

Following a major review and number of legal challenges to the way properties must be allocated in England, the allocation policy has been updated.

Customers found guilty of the following could have their housing register applications suspended from the Find a Home Service

Suspension Definitions:

Possible grounds for suspension	Usual period of suspension	Usual requirement for ending suspension
Anti social behaviour or malicious damage (rechargeable repairs)	12-18 months	Customer must be able to provide evidence to demonstrate a period of good behaviour and will be able to conduct a tenancy in a satisfactory manner e.g. suitable references from current landlord and or reduced the rechargeable repair debt to below £400 and made 12 consecutive payments.
Drug dealing or using the property for other illegal purposes.	12-18 months	Customer to provide clear evidence of a change of attitude and behaviour over a specified period , usually, the previous 12-18 months and that they will be able to conduct a tenancy in a satisfactory manner. Examples of suitable evidence could include references from the police or Probation Services
Racist behaviour during a current or previous tenancy or during the process of obtaining a home through the service.	12 – 18 Months	Customer must provide clear evidence of a change of attitude and behaviour over a period of approximately 12-18 months and that they will be able to conduct a tenancy in a satisfactory manner and not undertake racist behaviour. In the event of similar types of behaviour towards members of staff from the Council, Housing Associations, Primary Care trust or other public service organisation the same process will be applied.

NB: Where more than one ground for suspension applies, i.e. ASB and racist behaviour, the usual period for suspension will be the longest and not cumulative.

Where a customer disagrees with their suspension from the register they may appeal this decision as per the appeals process.

2. Acceptable References

Customers are advised when offered a property to provide 2 references. These references are mandatory for a customer to access one of our homes.

- Employer (over 6 months)
- Current/ Previous landlord
- Interview with Housing Officer

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Additional information in support of the customer sustaining a tenancy can be obtained from the agencies listed below:

- Probation Service
- Social Services
- Teachers
- Youth Leader / Workers
- Community Leader/ Worker e.g. Youth Club, Uniformed Organisation, Disabled/Special Needs Group etc.(to include voluntary workers)
- Vicar/Priest/etc.
- Resident Representative
- Record of Achievement

However, they will not be treated as acceptable references for the purpose of allocating a home.

3. Offer Refusals and No Response to Offer

Customers failing to respond to two offers of accommodation or customers who refuse three offers of accommodation for reasons such as 'garden too large' or poor external condition' when this is clearly not the case, can be considered for removal from the register. These cases, as identified by the Housing Officer, are to be referred to the Find a Home Services team for removal from the register.

Details should be emailed to Find a Home at findahome@bolton.gov.uk including name and registration number. Where a customer disagrees with their removal from the register they may appeal this decision as per the appeals process.