



Crowding and Space Hazards Procedure

Introduction

As a landlord, Derby Homes has a responsibility to identify larger families who are overcrowded in their current accommodation. This is not only because they may be lacking the appropriate number of bed spaces for their family, but there may be additional hazards within the home because of the overcrowding. This procedure sets out what actions Derby Homes will take to try to resolve overcrowding issues both for our tenants and for applicants seeking rehousing into one of our properties.

Larger families may come to our attention in a number of ways:

- When a tenant applies for rehousing as they wish to move to a larger home because they are overcrowded, either as an internal or external applicant
- Existing tenants identified through day to day housing management duties
- Reports run from Capita Housing. Reports are run on a quarterly basis by the Allocations Manager and circulated to the Area Housing Managers.

Overcrowding cases will be recorded both on Capita Housing's CSM module and on a separate [case tracking spreadsheet](#).

When a family is identified as potentially seriously overcrowded in a Derby Homes' property, because they are lacking three or more bed spaces in their current home, the Area Housing Manager must make contact with them. In some circumstances it may be that the information held on our system is incorrect and the family are not overcrowded. In these instances the Area Housing Manager should get the correct information and update the details held on Capita Housing. These cases will not be captured on Capita Housing but should be recorded on the "resolved" tab of the case tracking spreadsheet to provide an audit trail.

If, after making contact, the family is still suspected of being seriously overcrowded the Area Housing Manager must conduct a home visit to complete the [crowding and space hazards checklist](#) which records family composition and room sizes. The checklist also makes reference to the [Safeguarding Process](#). If there are any concerns regarding the vulnerability of a child or adult within the family a safeguarding referral must be completed.

The Home Visit

The crowding and space hazards checklist must be completed with correct details of all current occupants of the property and whether they live there on a permanent or temporary basis. The Area Housing Manager must then discuss the following with the tenant:

Rehousing

- If the tenant is not already registered for rehousing an application must be completed, regardless of whether or not the tenant will consider rehousing.

This is so that we can demonstrate that we have made every effort to resolve the crowding and space hazard. The appropriate needs should be awarded and the application must be made active, regardless of tenancy breaches or arrears. If the number of bed spaces lacking is up to two the “overcrowded by 1 or 2 bed spaces” need should be awarded. If the family lack 3 or more bed spaces then the “overcrowded by 1 or 2 bed spaces” need and the “serious overcrowding” need should be awarded. The “corporate initiative” need should also be awarded on those cases where the “serious overcrowding” need is awarded. Auto bidding must be activated on the application so bids are placed automatically for any larger properties of an appropriate size. The choice of areas must be defaulted to “all areas” to maximise the chances of rehousing. This will ensure the applicant is on the shortlist for the Allocations Team to consider.

- If the crowding and space hazard can be resolved by splitting the household this must be discussed. This will mean someone moving out of the household e.g. there may be a 22 year old son that could be rehoused on his own in a one bed flat, or parents that could move to a one bed bungalow. The Area Housing Manager must ensure that these family members have an active rehousing application in their own name with the correct needs (including overcrowding by 1/2 bed spaces and/or serious overcrowding needs as appropriate, along with sharing facilities need), and activate autobidding.
- We will make up to 3 appropriate offers of larger accommodation.
- If the Area Housing Manager feels that a detailed assessment under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is required to determine if there is a serious crowding and space hazard, they must contact the Allocations Manager. The Allocations Manager will be the central point within Derby Homes and it is their discretion whether they refer the case to the Housing Standards Team at Derby City Council. If an HHSRS assessment is carried out the Housing Standards Officer will report the outcome of the assessment and any recommendations to the Allocations Manager. At the moment Derby City Council have indicated that they are unable to carry out these checks. Nevertheless, where Derby Homes feel that a check is necessary we will still make the referral. We will allocate such cases the same level of allocations priority needs that they would get if the HHSRS assessment were carried out and assessed as a category 1 hazard in any case so that the if assessments are not carried out we can be sure that the tenants have not been exposed to any additional risk as a result

Sleeping in a room with a gas appliance

- If a member of the household is sleeping in a downstairs room with a gas appliance, then the [gas appliances in sleeping rooms' procedure](#) must be followed.

Safe and Well Check

- The Area Housing Manager should arrange for the Housing Officer to carry out a Safe and Well Check. Tenants will be given advice to ensure that all occupants know how and when to vacate the property in the event of a fire. Children within the household should be taught to understand the importance of vacating the property should the fire alarm sound. Please refer to the [Safe and Well Check procedure](#).

Following the visit the Area Housing Manager will send the [crowding and space hazards letter 1](#) (*hyperlink needed*) confirming that the tenant is overcrowded and that they are being registered on Homefinder so rehousing can be considered. It also notifies the tenant that their case will be discussed with Senior Management and further ways to resolve the overcrowding issue may be considered.

Recording Overcrowding Cases

For cases where serious overcrowding is identified a case must be opened in the CSM module of Capita Housing to record the outcome of the visit. The case type is 'HM Crowding and Space Hazard' and the category is 'Housing Management'. The monitoring user is the name of the Housing Officer manages that district. The responsible user is the district number e.g. DISTRICT 11. Notes and case task details must be kept updated as the case progresses. The case should also be tracked through the case tracking spreadsheet. The checklist, and any related documents, must be saved in the Customer Services file in Meridio.

CSM Data Entry - MCA3000 - Penetration - CSM Form

Case ID: 93353 Status: 9307 User Code 8840: ACTIVE

Case Type: HM CROWDING AND SPACE HAZARD Category: HOUSING MANAGEMENT Monitoring User: MARK WATSON

Address Line: Original Target Date: 17/03/2015 Current Target Date: 17/03/2015

Related Items: Housing Officer, Space Officer, Case Officer, User Code, Case History, Case Task Details

Type: ☐ Tenant ☐ Applicant ☐ HM Case ☐ Contact ☐ Other

Contact: 49442334 Status: 0

Name 1: 49442334 DH DH ALLERTON, 40

Name 2: 0

Organisation: JERRY HUNTER

Address: PENNYHILL STREET, 40

ALLERTON

POSTCODE: LE11 4AA

Phone: 0115 933 000

Responsible User: DISTRICT 11

Contact Details: CONTACT DETAILS ONLY

Category: NOTIFICATION

Age Band: 0

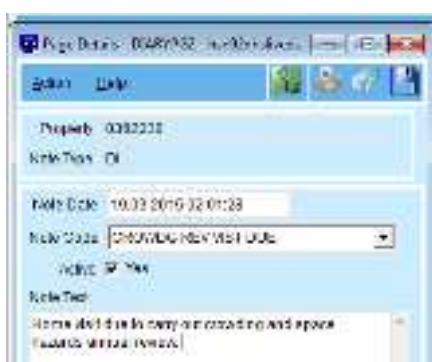
Discretion: No

Contact Details: Name, Address, Postcode, Phone, Email

If there are any problems identified with the state of the property such as rechargeable repairs, unauthorised alterations or overgrown garden, then a separate CSM must be opened and this must be dealt with in line with housing management procedures.

The Annual Review

Serious overcrowding cases must be reviewed on an annual basis. The annual review must be recorded on Diary Pages in Academy by inserting a futuristic note code 'Crowding Review Visit Due' for a year hence. A report will be run monthly, by the Housing Management Trainer, and sent to the Area Housing Managers to identify any checks that are due.



When carrying out the annual review, officers must check whether there have been any changes to the family composition, and update Capita Housing and the rehousing application as appropriate. A Safe and Well Check must be arranged at each annual review.

Case Conference

All serious overcrowding cases will be brought to a case conference by the Area Housing Manager. The Allocations Manager will organise a the case conference on at least a quarterly basis with the Housing Services Manager, the Area Housing Managers, the Housing Advice Manager, the Senior Maintenance Surveyor and any relevant Support Workers. All the officers in attendance will review the case and decide upon a course of action. The case may be subject to further review at future case conferences

If a property is required of 3 bedrooms or less then we will continue to look for alternative accommodation through Homefinder.

If a property with more than three bedrooms is required we will consider the feasibility of extending the existing family home, as well as considering rehousing. The Area Housing Manager will arrange to revisit the tenant with the Senior Maintenance Surveyor to survey the house to see if there is potential for extension or remodelling the existing layout. At this time the tenant must be advised that this will affect the property value and cause an increase in the weekly rent charged. This

rental increase will be based on the new property valuation and will be applied from the April following completion of the work, at the same time as the annual rent increase.

Consideration may also be given as to whether there are two adjoining properties that could potentially be knocked into one larger property. This option could be a more cost effective way of providing the duty of care we have to the family.

If any of these options are possible and will resolve the overcrowding the Senior Maintenance Surveyor will progress this through the planning process.

If it is not possible for the property to be altered or extended and the tenant has been made three reasonable offers of alternative accommodation the case can be closed after sign off by the Housing Operations Manager.

Once all possible solutions have been considered, and either implemented or rejected, and any actions identified at the case conference have been taken, the Housing Operations Manager will sign the case off. The Area Housing Manager will write to the tenant using [crowding and space hazards letter 2](#) (hyperlink needed) explaining that our duty has been exercised. This letter will detail all the measures attempted by us to resolve the crowding and space hazard, including any properties that have been offered and refused by the tenant.

The Area Housing Manager will update the [case tracking spreadsheet](#) which records all overcrowding cases and the outcomes of case conferences.