

## **APPENDIX 3: SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR HIGH/URGENT NEED CUSTOMERS**

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Bolton Council and Bolton Community Homes is committed to helping secure that 'suitable' accommodation is available for customers who have a high/urgent need for accommodation within the Homes for Bolton choice based lettings scheme. Below are criteria used for purposes of guidance when considering the 'suitability' of available accommodation. Any such evaluation will also take into account availability, demand and supply of alternate properties, types and locations; as well as timescales and reasonable expectations:

### **1. FIT TO LIVE IN**

The property should be secure, wind and weather tight with adequate heating, etc. (subject to works which will be carried out prior to or post occupation) as proposed by the landlord and considered appropriate. A landlord may also provide a decoration allowance in some instances.

### **2. REASONABLY CLOSE TO PLACE OF WORK**

Defined as 45 minutes travel by public transport with no more than two buses needed for the journey. Sensitivity needed for shift workers who may start / finish in early hours of morning when there is no public transport. Sensitivity needed in cases where the loss of organised childcare would mean a parent / guardian giving up work.

### **3. REASONABLY CLOSE TO CHILDREN'S SCHOOL(S)**

Consideration will be given to minimise disruption to schooling where possible.

### **4. REASONABLY CLOSE TO PLACE OF WORSHIP**

Defined as 45 minutes travel by public transport with no more than two buses needed for the journey. Sensitivity will be displayed where, for example, worship takes place on a daily basis.

### **5. MEDICAL OR OTHER PROVEN NEED OF SUPPORT IN GIVEN LOCALITY**

There will be need for substantial medical or other convincing proof that a customer must be housed in a specific area for reasons of family or other support. A wish to simply be near a relative, etc. will not suffice. In addition flexibility to areas will be applied if existing demand and pressure for housing in a particular area would mean an excessive wait in temporary accommodation or other arrangements.

### **6. SUITABLE FOR SPECIFIC NEEDS**

For example, to meet a disability or medical recommendation – subject to substantive evidence and appropriate assessment and referral.

### **7. FREE FROM FEAR OF VIOLENCE**

It would be wrong to enforce rehousing in a specific area where violence or threat of violence to the customer has been recorded and is considered by the appropriate authorities to pose an on-going substantial and/or unmanageable risk. However, this should not mean that customers will not be rehoused in the same district, but on a different area from previous violence. Common sense will be needed and advice of appropriate agencies.

### **8. ADEQUATE SIZE**

Property should be of an adequate size for household needs. This will usually apply to the applicant household for which any priority has been awarded and will usually not allow for additional household members not relating to the priority award. Consideration should also be given to issues of affordability. Customers should not be coerced into living in overcrowded conditions whilst there may be circumstances for limited under-occupancy to be created (not withstanding any other size criteria which may apply).