Consultation on changing the way we let our homes
**Purpose**

East Renfrewshire Council is proposing a big change to the way we let our homes. This briefing summarises the proposed change and what it will mean for our existing tenants and for those applying to be housed by us.

**Background**

Some councils and housing associations in Scotland have already moved away from the traditional points-based housing list to one that offers more choice for those waiting for housing. The term used for this is “choice based letting” or “CBL” for short.

Across Scotland, there is insufficient social housing for those who need/want it, i.e. homes for rent from Councils and Housing Associations. This means that all social landlords must have a system that prioritises those in greatest need, including those that we must prioritise by law. As a small council with a very limited supply of homes for rent, we are keen to improve the choices for those on our housing list and for existing tenants in any way we can.

In 2014, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation which included some changes to the legal framework for the allocation of social housing. This means that we must review our current policy on how we prioritise the allocation of our homes to ensure we comply with this legislation. So this is an appropriate time to also consider changing to a new, more flexible approach.

**Summary of the Changes Proposed**

- We are proposing to move from a points-based way of assessing your need for housing to a system based on five groups of priority for housing. We have called these groups “Priority Passes”. Everyone who registers with us for housing, including existing tenants who want to transfer, will be assessed and allocated to one of the five groups. See the diagram for an explanation of the groups.

- A choice based letting (CBL) approach means that those on our list looking for our homes or for a move have more of a choice. Currently, you have to wait until we offer you a home or a transfer. Under our CBL system (“HomeSeeker”), each week you will be able to see details of all of the homes that are about to become empty and will be able to bid for one or more of them.

- We will advertise the details of our homes about to become empty on our website each week and will mark each one as open to bids from one or more of the five priority groups and will state if particularly suitable for specific needs (e.g. those needing ground floor accommodation or specific adaptations).
Each year, we will publish a lettings plan outlining the percentage targets (or “quotas”) of available homes that will be allocated to each priority group. This will ensure a variety of people are rehoused. We will have two sets of percentage targets: one for existing council homes becoming available to be re-let and one for our new council homes.

After the closing date for bids, the successful bidder will be from the target priority group detailed in the advert, taking account firstly of who has a particular need for the type of property (i.e. ground floor or certain adaptations) and who has the earliest date of registration.

The bidding outcome for each advert will be published on our website. This will list the number of bids received and the priority group of the successful bidder. You will find this information useful in deciding when and what to bid for.

**We are also proposing to**

- Review our current approach to medical assessments to include consideration of mental health issues that could be improved by re-housing;
- Ask successful bidders for new Council homes to provide two references;
- Take account in the new Lettings Policy of the changes in legislation about allocations, adapted homes and short term tenancies for home owners who need to do repairs;
- Scottish Government guidance is not available yet for the legal changes to the rules about suspension from housing register and to those for offering short term tenancies where there has been anti-social behaviour. We will be incorporating this in the new lettings policy as soon as it is available.

**Have Your Say**

[www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/Housing](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/Housing)

If you do not have access to the internet, paper copies of the survey are available with prepaid return envelope by contacting us at: [housingserviceimprovement@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:housingserviceimprovement@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk) or 0141 577 3980
PRIORITY PASS A
Unintentionally homeless/potentially unintentionally homeless
Moving on from council supported housing
Special cases

PRIORITY PASS B
Intentionally homeless/potentially intentionally homeless
Living in unsatisfactory housing & needs cannot be met by other means
Social housing tenant with two or more bedrooms than needed
Unsuitability of existing home delaying discharge from hospital
Overcrowded with two or more bedrooms less than needed
Medical/disability need for more suitable housing
Living in one of our adapted homes where adaptations no longer required

PRIORITY PASS C
Need to move to receive or provide support
Sharing amenities and do not have own bed space
Overcrowded and needing one more bedroom
Social housing tenant with one bedroom more than needed
ERC tenant wishing to combine households with another ERC tenant

PRIORITY PASS D
Sharing amenities with people not part of your household and have own beds pace
Regular overnight access to child(ren) and home unsuitable
Living in a private let with a short assured tenancy
Want to move to East Renfrewshire to be closer to work, take up employment offer, have social/medical reasons for wanting to move here or have a relative living in the area

PRIORITY PASS E
You are in none of the described A-D categories