



Purbeck District Council

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with the natural environment



Reasonable and Additional Preference for applicants





Reasonable and Additional Preference for applicants

This leaflet explains how your housing need is assessed when you are on the Housing Register, and provides suggestions on what you can do to improve your current situation.

Am I in the right Band?

In order to be placed in the Amber or Green Band, you will need to demonstrate an established need to move by answering questions about your housing need and providing evidence that your current accommodation is detrimental to your household for one of the following reasons:

- A medical problem or disability is being made worse
- Your household's welfare is at risk
- Your household is homeless or owed a duty by a Housing Authority under the Homelessness Act 2002
- You are occupying accommodation which is insanitary, overcrowded or in a state of disrepair
- You need to move to a particular locality to avoid hardship.

How do I apply to change my Band?

The Housing Register Application form asks you questions about your housing need. If you are already on the Housing Register, you will need to complete a separate form to amend and update your application. You can request this form from Purbeck Housing Trust offices, by telephone 01929 558433 by fax 01929 558406 or by email homechoice@purbeckhousing.co.uk

If your responses show you have a need to move because your current housing situation is detrimental to your household on one of the previously stated grounds, you will need to provide written evidence from a relevant professional to support your need. An assessment of your needs cannot be completed without supporting evidence. This booklet will provide you with guidance on what evidence can be provided to support your needs.

If your band changes as a result of our assessment of your housing need, you will be given a new "effective date" which may not be the same as the date when your application for housing was received.

How can I address my housing need?

A member of staff from Purbeck Housing Trust's Housing Needs Team will be able to talk to you about your specific situation. However, the following advice may be useful in resolving the problems you are experiencing and may assist you in getting your needs recognised.

I need to move because a medical problem or disability is being made worse

We suggest you contact Dorset County Council's Adult and Community Services or Children and Family Care and ask for an Occupational Therapist's assessment. An Occupational Therapist will look at what is causing you difficulty and may be able to provide assistance to improve your situation. They may also be able to provide a report which may support your application to change your priority band. Applicants residing outside the Dorset County Council area will need to contact their own Social Services Departments.

Other professionals working with you to address your medical problem or disability, such as your doctor, consultant, community nurse or social worker may also be able to write in support of your need for alternative accommodation.

I need to move because my welfare is at risk

If you are a victim of anti-social behaviour, harassment or abuse you should contact the relevant professionals for advice and support. These may include your Housing Officer or Landlord, the Police, the Council's Anti Social Behaviour Reduction Officer or Community Safety Officer. They could also recommend that a move would increase your safety.

If your accommodation is affecting your household's ability to function effectively in employment, education or training your employer, tutor or teacher may be able to suggest ways to make it easier for you to work. They can also write to us in support of your application.

I am homeless or owed a duty by a Housing Authority under the Homelessness Act 2002

If you do not have accommodation which is available for your occupation, or it is not reasonable for you to occupy, you will need to speak to a member of staff from Purbeck Housing Trust's Housing Needs Team regarding your options. If you do not have a settled home and have been found intentionally homeless or not in priority need by any authority, you may qualify for a priority band. Alternatively, if you have been accommodated temporarily by any other authority under the terms of the Act you should again contact the Housing Needs Team.

The staff member will investigate your circumstances in order to address your needs appropriately, will recommend alternative housing options and make a decision on your eligibility for Reasonable Preference.

I am overcrowded, my home is in a state of disrepair or I am living in insanitary conditions

You should always speak to your landlord or Housing Officer in the first instance as they may be able to facilitate a move or carry out the necessary work to improve your situation. If given reasonable time to resolve any of the problems your situation has not improved, you should request an assessment of your home under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) by Environmental Services. This will tell us about your need to move by scoring the hazard level your home presents.

If you consider that overcrowding is having a negative effect on your household and you live in the Purbeck District Council area, you can request an HHSRS assessment from Environmental Services on 01929 557270/557277. They may also be able to help resolve the problems with your Landlord, including taking legal action.

Applicants residing outside Purbeck will need to request this from their own local authority or Landlord.

I need to move to a particular area to avoid hardship

If you need to move to provide or receive care and support, then you should speak to Dorset County Council's Adult and Community Services or Children and Family Care about the assistance they are able to provide. We will need to know about the arrangement you have: the frequency and type of care and support you provide or require. A move will need to be supported by any professionals involved in addressing the needs of the relevant person.

What if I have a need to move under more than one of the above grounds?

If you have an established need to move on more than one of the grounds as set out above, then you may have a cumulative need and may be placed in the Green Band.

What if my need to move is urgent?

Applicants who feel that their need to move is urgent, because their housing is having a severe detrimental effect upon the household, are advised to read the advice above in relation to their need. You will only be given Priority Status if your urgent need to move is on the same grounds as your established need to move (i.e. the reason why you have been placed in the Amber or Green Band).

If Purbeck District Council has accepted a duty to you under homelessness legislation and you are living in temporary accommodation, you will automatically be awarded Priority Status (after 6 months in temporary accommodation).

All other appropriate cases will be referred to the Joint Priority Panel for assessment.

In order to be considered for Priority Status, you will need to be able to demonstrate the following:

- That your current accommodation is having a severe detrimental effect upon the day-to-day living of your household; **and**
- An urgent move is essential to resolve or significantly improve your circumstances; **and**

- You cannot reasonably be expected to secure suitable accommodation for your household; **and**
- All potential alternative solutions have been fully explored **and** are not viable **and** all of the above are supported by written evidence from a relevant practitioner.

The outcome of any application will be made known to you in writing. If you disagree with any decision, you have the right to request a review of that decision.

Requests for a review should normally be made:

1. In writing (a request over the telephone or made verbally will need to be confirmed in writing). Please ask if you need assistance.
2. Within 21 days of the date of the decision that is being appealed
3. To the Housing Policy and Community Safety Team Leader.

If, after the decision has been reviewed, you believe that we have not assessed your application in accordance with the stated policy and assessment criteria, you have the right to make a complaint using our formal Complaints Procedure. Details are available at Purbeck District Council's Offices or at www.purbeck-dc.gov.uk

