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Housing Options Team
Maidstone Borough Council
Maidstone House
King Street
Maidstone
Kent ME15 6JQ
T: 01622 602440

For more information visit:
www.kenthomechoice.org.uk

Housing Register

Points Scheme

This leaflet lets you know how we assess you and award you points so that you can apply (bid) for social housing under the Kent Homechoice scheme.



The Points Scheme

We have joined forces with other councils and registered social landlords in Kent, including Maidstone Housing Trust (MHT), to introduce the Kent Homechoice scheme. A company called Locata has been formed to work with all Kent councils as a central letting agency to advertise and match people to homes. For more details about the Kent Homechoice scheme, go to www.kenthomechoice.org.uk.

The council is still responsible for the Housing Register. We or the appropriate registered social landlord will advertise available properties on the Kent Homechoice website and in a free magazine called Homechoice.

Each landlord will check that the person who matches successfully with each property is eligible to be offered it. They will do this in line with their lettings policies and procedures or our housing policy.

If you are a tenant of a social landlord, you need to be living at your current accommodation for two years before you can apply for a transfer. If you are experiencing any problems where you are currently living, or if you need help with bidding for a home through the Kent Homechoice scheme, please discuss this with your landlord or housing officer.

Our Housing Register works on a 'points' basis. When you apply for housing, we will assess your application according to your current circumstances, as set out on your application form. These include the following.

- Your current home
- Your financial circumstances
- Any medical circumstances which affect where you are currently living
- Whether you need care and support
- Time on the register
- Whether you are sleeping rough

Security of your tenancy

We will award points according to how secure your tenancy is, as follows.

Type of tenancy	Points
Assured shorthold tenant	4
Licensee (For example if you are sharing your accommodation with a private landlord)	6
Living in a hostel	
Tied tenant (This is accommodation provided with your employment)	
Living on a boat	
Living with parents or other family members	
Threatened with homelessness	10
If your landlord or lender has served you with a notice	
If you are sleeping rough and this has been confirmed by Maidstone Day Centre or the Porchlight floating-support scheme	80

Condition

If your home is in a poor state of repair, we may award up to 20 points depending on how serious the state of the property is. Our Private Sector Team will assess this.

Facilities

Facility	Points
No inside toilet	9
Shared toilet	3
No bath or shower with hot water	7
Shared bath or shower with hot water	3
No piped hot water (other than bath or shower)	7
Shared piped hot water (other than bath or shower)	3
No separate kitchen	7
Shared kitchen	3
No separate living room	6
Shared living room	3

Overcrowded or under-occupied homes

We award points for every couple, single adult, child or full-time carer who lacks a separate bedroom. The number of points will depend on the person's age, as follows.

Age of person lacking a bedroom	Points
Person aged 16 or over, or a couple living together	20
Child aged 10 to 15	15
Child aged 10 or under	10

We can also award the following points for overcrowded conditions, as follows.

If children of the opposite sex share a bedroom, and one is aged five or over	5
If a member of the household is pregnant, and there is no separate bedroom for the baby when it is born	5

In a household where more than one person is lacking a bedroom, we would consider how the household is made up (that is, how many people live in the home and what their circumstances are) and how many bed spaces there are.

We will award 20 points for each bedroom if:

- you are already a tenant of a registered social landlord or Maidstone Housing Trust;
- your home is too large for your needs; and
- you want to move to smaller accommodation.

Access to a garden

We will award 2 points for each child under the age of 16 who does not have access to a garden. (If you have access to a shared garden which is often provided to tenants of flats, you will not be eligible for these points.)

Local connection

We will award points, as a one-off, if you have any of the following ‘local connections’ with the borough.

Local connection	Points
If your accommodation in the borough is your main home	30
If you live outside the area but have close family members in the borough (for example, parents, children, sisters or brothers)	20
You, or a member of your household who is part of your Housing Register application, has paid employment in the borough (this must be at least 16 hours a week)	15
You need to move to the borough to give support to, or receive support from, a member of your immediate family (i.e. parents, children, sisters and brothers). Our medical advisor, or any other professional we involve, will check this.	10
If you live outside the area but have lived in the borough within the last five years	10
If you live outside the borough and have no local connection with it	5

Financial circumstances

We will give you priority if you have difficulty buying or renting a home for financial reasons. As a result, we will award five points if you claim Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit or another benefit which is paid based on an assessment of your circumstances.

If you are a tenant of a registered social landlord like Maidstone Housing Trust, you will receive 5 points if you have a clear rent account for 12 months, prior to registering to the Housing Register. You will need to provide your rent statement to be eligible for these points.

Time on the register

We will award 2 points for every complete year you are on the Housing Register. If you are a tenant of a registered social landlord or Maidstone Housing Trust, you will also receive 1 point for each year you have been a tenant, up to the time you make an application to transfer properties.

If you are a tenant of a registered social landlord or Maidstone Housing Trust, you need to be living in your accommodation for two years before you can apply for a transfer.

Homelessness

We will give you priority – and award you 100 points – if, under the Housing Options rule, the council would have had a full duty to:

- rehouse you under current homelessness laws if you had made an application for housing; or
- prevent you from becoming homeless.

If we have awarded you extra priority because you have been accepted as being homeless, you will be able to bid for up to two months through Kent Homechoice. If you do not successfully bid for a property which would have been suitable for the size of your household, we will pass your application to a designated officer to bid on your behalf.

If you are in supported accommodation and your support provider agrees with you that you are ready for independent living, then 100 ‘move on points’ may be awarded. The council has formal or informal agreements in place with a number of supported accommodation providers in the borough. Any ‘move on points’ awarded will be within the agreed quota with the support provider.

Medical and mobility reasons for rehousing

The procedure for deciding how many points to award a person who needs to be rehoused for medical reasons or mobility reasons is set out below.

The council will judge whether they need more advice to help decide whether you are entitled to be rehoused for medical reasons or mobility reasons, and the level of priority you should be given. The council will have arrangements in place to get this advice from medically qualified people who are independent of the council. A person from the council may visit you to carry out a medical or mobility assessment, which will include filling in a medical assessment form or mobility self-assessment form (or both). As part of this assessment, the person from the council will ask you for permission to contact your GP or another medical practitioner who treats you, to confirm information or gather more details about your medical condition.

We will award you ‘medical points’ if you need to be rehoused for medical or mobility reasons (that is, if you have any medical or mobility problem that is directly affected by your current housing circumstances and that would be relieved by you moving to other accommodation). **(When we say ‘you’ throughout the following two sections, this also includes members of your household.)**

We award medical points in the following ‘bands’ to reflect how urgent it is to find you other accommodation.

- **Low priority** - we will award you an extra 5 points if you have a medical or mobility problem which may be improved if we move you to other accommodation.

- **Medium priority** - we will award you an extra 10 points if:
 - your current housing has a negative effect on your medical condition, and your health is likely to worsen unless we rehouse you as soon as possible; and
 - you have a mobility problem which prevents you from using the whole accommodation, such as the upstairs rooms.
- **High priority** - we will award you an extra 15 points if you have an emergency medical condition or mobility problem which justifies rehousing you as quickly as possible.
- **Urgent** - we will award you an extra 20 points if there is an urgent medical or mobility reason to move your household, and this reason is confirmed by another agency, such as social services or a hospital consultant. Examples of circumstances in which we would award points under this category include if you have a severe disability which means you are unable to leave your home, or if you are 'technically' homeless because it would be unreasonable for you to have to stay in your current accommodation.

Care and support reasons for rehousing

Maidstone Borough Council, with the help of social services and other relevant agencies (as appropriate), will assess whether you need care and support as part of your housing. You would be entitled to housing for care and support reasons if you:

- already need care and support to manage in your own home; or
- you have left care, or are vulnerable, and you need a secure base from which you can build a stable life.

Other care and support reasons for rehousing include if you need to move to a different area to give care and support to another person. If this is the case, we would need to carry out a needs-based assessment.

We will award care and support points if you have already been assessed as needing care and support to live in your own home and you need suitable and settled accommodation so these needs can be met. Points are discretionary (that is, it is our decision whether we award them) and awarded in fixed amounts of five points, up to a maximum of 20 points.

In some circumstances (for example, if a member of your household is a disabled child or an older person), we may decide that a family member should provide the care and support.

To be considered for these points, you must fill in the medical assessment form, the mobility self-assessment form and the Support Needs section. This section asks about any care and support needs you or a member of your household has. When we assess how many care and support points to award you, we will consider whether you receive benefits such as Invalid Care Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Severe Disablement Allowance. If you receive 'outreach support' from social services or a specialist provider, or if a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) visits you regularly, this may suggest that we should award you care and support points.

The types of people or households we will consider for care and support points are as follows.

- Frail older people who receive significant home care from social services or are cared for by a member of their household.
- People who are physically disabled or have a long-term medical condition, who receive home care from social services or are cared for by a member of their household, and who, by being rehoused, will be able to receive that support.

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- People with learning disabilities who need care and support to manage in their own home, and who have been assessed through the Joint Assessment and Referral process (JARP). The group is made of a number of professionals including Housing; Social Services; Probation, Mental Health and Supporting People. The group considers applications received from professionals regarding any care and support needs. The group can recommend additional points. This can be up to 10 points.
- People with a severe mental illness who are assessed as needing care and support to manage in the community and who have been assessed through the Joint Assessment and Referral Process.
- Young people who are considered at risk or who have been housed by social services and who have been assessed as a 'child in need' in line with the Children Act 1989. If the young people are homeless or threatened with homelessness, they will have been jointly assessed by the council's Housing Options staff and by social services. To qualify for care and support points, social services or a specialist provider must:
 - have put arrangements in place for the young person to receive ongoing support to manage in their own accommodation in the community; and
 - refer the young person for consideration at the next scheduled Joint Assessment and Referral Process panel.
- Some families with children who have a specific need for suitable and settled accommodation because of a particular risk to their health, welfare or development which other families do not face. This may include families where the children are on the social services 'At Risk' register or where

the family are homeless due to domestic violence or harassment and this has resulted in particular problems affecting the parent or child. To qualify for care and support points, these families will need to receive ongoing care and support from social services.

- A person who may need to move closer to be able to give care and support to someone who is identified within the categories above. We will only award these points to either the person providing care or the person receiving care and not to both. In all cases, the care and support will be more easily available if the person making the application moves from their current accommodation (the only exception being where somebody is awarded points to provide the care).

Cumulative needs

If you have a range of needs which, when assessed separately, would not give you the priority for housing that would be considered appropriate, we may decide to give you 'cumulative needs priority'. This would include applicants whose households include two or more people with medical needs of an urgent nature. If we think it is appropriate to award you this higher priority, the Housing Options Team, having fully considered the details of your case, will pass on their recommendation to the Housing Options Manager for authorisation to award you a higher priority of up to 100 points.

