



**CALDERDALE COUNCIL /PENNINE HOUSING 2000**

**CHOICE BASED LETTING SCHEME**

## ***KEYCHOICE***

**Scheme Overview**

If you would like this information in another format (eg. Braille, large print audio type or computer file), or another language, please contact **Gillian West** on

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اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دوسری زبان  
یا شکل میں چاہئے تو رابطہ کریں:

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য অন্য কোন মাধ্যম অথবা ভাষায় চান  
তাহলে দয়া করে যোগাযোগ করুন :

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2007, Calderdale Council (CMBC) in partnership with Pennine Housing 2000 (PH2K) will launch a Choice Based Letting scheme (CBL scheme) to be known as '**Keychoice**'. This scheme will see most of the available Pennine Housing 2000 homes being widely advertised and people wishing to be considered for a particular property, expressing their interest by placing a 'bid'. Expressions of interest will be prioritised by a transparent system that uses four Priority Bands to reflect need, and a 'Relevant Date' that usually reflects the time spent in a particular band, to differentiate between households with the same level of need. At the end of each bidding cycle there will be a 'Unique Queue' for each property and unless there are valid reasons not to, an offer of a tenancy will be made to the member who is at the top of this queue.

It is anticipated that several other Registered Social Landlords (RSL) operating in Calderdale will also make use of the 'Keychoice' scheme to let their available homes and that Low Cost Home Ownership properties such as Shared Ownership and Shared Equity homes will also be incorporated.

It is Calderdale Council's policy that wherever possible people wanting social housing should be able to choose the properties that they wish to be considered for from those that will be advertised. However there may be some circumstances that mean it will be necessary for the Council to ask a Registered Social Landlord to make a 'direct offer' of a property to a particular household, without that property having been advertised. Such circumstances will include offers made to discharge the Councils duty to homeless households.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE KEYCHOICE SCHEME**

- To enable customers to play an active role in choosing a home by introducing a system that is easy to use, transparent and gives a realistic picture of re-housing prospects.
- To comply with statutory and regulatory requirements
- To make best use of available homes and help to create and maintain stable communities
- To continue to support vulnerable customers through partnership working.
- To promote efficient use of housing and minimise void turnaround times

## **PARTICIPATING LANDLORDS**

The following Registered Social Landlords have agreed to let the majority of their vacant properties in Calderdale in accordance with the 'Keychoice' scheme:

- **Pennine Housing 2000**

Other Registered Social Landlords have been invited to advertise the properties for which they are seeking nominations from CMBC within the scheme. Such landlords have not yet committed to full participation, but it is hoped that in due course they will do so.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHEME**

The 'Keychoice' Scheme will be administered by Pennine Housing 2000 and in doing so the Company will manage Calderdale Council's Housing Register, and nomination rights. Pennine Housing 2000 will also make nominations in accordance with the 'Keychoice' eligibility and prioritisation system on behalf of CMBC to Registered Social Landlords not advertising properties within the scheme.

The Council and Pennine Housing 2000 will work together to monitor scheme outcomes and effectiveness.

Appropriate Information about scheme membership and lettings activity will be shared between the Council and participating landlords in accordance with protocols that will be developed prior to the launch of the scheme.

The 'Keychoice' scheme will be complemented by detailed procedural guidance for officers.

## **ELIGIBILITY TO JOIN THE KEYCHOICE SCHEME**

Anyone aged 16 or over is eligible to join the scheme unless:

- They are 'Persons From Abroad' who the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government has deemed ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation.
- They, or a member of their household, have been guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour and they are not considered by Calderdale Council to be suitable to be a tenant.

The type of unacceptable behaviour that may lead to an applicant being considered ineligible includes:

- Owing serious rent arrears.
- Causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or visitors.
- Being convicted of using a home for illegal or immoral purposes; for example prostitution or drug dealing.
- Conviction for an arrestable offence in or near home.
- Being violent towards a partner or family member.
- Allowing the condition of a rented property to deteriorate.
- Damaging/destroying or disposing of furniture provided by a landlord.
- Obtaining a tenancy by deception; for example, by giving false information.
- Paying money illegally to obtain a Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord tenancy.

Each application to join the 'Keychoice' scheme will be considered individually and in deciding whether an applicant is ineligible, Calderdale Council can only consider behaviour that would have entitled the Council to seek a possession order had the applicant been a secure tenant at that time. In addition the behaviour must have been serious enough that

the Council would have gained an outright order for possession. **N.B. it does not matter whether or not the applicant was in fact a secure tenant or not, this is a notional test.**

The Council must also consider whether at the time of the application the applicant is still unsuitable to be a tenant, because of that behaviour.

The decision that an applicant is ineligible will be made by a Pennine Housing 2000 Senior Housing Officer, on behalf of Calderdale Council.

Pennine Housing 2000 (on behalf of Calderdale Council) will write, giving reasons to people deemed ineligible to join the scheme. People who are considered to be ineligible because of serious unacceptable behaviour have the right to request a review of that decision. This review will be undertaken by the CMBC Housing Options Manager or Housing Access Manager.

### **Assets & Income**

Some of the Registered Social Landlords likely to fully participate or advertise properties in the scheme are charitable organisations. This means that they must let their homes to people in 'necessitous circumstances' and people who have capital assets or income above certain levels may not be eligible for an offer of a property from those organisations. If income levels apply, this is likely to be stated in the property advertisements.

### **16 & 17 Year Olds**

People age 16 & 17 are eligible to join the 'Keychoice' scheme but are unlikely to be offered a property by Pennine Housing 2000 or another Registered Social Landlord unless they can satisfy the prospective landlord that they are able to meet the responsibilities of a tenancy.

### **Ability to Sustain a Tenancy.**

Calderdale Council and the participating landlords will need to be satisfied that new tenants of RSL homes in Calderdale are able to sustain a tenancy. If either Calderdale Council, Pennine Housing 2000 or another Registered Social Landlord participating in or advertising properties in the 'Keychoice' scheme considers that an applicant is likely to have difficulties in sustaining a tenancy, they may be eligible for membership, but may not be offered a property unless appropriate support is in place or the member has completed appropriate pre-tenancy training.

## **JOINING THE KEYCHOICE SCHEME**

Applicants can apply to become members of the 'Keychoice' scheme by:

- Completing a membership form that can be downloaded from the Calderdale Council website, PH2K website, the Keychoice website and the websites of some participating landlords. The form can also be obtained from any PH2K

office, PH2K Property Shop, Calderdale Council Housing Advice Centre and other community venues.

- On –line by accessing a dedicated website:[www.keychoice.org.uk](http://www.keychoice.org.uk)

The membership form will require applicants to provide information that will enable Pennine Housing 2000 staff to determine eligibility and assess priority for re-housing. The form will include sections on equal opportunities issues and availability of information in other languages and formats. It will also seek to identify customers who may require assistance with the bidding process and those who may require support to sustain a tenancy.

Prospective members will be also asked whether or not they are interested in Low Cost Home Ownership schemes, such as shared ownership.

The membership form will ask applicants to sign a ‘declaration’ to:

- confirm that the information given is correct and that the applicant will notify PH2K of any changes in circumstances.
- confirm that applicants will allow PH2K/CMBC staff to make enquiries into their circumstances for verification purposes.
- give consent to provide information to another RSL participating in the scheme.

The 1996 Housing Act makes it a criminal offence to give false information, or to knowingly withhold relevant information in a housing application. If a tenancy is granted on the basis of provision of false information, the landlord may take action to gain possession of the property through the courts.

Calderdale Council’s Housing Register will consist of all members of the ‘Keychoice’ scheme.

## **SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

Calderdale Council and all participating landlords are keen to ensure that vulnerable people are able to access and make full use of the ‘Keychoice’ scheme. The membership form includes questions about using the system and placing bids and the ‘Keychoice’ Team, based at Pennine Housing 2000 will include a ‘Keychoice Co-ordinator’, whose role will be to assist vulnerable people, to use the scheme. The ‘Keychoice Co-ordinator’ will also train support agencies in use of the system so that they can then assist their clients.

The Council’s Housing Advice Centre staff will assist customers to apply for membership of the scheme and to place bids. Members may also appoint an advocate to place bids on their behalf

Prior to the launch of the ‘Keychoice’ scheme, comprehensive training on use of the scheme will be offered to a wide range of support and advice agencies.

The ‘Keychoice’ website and the dedicated telephone line used to make ‘bids’ will have the facility to offer key information in different languages and formats

## **IDENTIFYING PEOPLE LIKELY TO REQUIRE SUPPORT TO SUSTAIN A TENANCY.**

The 'Keychoice' membership form will include sections that help to identify people who may require support to sustain a tenancy. Further enquiries will then be made to establish the level and nature of support required.

## **VERIFICATION OF MEMBER CIRCUMSTANCES**

Verifications checks may be carried out at any stage of the lettings process by Pennine Housing 2000 and CMBC Housing Advice Centre staff to:

- Confirm that eligibility criteria are met
- Confirm identity and household details
- Confirmation of current and previous housing circumstances
- Confirmation that banding criteria are satisfied
- Confirm that lettings criteria are satisfied
- Obtain information about the conduct of current or previous tenancies
- Confirm ability to sustain a tenancy.
- Obtain information about anti social behaviour activity
- Assess risk

Verification may involve providing additional information, supplying documentation and may involve a home visit by PH2K or CMBC, Housing Advice Centre staff.

Most Housing Associations are likely to carry out home visits and may require additional information before an offer of a tenancy is made, to ensure that their own lettings policies are complied with.

## **Suspensions & Other Restrictions**

Members will be given 'less preference' in the 'Keychoice' scheme and their membership will be suspended if they or any member of their household

- Has engaged in anti-social behaviour, whether or not they were at the time a tenant of a Local Housing Authority or Registered Social Landlord and has not made and maintained a satisfactory undertaking to address that behaviour.
- Is a tenant of Pennine Housing 2000, or any other Social Landlord and is or has been the subject of action for breach of tenancy.
- Owes rent arrears or any other housing related debt to Pennine Housing or any other Social Landlord and has not made and maintained a satisfactory arrangement to repay the debt.
- Has deliberately or negligently caused damage to property belonging to Pennine Housing or any other Landlord, whether the tenant of that property or not.

- Has been convicted of using their home, or allowing it to be used, for immoral or illegal purposes.
- Has in the view of Pennine Housing 2000 or any other participating landlord engaged in behaviour that affects his suitability to be a tenant and would prejudice their ability to maintain their responsibilities to their existing tenants.

These categories may be extended, but in all cases there must be satisfactory evidence to support the suspension of the member and examples of such evidence will be set out in detailed procedural guidance for officers

Members who are suspended from the 'Keychoice' scheme will not be able to bid for advertised properties.

Participating landlords may restrict the type or location of properties that they are prepared to offer a member of the scheme in the following circumstances:

- The member or someone else in their household has been involved in conduct likely to cause a nuisance in a given locality.
- The member or someone else in their household has been convicted of an offence which affects or is likely to affect the well being of the neighbourhood or any individual member of the community in a given locality.
- The member or someone else in their household has a conviction which is not spent for a serious crime and there could still be a significant risk to some members of the community in a given locality.
- The member or someone else in their household cannot be offered a tenancy in a given locality under the provisions of the Landlord's domestic violence policy.
- The member is the subject of a court order that restricts the areas in which they can live or enter.

Pennine Housing 2000 will write to members suspended from the scheme or restricted in their ability to access a tenancy. The letter will explain:

- That membership has been suspended, or restricted and the reasons for this.
- That there right to a review of this decision and the process for making such a request.
- What the member must do before a suspension or restriction will be reconsidered.
- Suspension of membership will not affect registration or relevant dates

## Risk Assessment

Pennine Housing 2000 and other participating landlords may carry out a risk assessment during the verification process or before making an offer of accommodation if they consider it to be appropriate.

## ASSESSING PRIORITY FOR RE-HOUSING

Under the Housing Act 1996 Local Authorities must give reasonable preference to the following categories of people when determining priorities for re-housing:

- a) People who are homeless within the meaning of Part VII of the 1996 Housing Act. This includes people who are intentionally homeless and those who are not considered to be in priority need.
- b) People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- c) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to a disability)
- d) People who need to move to a particular locality of the district where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

Local Authorities can frame their allocation schemes so that additional preference can be given to certain people falling into the reasonable preference categories who have urgent housing needs.

In the 'Keychoice' Scheme, priority for re-housing will be achieved by a combination of a **Priority Band** and a **Relevant Date**. The Priority Banding system reflects the reasonable preference groups set out in the 1996 Housing Act.

### Priority Band

There are four priority bands:

<b>Band Description</b>	<b>Level of Priority</b>	<b>Legal Description Of Priority Level</b>
Bronze Band	- Standard priority	- No Preference
Silver Band	- Housing Need priority	- Reasonable Preference Priority
Silver Plus Band	- High Housing Need Priority	- Multiple Need Priority
Gold Band	- Very High Housing Need Priority	- Additional Preference Priority

An outline of each priority band is given in the table below

<b>Gold Band–Very High Housing Need</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households that have been accepted by CMBC as unintentionally homeless and in priority need with a local connection with Calderdale</li> <li>• People who need to move urgently on medical or welfare grounds (See Appendix 1).</li> <li>• 16&amp; 17 year old care leavers who will continue to be supported by the Calderdale NCH Leaving Care Team or Foundation Housing</li> <li>• Existing tenants of Registered Social Landlords in Calderdale who are required to leave their property to allow for major improvement work, disposal or demolition. Also people in owner occupied and privately rented homes in Calderdale who will be displaced by renewal area or regeneration schemes. (Decants)</li> <li>• People living in a property that has been served with a clearance order or closing order by CMBC.</li> <li>• People who occupy properties served with a Prohibition Notice by CMBC and where discussions with the relevant Environmental Health Officer support the decision to award priority.</li> </ul>
<b>Silver Plus Band –High Housing Need</b>
<p>People who qualify for two or more of the following categories in Silver Band</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.</li> <li>• People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.</li> <li>• People who need to move to a particular locality in the district to avoid hardship</li> </ul>
<b>Silver Band - Housing Need Priority</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households that have been accepted by CMBC as homeless, but are either non- priority or intentionally homeless.</li> <li>• Prevention of homelessness</li> <li>• Standard medical or welfare cases (See Appendix 1)</li> <li>• People living in unsatisfactory housing (See Appendix 1)</li> <li>• People who need to move to a particular locality in the district to avoid hardship (See Appendix 2)</li> <li>• Households in priority need who are threatened with or likely to be threatened with homelessness within 8 weeks</li> <li>• PH2K/Participating landlord Management Transfers (See Appendix 1)</li> </ul>
<b>Bronze Band - Standard Priority</b>
All other eligible members

When a member joins the ‘Keychoice’ scheme, Pennine Housing 2000 staff or in some cases, CMBC Housing Advice Centre staff will assess priority for re-housing and place the member in the appropriate band.

If Pennine Housing Officers or CMBC staff feel that they need more information before deciding which band is appropriate they will contact members directly. Until enquiries are completed, the member will usually be placed in Bronze Band.

## **Relevant Date**

### **General**

On joining the 'Keychoice' scheme, members will be allocated a "relevant date". The relevant date will determine a member's 'place' within a band and will be a major factor in how long a member will have to wait for an offer of a new home. Current tenants of Pennine Housing 2000 and fully participating landlords will have a "relevant date" of the date their current tenancy started, for all other members the "relevant date" will be the date of acceptance onto the scheme.

### **Members awarded Gold, Silver Plus or Silver Band priority**

Most members eligible for Gold, Silver Plus or Silver Band priority will have a 'Relevant Date' of the date the priority band was awarded. Members eligible for Silver Band priority because they are 'moving on' from supported housing will have a 'Relevant Date' of the date they moved into that supported housing scheme.

### **Moving up a band**

If a member moves up a band, then their 'Relevant Date' will be the date they enter the higher band.

### **Moving down a band**

If the member moves to Bronze Band, the Relevant Date will revert to the membership date or PH2K/ participating landlord current tenancy commencement date. If a member moves from a higher band to either Silver Plus or Silver Band, then the Relevant Date will revert to the date that applied when they were previously in that band. If the member had not previously been in the lower band, they will retain their former Relevant Date.

### **Gold Band – Additional Preference Priority**

All members awarded Gold Band priority will have a dedicated officer who will support their application. For members who are homeless, or who are 16&17 year old Care Leavers, this will be a member of CMBC Housing Advice Centre staff. All other members with Gold Band priority will be supported by a member of Pennine Housing 2000 staff.

With the exception of members awarded Gold Band priority because they are being required to move from their existing home, to allow for major improvement work, disposal or demolition (Decants), Gold Band priority will be valid for 3 months. During this period the member will be expected, actively to bid for suitable properties. CMBC Housing Advice Centre staff may place bids on suitable properties for members who are homeless and for 16&17 year old Care Leavers.

At the end of the 3-month period, the priority status will be reviewed. If a member has been actively bidding, but not been made an offer, Gold Band priority may be extended for a further 3 month period.

Members awarded Gold Band priority because they are being required to move from their existing home, to allow for major improvement work, disposal or demolition (Decants), may take part in the bidding process, but will also be considered for direct lets. (See section on properties available for letting). The Gold Band priority will be reviewed on a six monthly basis.

Members who have been accepted by Calderdale Council as unintentionally homeless and in priority need, will only be awarded Gold Band priority when it has been determined that they are able to sustain a tenancy either with or without appropriate support.

### **Silver Plus Band –Multiple Need Priority**

Silver Band priority recognises ‘multiple need’ and is awarded to members who fall into more than one of the following categories of need in the Silver Band:

- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district to avoid hardship\*

\*Silver Plus Priority awarded to members who have been awarded the priority in part because they need to move to a particular area of the Borough, will only be valid for bids made on properties in that area.

### **Silver Band - Reasonable Preference**

Silver Band priority awarded on Homelessness grounds will be valid for a maximum of 6 months.

Silver Band priority awarded on Homelessness Prevention grounds will be valid for a maximum of 8 weeks. Priority will be removed in the meantime, if the member either resolves their housing need or is accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

Silver Band priority awarded because a member needs to move to a particular location in Calderdale to avoid hardship, will only be valid for bids made on properties in that area.

Appendix 2. summarises the prioritisation system

### **Re-Assessment Of Priority**

Each member’s preference band will be kept under review and altered to reflect any agreed change in circumstances.

## **Confirmation of Membership.**

When an application to join the Keychoice scheme has been accepted, members will receive written confirmation and be notified of:

- Their unique membership number
- Their current priority band status
- The current relevant date
- The date membership of the CBL scheme commenced.

If a member feels that any details are incorrect, they should contact Pennine Housing 2000. If a member feels that they have been placed in the wrong band, they will be given the opportunity to ask for a review of the priority awarded.

## **PROPERTIES AVAILABLE FOR LETTING**

It is the intention of CMBC & the participating landlords, that the majority of properties becoming available in Calderdale will be let advertised and let via the 'Keychoice' scheme. There are however situations when a direct letting of a property will be made.

### **Properties that may be let directly and not via the 'Keychoice' scheme include:**

- Direct lets to people who are required to leave their present home because of a regeneration/refurbishment scheme approved by CMBC or where they are existing tenants of an RSL and their home is due to be demolished, sold or improved.
- Direct lets in circumstances where there would be a risk to the member by being required to take part in the bidding process.
- Direct lets to members awarded Management Transfer priority
- Direct lets made as 'final offers' to members accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need.
- Properties that have been fitted with 'level 3 Sanctuary' target hardening measures
- Homes that have been significantly adapted for a disabled person.
- New build wheelchair accessible homes
- Homes that are suitable for adaptation for an identified member with a disability and it has not been possible to identify an existing suitably adapted property.
- Homes that are suitable for Supported Living arrangements, for people with a learning disability.
- Lettings made under the Temporary to Settled' scheme
- Lettings made in partnership with the Young Person's Accommodation & Support Service (YPASS)

- Extra Care/Very Sheltered Housing.
- Succession of tenancy, mutual exchanges and transfers of interest made under a court order.

### **New Build Properties Designed To Wheelchair Standard.**

Some new properties in the social housing stock will be built to wheelchair standard and will be designed and built specifically for individual households on the Housing Register. Such households are likely to include someone with a complex disability where it has not been possible to adapt the existing home or identify an alternative suitable property in the existing stock. Households will be identified for new build wheelchair standard property by a small panel consisting of CMBC Housing & Community Support Service staff, CMBC Social Services staff and occupational therapists.

### **Extra Care/ Very Sheltered Properties**

Extra Care housing schemes (sometimes known as very sheltered schemes) are specifically designed to meet the needs of older people who are frail and less able to manage. Whilst people interested in such homes can make an initial application and be awarded a relevant degree of housing priority within the Choice Based Lettings scheme, available homes will be let outside the scheme.

The current letting scheme for Extra Care properties is given in Appendix 3.

## **HOW PROPERTIES WILL BE LET**

### **Advertising Properties Available For Letting**

Most homes will be advertised when a notice is received from the present tenant. New build homes are likely to be advertised at least 6 weeks before completion.

Homes will be advertised and let on a weekly basis. Properties will be advertised from 00.01hrs Wednesday until 21.59hrs on the following Sunday and bids may be made at anytime during this period as illustrated in the diagram below.

Week 1							Week 2						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
		Advertising and bidding period							Advertising and bidding period				

Available homes will be advertised on the Keychoice website, in all PH2K housing offices, the PH2K Property Shop, Calderdale Council Housing Advice Centre and at a number of community venues including Calderdale Council libraries and Customer First Offices. Members who wish to do so will also be able to subscribe to receive a weekly newsletter containing all available homes.

The advert for each property will include:

- The location of the property
- A description of the facilities in the property
- Local information
- Rent and other charges
- Local Connection criteria if applicable
- Lettings criteria
- Lettings basis - ie whether the property will be let on the basis of priority band and relevant date or is considered to be an 'open let'

Wherever possible the advertisement will include a photo of the property or a similar property.

Advertisements will also remind members about how bids should be made.

Members will be able to bid for two properties in each cycle and will be asked to 'rank' their bids according to their preference.

### **Local Connection Criteria in Rural Areas**

In many of the rural areas of Calderdale, a combination of high house prices, shortage of social housing and loss of stock due to Right To Buy & Right To Acquire, have made it increasingly difficult for local people, to find affordable accommodation. As a consequence people seeking affordable housing have increasingly had to move away from their families and support networks and rural areas have been rendered socially and economically poorer.

The 'Keychoice' scheme will therefore provide for people with a local connection with certain rural areas to be given preference for a proportion of the lettings made in those areas.

A local connection is defined as:

- Having lived in the area for the previous 12 months
- or
- Having lived in the area previously for a continuous period of 10 years
- or
- Having permanent employment in the area
- or
- Having immediate family in the area, who have lived there for the previous 5 years,
- or
- Needing to live in the area to provide essential support to a permanent resident and there is no other person able to do this.
- or
- Needing to move into the area to receive essential support from a permanent resident and there is no other way of receiving such support

At the commencement of the Keychoice scheme the Parish Council areas of Blackshaw, Errington, Hebden Royd (part only), Heptonstall, Ripponden and Wadsworth will be subject to local connection provisions and 3 out of 4 properties advertised will give preference to members who have such a local connection. Following scheme launch, this proportion will be reviewed for different property types on the basis of supply and demand.

In addition all Pennine Housing 2000 and Housing Association homes becoming available on developments that were granted planning permission subject to a condition restricting occupation to local people, will be advertised on the basis that lettings (or sales) will be restricted to people with a specified local connection.

### **Lettings Criteria.**

Lettings criteria are the rules the participating landlords make to decide who an available property is offered to. Every advertisement will state the Lettings Criteria for that property

Purpose of the Lettings Criteria:

- To assist applicants in making informed choices from the properties available
- To make best use of the available housing stock
- To ensure community sustainability
- To ensure that supported housing schemes include a balance of needs.
- To help the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to people in need.

Examples of Letting Criteria

- Size and composition of household that is eligible to bid. (See below)
- Minimum age for some flats and bungalows.
- Preference given to member with a mobility difficulty who needs ground floor accommodation
- Preference given to an applicant who needs any adaptations installed in the property – e.g. Level Access Shower.
- Whether or not some pets may be kept in the property
- Sheltered need identified
- Preference given to members who are economically active

Participating landlords are likely to have lettings plans for estates and neighbourhoods that aim to promote community sustainability. Lettings criteria may also include factors linked to such lettings plans

As demand for available housing greatly exceeds the supply, the Lettings Criteria will also normally state the minimum number of permanently resident members in a household for a bid to be considered an eligible bid. Some properties may however be advertised on the basis that members with visiting children or the need for an occasional carer to stay overnight will be eligible to bid.

### **Properties That Have Been Fitted with Major Adaptations For Someone With A Disability Or Mobility Difficulty.**

Properties that have been adapted for someone with a disability may be advertised via the 'Keychoice' scheme, or may be offered directly to members known to require the adaptations concerned. If advertised, the property will be offered, following discussion with the Occupational Therapy Service, to the member identified as most suitable for the property. This may not be the person with the highest priority and oldest Relevant Date.

### **Sheltered Properties**

Before making an offer of home in a sheltered housing scheme, landlords will need to be satisfied that the member has a need for such a property and that their support needs can be accommodated at that time and to ensure that a 'balance' is maintained within the scheme.

### **Priority Status And Waiting Time**

Most properties will be let on the basis of priority for re-housing (at the commencement of the 'Keychoice' scheme, this will be 3 out of 4 advertised properties). A proportion of properties will however be let on the basis of waiting time only or length of PH2K participating landlord tenancy and will be known as Open Lets.

The proportion of properties advertised as Open Lets will be reviewed on the basis of supply and demand.

### **Priority basis**

The majority of homes will let on the basis of priority and length of time with priority. The property advertisement will indicate which priority band will be given preference and the order of other bands.

**Example:** gold- silver plus- silver - bronze

For such lettings members in Gold Band will be considered before those in Silver plus Band and subsequently Silver Plus Band members will be considered before Bronze Band members etc. If more than one member from each band bids for the same property, the member with the oldest relevant date will be considered first.

**Example:** silver- bronze-gold - silver plus

For such lettings members in Silver Band will be considered before those in Bronze Band and subsequently Bronze Band members will be considered before Gold Band members etc. If more than one member from each band bids for the same property, the member with the oldest relevant date will be considered first.

The proportion of lettings giving preference to each band will reflect the number of members in each band requiring a specific property type and location. This will ensure that Calderdale Council is able to meet its statutory duties to homeless households and others in acute or urgent housing need within a reasonable timescale. The proportion of lettings giving a preference to each priority band will be closely monitored by Pennine Housing and Calderdale Council.

Enabling a proportion of lettings to give preference to households in Silver Plus, Silver and Bronze Bands as well as Gold band, will ensure that other households in need have an opportunity to secure a home and should help to prevent 'band chasing' as well as helping to ensure community sustainability.

## **Open Lets**

For properties advertised as open lets, bids will be ranked in order of membership date or PH2K /participating landlord tenancy commencement date.

## **Placing A Bid**

Members indicate their desire to be offered a particular home by placing a bid for the property. Before placing a bid for a property, members should ensure that they meet the relevant lettings criteria.

Members who wish to 'bid' for a property can do so by:

- Completing the on line form,
- Telephoning on a dedicated phone number
- sending a text to a dedicated phone number
- Calling in at any PH2K office the PH2K Property Shop or Calderdale Council Housing Advice Centre

Before confirming a bid, members will be told their relative position in the 'Unique Queue' for the property at that time. It will also be possible for members to check their position at any time before the close of the advertising and bidding cycle.

## **Process At Close Of Bidding**

At the close of bidding there will be a Unique Queue of members for each property. This will be ordered by either priority band and relevant date, or by membership date/ tenancy commencement date, depending on the basis on which the property is being let.

The landlord of the property will then check the application details of the member who is at the top of the queue to ensure that Lettings Criteria appear to be satisfied. If the criteria do appear to be satisfied the landlord will then contact the member to invite them to view the property. Some of the participating landlords will carry out home visits before inviting to view and may also require members to provide additional information to establish that their own lettings policies are satisfied.

Landlords may also ask members to provide documentation to verify the priority band status and household circumstances.

If everything is in order, the member should subsequently receive an offer of the property.

## Circumstances That Will Result In No Offer Being Made

In most cases the member who is at the top of the Unique Queue for a property at the close of bidding will be made an offer of that property. There are however circumstances that may result in an offer not being made.

These are:

- If since joining the scheme a member has become ineligible for membership.
- On verification of membership details, the priority band was found to have been incorrectly awarded.
- The member's current circumstances are such that suspension of membership is appropriate, or that the member should be restricted from bidding in the neighbourhood in which the property is located.
- The member's circumstances have changed since the priority band was awarded and the member is no longer entitled to the same level of priority.
- The property is subject to a local connection criteria and the member does not meet those criteria.
- The members circumstances do not accord with the local lettings policy in operation
- The member does not satisfy the advertised lettings criteria for the property
- The member has been assessed as needing support to sustain a tenancy and such support is not in place or cannot be arranged before the proposed tenancy commencement date.
- The neighbourhood or scheme in which the relevant property is located has *currently* a need to maintain a community balance and that the circumstances and/or behaviour of the member is in the view of the landlord of the property, unlikely to contribute to the required balance.
- The level of support needed to sustain the tenancy at the relevant property would seriously undermine the support providers ability to support other residents in the same neighbourhood or scheme.
- The member has qualified for an offer of more than one property and been offered their highest ranked choice.
- The member could not be contacted by the landlord of the property

After the close of the bidding cycle, scheme members will be able to find out their position in the unique queue for each property for which they have placed a bid. If they were at the top of a unique queue for a property but were not contacted by the relevant landlord or made an offer, they will be able to contact that landlord to ask for an explanation.

When a member has accepted an offer of a property, their scheme membership will be cancelled and it will be necessary to re-apply, should they wish to move again in the future.

## **REFUSAL OF AN OFFER BY A MEMBER**

Most members will be able to refuse an offer of a tenancy without affecting their priority band status. Refusal of an offer by members in the groups described below may however result in their priority band being reviewed.

### **Members Awarded Gold Band Priority Because Of Homelessness**

Members awarded Gold Band priority because of homelessness will lose this priority status if they refuse a qualifying offer of suitable accommodation, whether made within the CBL scheme or directly by a landlord. This includes offers of tenancies resulting from bids placed by a member of CMBC Housing Advice Centre Staff. The decision as to whether an offer of accommodation is a suitable offer will be made within the provisions of The Refusal Policy For Homeless Applicants.

### **Members Awarded Gold Band Priority Because They Are A 16/17 Year Old Care Leaver**

Members awarded Gold Band priority because they are a 16/17 year old Care Leaver will lose their priority status if they refuse an offer of accommodation for which they or their proxy has bid and which is considered by the CMBC Housing Advice Team, following discussion with the NCH Leaving Care Team, to be appropriate for the young person concerned.

### **Members Awarded Gold Band Priority On Medical/Welfare Grounds**

Members awarded Gold Band priority on medical/welfare grounds will lose their priority status if they refuse an offer of accommodation for which they or their proxy has bid and which is considered by PH2K staff to meet their needs. A property will be usually be considered to be a reasonable offer for this purpose if it:

- Is of sufficient size to accommodate the members household
- The physical access to the property and the internal layout and facilities are appropriate
- The property was accurately described in the property advert.

### **Members Awarded Silver Band Priority Because Of Homelessness**

Members awarded Silver Band priority because of homelessness will lose their priority status if they refuse an offer of accommodation for which they or their proxy has bid and which is considered by PH2K staff to meet their needs. A property will be usually be considered to be a reasonable offer for this purpose if it:

- Is of sufficient size to accommodate the members household
- The physical access to the property and the internal layout and facilities are appropriate
- The property was accurately described in the property advert.

## **LETTINGS FEEDBACK.**

Information about lettings made in previous cycles, will be published on a regular basis. This will enable members to gauge their chance of making a successful bid for similar properties.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

Members can request a review of a decision made in relation to:

- Eligibility to join the scheme if they have been considered ineligible because of unacceptable behaviour.
- The priority band awarded.
- Loss of priority band status.
- Suspension or restriction of membership
- Decision by participating landlord not to make an offer to the member at the top of the Unique Queue for a property at the close of bidding.

Members who wish to request a review of a decision that they are ineligible to join the scheme should write to the Housing Advice Centre Manager at Calderdale Council.

Members who wish to request a review of a decision that they have not been awarded priority on the grounds of homelessness or homelessness prevention should contact Calderdale Council Housing Advice Centre. Requests for such reviews will be dealt with under the homelessness review process outlined in Part VII Housing Act 1996.

Members awarded Gold Band priority on the grounds of homelessness who subsequently lose that priority because they have refused an offer of accommodation should contact Calderdale Council Housing Advice Centre. Requests for such reviews will be dealt with under the homelessness review process outlined in Part VII Housing Act 1996.

Members awarded Gold Band priority because they are a 16/17 year old Care Leaver and subsequently lose that priority because they have refused an offer of accommodation should contact Calderdale Council Housing Advice Centre.

Members who are refused an offer despite being at the top of the Unique Queue at the close of bidding should contact the relevant landlord to request an explanation, and if not satisfied, should follow that organisation's complaints process.

All other requests for a review of a decision should be made to Pennine Housing 2000. The review will be undertaken by an officer who was not involved in the original decision.

A successful review decision will not result in an offer of the property involved in the appeal, if that property has been let to another member of the scheme.

## **PROCESS FOR REVIEWING MEMBERSHIP OF THE KEYCHOICE SCHEME**

'Keychoice' membership will be reviewed on an annual basis and members, who have not bid for properties in the previous six months will be asked to confirm that they wish to remain in the scheme.

All members should notify Pennine Housing 2000 of changes in their circumstances, so that membership details can be kept up to date.

## **REVIEWING THE POLICY**

As the 'Keychoice' Scheme is new to Calderdale and completely changes the way that social housing is allocated, it is likely that some adjustments will be required once the scheme becomes operational. Minor changes will therefore be implemented as and when the need arises. The scheme will however be formally reviewed 6 months after implementation by the Choice Based lettings Scheme Project Steering Group and reported to Councils Community Services Scrutiny Committee and the boards of the Participating Landlords. Thereafter the policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

## **PROCEDURE FOR TRANSFERRING EXISTING APPLICANTS TO NEW SCHEME**

During October and November 2006, each applicant on the current Housing Register was contacted to advise them of the new scheme proposals and to ask them to confirm their wish to remain on the Register.

In March 2007 Pennine Housing 2000 staff began the process of re- assessing applicants against the new banding criteria and determining the appropriate Relevant Date.

Shortly before implementation of the 'Keychoice'scheme, Pennine Housing 2000 staff will write to applicants to advise them of their membership number, priority band status, Relevant Date and scheme membership date. Scheme membership date for such members will be the date that the applicant had originally applied to join the Calderdale Housing Register or the waiting lists of fully participating landlords.

## Appendix 1

### Banding Criteria Descriptions

The descriptions below provide additional information about the criteria for awarding Gold and Silver Band priority to certain groups of member. Detailed guidance to officers will be included in an operational procedure manual.

#### People Who Need To Move On Medical Or Welfare Grounds

##### Gold Band

An immediately life threatening or progressive condition which is seriously affected by the current housing and where re-housing would solve or alleviate that medical condition or make it easier to manage.

**Or**

A member of the household seeking accommodation cannot be discharged from hospital or rehabilitation accommodation until suitable housing is provided and:

The household had settled accommodation in Calderdale prior to hospital admission.

**Or**

A member of the household is elderly, disabled or has a progressive illness and is likely to require admission to hospital or residential/nursing care in the immediate future and re-housing would enable that person to remain living at home.

**Or**

The household seeking accommodation has welfare needs so severe that the protection of **vulnerable adults or children** is only possible if the household were to move to a new home and where the present circumstances could deteriorate to such an extent as to place household members at risk, or in need of residential care unless re-housing is offered.

**Or**

The household has been recommended for re-housing under the Housing Re-location Scheme

**Or**

The member is aged 16 or 17 and is leaving the care of Calderdale Council, providing that:

In the view of the Leaving Care Team and staff at The Housing Advice Centre, the young person is able to meet the responsibilities of being a tenant and will continue to be supported by the NCH Leaving Care Team or Foundation Housing.

##### Silver Band

The member has a diagnosed medical condition, which is caused, significantly affected by, or made difficult to manage by their current accommodation and where re-housing will solve or alleviate that medical condition, or make it easier to manage.

**Or**

A member of the household seeking accommodation is disabled and re-housing will enable that person to overcome physical barriers created by current accommodation eg steps and stairs

**Or**

A member of the household seeking accommodation is disabled and has been assessed by an Occupational Therapist to require adaptations that cannot be fitted in the existing home or it is not considered reasonable to do so.

**Or**

The household includes a member who has an assessed support need and requires supported accommodation (including accommodation with floating support).

**Or**

The household is 'moving on' from certain supported accommodation in Calderdale

## People Occupying Insanitary Or Overcrowded Housing Or Otherwise Living In Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions

### Silver Band

Members have not been assessed as homeless, but have lived at their current address for at least 12 months and the home is overcrowded. A home is considered to be overcrowded if there are insufficient bedrooms for the household having regard to the guidance below:

No more than two people should have to share a bedroom.

A separate bedroom is needed for:

- Each couple living together
- A parent in a single parent family
- Each permanently resident child aged 8 or over who is sharing a bedroom with a permanently resident child of the opposite sex
- Each single person aged 16 or over that is not part of a family.
- A resident carer where there is a confirmed need for such provision.

**Or**

A member has not been assessed as homeless, but is a licensee and is sharing a living room, kitchen, bathroom or WC with non-household members.

(Licensees are lodgers, people staying with friends/relatives, people living in B&B, hostels, caravans, tents etc).

**Or**

The home occupied by the member is the subject of a notification of a Class 1 Hazard under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System and enquiries made with the relevant Environmental Health Officer support the award of reasonable preference priority.

## Pennine Housing 2000 Management Transfers

### Silver Band

In some very urgent circumstances the appropriately authorised officer in Pennine Housing 2000 may award 'Reasonable Preference' (Silver Band Priority) to their existing tenants.

Under this process the tenant will have the option to actively 'Bid' for properties being advertised under the choice-based letting scheme.

In some circumstances the Housing Officer may remove a property from the normal choice based letting scheme to offer it as a management transfer letting.

The Housing Officer will then make a direct offer of a particular property to an applicant where there are specific or exceptional circumstances as to why the existing tenant may need to move, for example:

- Someone suffering serious anti-social behaviour which has not been resolved by the Pennine Anti-Social Behaviour Team;
- A tenant experiencing domestic violence
- Someone giving up a family home to move into a smaller property;
- Emergency re housing due to fire or flood;
- Someone giving up an extensively adapted property for a general needs property.

This list is not exhaustive as circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

Silver Band Priority awarded on Management Transfer grounds will be valid for 6 months. After this time if an appropriate property has not been offered, but active 'bids' have been made Pennine Housing 2000 will review the application and extend the priority time for a further 6 months where necessary.

## **People Who Need To Move To A Particular Locality In The District To Avoid Hardship To Themselves Or Others.**

**Each application for Silver Band Priority on this ground will be considered individually, however examples of circumstances that may result in the award of Silver Band Priority are:**

Older people who need to move to sheltered accommodation and there is no such provision in the area in which they currently live.

The household includes a member who needs to access medical assistance on a regular basis and cannot do so, or it is unreasonable to expect them to do so, from the area in which they currently live.

The household includes a member who is unemployed and has been offered permanent employment in an area that they are unable to reasonably travel to.

The household includes a member who provides essential **care** to someone in another part of the Borough and they cannot deliver that care effectively from their current location.

The applicant is elderly or disabled and needs to move to a specific area to receive care or support from a close relative who lives there.

The Household includes a child or young person with a disability or learning difficulty, who needs to access specialist education or training facilities and cannot do so from their present home.

**It is important to remember that this priority is only valid for bids made on properties within a designated area.**

## APPENDIX 2

### Summary Of Prioritisation System

	1996 HOUSING ACT REASONABLE PREFERENCE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY AWARDED BY
<b>Gold Band– Additional Preference Priority</b>			
<p>Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded.</p> <p>Priority is removed if a <b>suitable</b> offer is refused</p> <p>Priority Band is valid for 3 months and will only be renewed if the member is actively bidding for properties</p>	<b>People Who Are Homeless</b>	Households that have been accepted by CMBC as unintentionally homeless and in priority need with a local connection with Calderdale	CMBC Housing Advice Centre Staff
<p>Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded.</p> <p>Priority is removed if a reasonable offer is refused.</p> <p>Priority Band is valid for 3 months and will only be renewed if the member is actively bidding for properties</p>	<b>People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds</b>	People who Need to move urgently on medical or welfare grounds (See Appendix 1)	PH2K staff (Housing Officers and Senior Housing Officers)
		16& 17 year old care leavers who will continue to be supported by the Calderdale NCH Leaving Care Team or Foundation Housing	CMBC Housing Advice Centre Staff
<p>Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded.</p>	<b>People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions</b>	<p>Existing tenants of Registered Social Landlords in Calderdale who are required to leave their property to allow for major improvement work, disposal or demolition. Also people in owner occupied and privately rented homes in Calderdale who will be displaced by renewal area or regeneration schemes. (Decants)</p> <p>People living in a property which has been served with a clearance order or closing order by CMBC</p> <p>People who occupy properties served with a Prohibition Notice by CMBC and where discussions with the relevant Environmental Health Officer support the decision to award priority</p>	PH2K Staff (Housing Officers and Senior Housing Officers)

<b>Silver Plus Band – Composite need</b>			
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded.	<b>People Who qualify for two or more of the following categories in Silver Band:</b>	<p>People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.</p> <p>People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.</p> <p>People who need to move to a particular locality in the district to avoid hardship</p>	PH2K staff (Housing Officers and Senior Housing Officers)
<b>Silver Band - Reasonable Preference Priority</b>			
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded. Priority is removed 6 months following award or if an offer is refused	<b>People Who Are Homeless</b>	Households that have been accepted by CMBC as homeless, but are either non- priority or intentionally homeless.	CMBC Housing Advice Centre Staff
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded	<b>People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds</b>	Standard medical cases (See Appendix 1)	PH2K staff (Housing Officers and Senior Housing Officers)
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded		People who have an assessed support need and require supported accommodation	PH2K staff following a standard assessment, that may have been carried out by a partner support agency
Relevant date is the date the member moved into supported accommodation		People 'moving on' from certain supported accommodation in Calderdale	PH2K staff on receipt of standard referral form. (Housing Officers and Senior Housing Officers)
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded	<b>People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions</b>	People living in unsatisfactory housing (See Appendix 1)	PH2K staff (Housing Officers and Senior Housing Officers)
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded.  Priority band is only valid for bids in a designated area	<b>People who need to move to a particular locality in the district to avoid hardship</b>	<p>People who need to move to a particular locality in the district to avoid hardship</p> <p>(See Appendix 1)</p>	PH2K staff (Housing Officers and Senior Housing Officers)
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded – valid for 8 weeks	<b>People who are homeless</b>	Households in priority need who are threatened with or likely to be threatened with homelessness within 8 weeks	CMBC Housing Advice Centre Staff

Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded	<b>PH2K Management Transfers (local preference category)</b>	PH2K/Participating landlord Management Transfers	PH2K Senior Housing Officers)
<b>Bronze Band - Standard Priority</b>			
The relevant date for PH2K qualifying tenants is the tenancy commencement date. For all other members the qualifying date is the date of registration	<b>Not applicable</b>	All other eligible members	Ph2K Staff (Housing Officers and Senior Housing Officers)

## Appendix 3 Extra Care/Very Sheltered Eligibility And Allocations Process

Access to the very sheltered service will be open to older people who meet the eligibility criteria set out below. The associated allocations process will be fair, equitable, open and transparent.

### 1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants who wish to be considered for very sheltered housing must meet the following criteria:

1. Must be registered on Pennine Housing's / Calderdale Council's joint waiting list
2. Will normally be 60 years or older. In exceptional circumstances, people below this age will be considered.
3. Must be in housing need
4. Present living situation may no longer be suitable because care and other facilities cannot be readily, practically or economically be provided there.
5. Will have care and support needs because of a range of difficulties, disabilities or problems including early stages of dementia, mental health problems as well as physical disabilities.
6. Will normally require assistance with their daily living tasks and/or their personal care.
7. Couples are eligible to apply where one or both meet the above criteria.

Applicants may currently be living in a range of housing, including residential care, ordinary sheltered housing, rented or owner-occupation.

Very sheltered housing will offer services not available in the applicant's current home or is not to the appropriate extent. For some, the key factors could mean the provision of more intensive, closer-to-hand care and/or support / continually supportive environment whereas for others it may be about helping to move towards a more independent lifestyle.

Applicants will be able to have a "home for life" as the service supports *ageing in place* unless their health deteriorates to the point where nursing care or 24 hour on-site care is required.

Applicants may be suffering from depression and/or the effects of isolation and/or mental health problems.

Applicants may be in the early stages of dementia but will still be able to make relationships, function within a daily routine, have some knowledge of their surroundings, and/or be in a supportive relationship within the scheme.

Applicants may have a learning disability provided they will be able to cope with independent living without due risk or disruption to others.

Whatever the applicant's specific needs, they must be able to cope with independent living within the setting of their "own home", albeit with the help they need to maintain an independent life. Recognition must also be given to the interdependence of the very sheltered community.

The boundaries of the service must also be considered in the context of meeting the needs of applicants. In particular, the focus upon planned care (albeit with flexibility) and the fact that night-time cover is provided by off-site services ie planned out-of- hours care and the Care Line Mobile Response Service for emergency responses.

## **2. WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE**

- Applicants who do not have care needs
- Applicants whose needs exceed that which can be reasonable met by the care provision within the scheme.
- Applicants who have a level of physical or mental frailty which is likely to either lead to violent or severely challenging behaviour or serious risk or disruption to others or require “round the clock” supervision.

This would include for example, people who:

- Persistently wander
- Are physically aggressive

## **3. ALLOCATIONS PROCES**

All applications will be considered by the Joint Allocations Panel.

The Joint Allocations Panel will comprise of equal representatives from each organisation, with arrangements in place for other appropriate staff to deputise when necessary. The membership details are, as follows:

Pennine Housing – Scheme Managers (Assistant Scheme Manager to deputise)  
Pennine Housing – Housing Officers (Senior Housing Officers to deputise)  
Social Services – Adult Care Team Manager (another ACTM to deputise)  
Social Services – Home Care Manager (another HCM to deputise)

The Panel will meet on a monthly basis or when necessary at the request of panel members.

The purpose of the meetings are to:

- 1. Assess new applications**
- 2. Review any existing applications already accepted onto the waiting list for very sheltered housing**
- 3. Regularly review and agree the order of priority of applicants on the list**

*The Panel will be chaired and minuted by the Very Sheltered Scheme Manager (Pennine Housing 2000)*

Ultimately, Pennine Housing 2000, as the landlord, has the final decision on any allocation. And the Chief Executive of Pennine Housing (or nominated Officer) has the right to veto any decision made by the Panel.

It is essential that all partners strive to ensure that the void period kept to a minimum.

Eligibility will be established by the completion of a:

- Housing Applicant Form (housing needs)
- Initial support assessment (support needs)
- Community Care assessment (care needs)

The Panel will also have regard to making sure that the service and its resources/facilities are used to their maximum advantage by prioritising applications to those in highest housing need and highest care need. Decisions will however be subject to sustainability, both in terms of sufficient staffing resources being available, both Social Services and Pennine Housing and the overall level of needs within the scheme.

#### 4. LETTINGS PROCEDURE

- 1) The Panel invites applications / referrals for vacancies from a variety of sources eg Housing Office, Social Services, relatives, carers, self-referral, GP or Health professional;
- 2) A Pennine Housing application form should be completed on behalf of all nominees for the service.
- 3) Once the application form has been completed and input by the Housing Officer, the Housing Officer will provide a copy to the Very Sheltered Scheme manager who will visit to complete an *Initial Support Assessment*
- 4) At the same time, the VS Scheme Manager will co-ordinate the completion of a Community Care assessment. This will be undertaken by the Social Care Assessor of Calderdale MBC.
- 5) Information should also be gathered at both assessments on actual or potential care and support needs of any partner or co-tenant
- 6) The Very Sheltered Manager will collate the completed assessments and make sure that they are available to the members of the Panel in advance of the meeting and ensure a housing application form has been completed and authorised.
- 7) Applicants whose assessments have not been carried out, or housing application form not authorised, will not be considered for any vacancy until such time as they have all been completed.
- 8) For out-of-borough applications, the host Borough will be required to provide comprehensive assessments. Again, in the absence of appropriate information, the application cannot be considered.
- 9) The Panel will consider each application and decide if the applicant complies with the criteria for the scheme.
- 10) The Panel will then decide on its up-to-date "priority" list, taking into account any new eligible applicants since the last meeting. The priority list should be drawn initially from the housing waiting list ie as a starting point to identifying priority applicants, the housing waiting list should draw down those who have priority points. Then the care

needs of those applications can be matched against the housing points. Alongside this, the Panel will have identified what type of applicant is needed in respect of care needs for when the next vacancy arises. The Panel can then identify who the next offer should be made to, based on the housing need priority and the care need of the applicant / care requirement for the scheme.

- 11) If the panel decides to make an offer to an applicant with less housing need than another (aside from care need), there needs to be a justifiable reason for doing so and this needs to be clearly documented in the decision-making records of the Panel.
- 12) The VS Scheme Manager will update the housing application form on the IT system.
- 13) The VS Scheme Manager will also write to any applicant who is not deemed to be eligible, explaining the reason for the decision and advising them of their right to appeal. Appeals will be considered jointly by the Head of Supported Housing Services (Pennine Housing 2000) and the Home Care Services Manager (Social Services), neither of whom are Panel members.

## **5. RELET PROCESS**

1. When a vacancy arises, the Very Sheltered Manager will action the offer process, to the priority applicant, as established at the last JAP meeting. If there is any doubt about the "priority applicant" then the VS Scheme Manager will check with other JAP members by e-mail, with a response required within 2 working days. The VS Scheme Manager will then contact the applicant and make an offer of accommodation.
2. If this offer is refused, offers should be sent to the next reserve applicant on the waiting list until an offer is accepted. (Again, as already identified by the JAP).
3. Once the offer is provisionally accepted and the keys are available, the ASM will contact the applicant to arrange a joint viewing with the applicant. Introductions to other tenants and members of staff from both organisations should be made at the accompanied viewing unless the new tenant does not want to do so.
4. If the offer is then accepted, the tenancy will commence in accordance with the Association's allocations procedure.

## **5. SETTLING IN NEW TENANTS**

On the day that the new tenant moves into the scheme, the Assistant Scheme Manager would "settle in" the new tenant and make a prior arrangement for the care staff to be introduced.

The Scheme Manager or the Assistant Scheme Manager and the Home Care Team Leader must discuss the new tenant's care and support needs (as gathered at the applicant / offer stage) to be exchanged prior to the tenant moving in. This ensures that staff from both teams are fully aware of the new tenant's requirements, unless the tenant has not given consent to the exchange of such information.

This information exchange would then continue for the lifetime of the tenancy and following care plan reassessments and support plan reviews, as part of effective joint working, again with the tenant's consent.

Regard must be given to any sensitive information within the support plan should the tenant have expressed concerns or raised a complaint about the care service. The Care Line provider should receive core information about the tenant' including a summary of their care plan and support needs on the first day of moving in. Thereafter, the care line provider must also be kept fully up-to-date with any changes via receipt of up-to-date summary information of both the care and support plans.