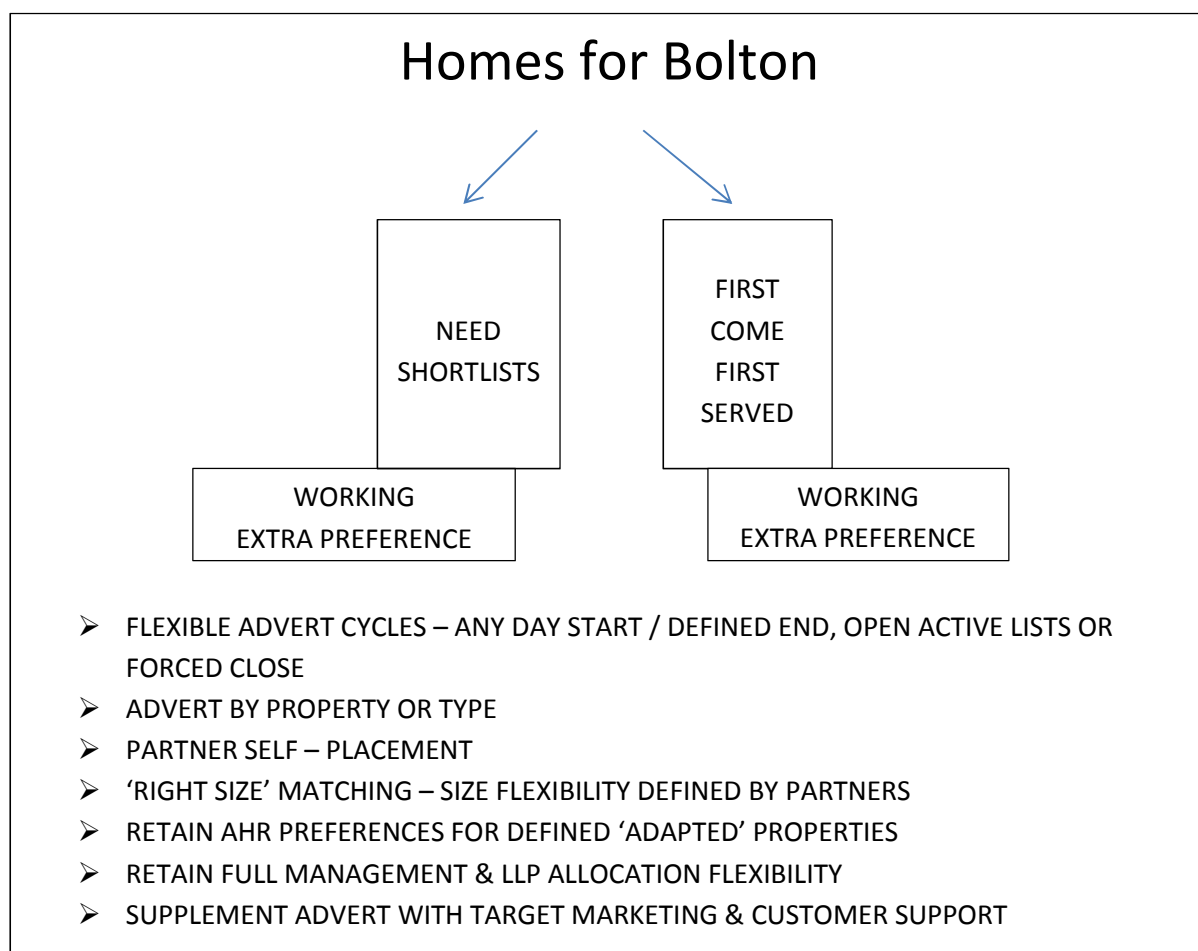


## System process changes

This document summarises Homes for Bolton (HfB) system changes

### Overall system:

Properties to be advertised into two primary routes - Need and First Come First Served (FCFS) with additional facility to provide preference to 'working households' in a percentage of allocations. There will be greater flexibility on advertisement cycles.



- Need shortlists / processing will broadly operate as currently however there will be allowance for a percentage preference for working households that can be applied
- FCFS shortlists / processing will operate on that basis. Shortlists can be worked as soon as expressions begin and closed as soon as a partner has a successful applicant. A percentage preference for working households that can be applied for which partners will start to process on a FCFS basis when they have a household with a 'working' marker against their application.

- Split between Need and FCFS pathways. Properties to be split between pathways by partners to reflect a pro-rata split across property size, type and area over extended period including the introduction of a review mechanism.
- Certain properties with protected characteristics ie adapted properties will still be managed through processes that ensure initial preference to AHR (Adapted Housing Register applicants) as recently implemented.
- FCFS will allow partners to close an advert / shortlist as soon as they have a suitable applicant. They will be able to work a shortlist as soon as expressions are made.

### **Working household preference / Working Extra \***

Within each route there will be facility to afford preference to 'working' households. This will be applied by applicant households confirming that they meet particular defined criteria / definition, which the allocating landlord can verify at shortlist / offer stage.

- Working household definition:
  - Where at least one adult of 18 years or over is employed (full time, part time or zero hours contract) or self-employed for at least 16 hours per week.
  - Volunteers - where an individual in the households has been volunteering for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of offer. Volunteering must be for a not-for profit organisation or a charity.
  - Full time carers - those in receipt of Carer's Allowance.

Referred to respectively in short as:

- WkgXtra-Employed
- WkgXtra-Volunteer
- WkgXtra-Carer

'Working Extra' flagged applicants can be processed first in order either by need category / application date within the Need pathway or in expression order within the FCFS pathway. Partners will verify as per normal process to their own satisfaction.

'Working Extra / WrkgXtra' is a working title to be confirmed.

### **Advertisement cycles**

Advertisements will have greater individual flexibility allowing for open ended, forced closure and time specific. These will be able to be defined by partners.

Partners will be able to advertise property types / sizes / locations within for example 'scheme' or defined areas and run open-ended 'active-shortlists' whereby pre-allocation decisions can be made to identify successful applicants for next available OR future lettings within the defined 'scheme'. It is envisaged this could, for example, be applied to better allow 'planned' moves in particular for elderly / sheltered schemes.

Partners can upload and open individual advert cycles / advertisements either directly themselves or utilise HfB team capacity to do so.

### **Right Size**

Expressions will be limited by a 'right size' matching process.

As partners have different approaches to 'size' criteria, each household application will be assessed under the Welfare Reform (WR) criteria to identify their size requirements (with a back-office manual over-ride facility managed by HfB team to allow for WR exceptions).

Partners will be able to define the size range of a household they will consider for any particular property which will be tested against the WR reform size criteria linked to the household applications. They will also be able to apply any other specific size related criteria in the advert detail eg if there are age related limitation in high-rise or other age related restriction.

Expressions will only then be allowed if the broad household application 'WR size' falls within the specified range detailed by the landlord against the application. There may still be additional size criteria that the landlord may wish to apply in addition, however the broad shortlist should exclude those households not meeting the basic 'welfare reform' definitions.

### **Property Advertisement**

Properties will be advertised via the Homes for Bolton website and can also be advertised via other media.

Partners will define any particular low demand issues/ schemes / areas / property types they wish to explore and will develop different marketing strategies in conjunction with the Homes for Bolton team.

### **Older Persons / Sheltered Accommodation**

There is a general consensus that the "normal advert/ expressions/ shortlist / offer / sign-up" process is not ideal for what is likely to be the last independent accommodation move of those particular applicants.

There are opportunities for partners to adopt a more planned approach involving wider engagement of the community and through HfB by the use of open 'active' shortlists whereby property types within a scheme are advertised on an ongoing basis or periodically for several weeks or months.

Within most schemes there will usually be a relatively predictable number of voids thereby allowing the development of a list of potential applicants who can be pre-allocated properties into the future months which both allows partners to pre-plan allocations and most importantly allows the applicants to plan for the move.

**Applicant information**

Timely provision of information by applicants at the offer stage is important to progressing verification and allocations.

Defining more clearly what information partners will require at offer stage and prompting applicants to ensure that they have any necessary documentation prepared in anticipation of possible offer.

The aim will be to provide on screen prompts at expression stage as well as developing periodic email prompts in particular to applicants who may be currently or regularly expressing interest and coming 'there or thereabouts' in shortlisting processes.

With a wider range and volume of properties being placed through FCFS processes, this may necessitate additional prompting. Some very clear messaging as to failure to provide defined required documentation within an agreed timescale ie you may forfeit an offer, will hopefully assist with this. These issues are also pertinent to any advertisement / marketing medium however the HfB processes will place a number of prompts throughout the process.