



Bedroom Standards

Information for council tenants and housing applicants

In March 2016 we changed our Housing Allocations Policy to give many families with two or more children a wider choice of which council homes they could bid for. This change also affects some tenants wishing to apply for a Mutual Exchange (swapping homes with another tenant). All other definitions, such as what is meant by a child living with you, have not changed and can be found in our Housing Allocations Policy.

This leaflet tells you about:

- The Dacorum Bedroom Standard
- The Government's Bedroom Standard
- Your choices about numbers of bedrooms if you are a Housing Register applicant
- Your choices about numbers of bedrooms if you apply for a Mutual Exchange
- How your decisions might affect your Housing Benefit
- What happens if you are overcrowded
- What you need to do

The Dacorum Bedroom Standard

We introduced the Dacorum Bedroom Standard in March 2016 because of the extreme demand for two-bedroom homes. By lowering the age at which children could become entitled to a room of their own, we have allowed some families to bid for a larger home than would be the case if following the government's standard. This helps meet our commitment to make best use of the borough's housing stock.

The Dacorum Bedroom Standard allows a bedroom for each:

- Married or cohabiting couple
- Adult aged 16 years or more
- Pair of children aged 0-15 years of the same sex
- Pair of children aged under 5 years regardless of sex

Important: Studio flats are classed as one bedroom.

The Government's Bedroom Standard

The Government's Code of Guidance 2012 defined a 'bedroom standard', which allocates a separate bedroom for each:

- Married or cohabiting couple
- Adult aged 21 years or more
- Pair of children aged 0-20 years of the same sex
- Pair of children aged under 10 years regardless of sex

Housing Register applicants

Dacorum Borough Council recognises both its own bedroom standard and the Government's Bedroom Standard. Any applicant falling between the two standards may choose to bid on properties that meet either one of these standards.

For example: A tenant with a son and a daughter aged four and six years may bid for properties with two or three bedrooms.

Mutual Exchange

Mutual Exchange applicants may now choose to use either of our recognised bedroom standards and may continue to exchange to a property with one 'extra' bedroom. We no longer measure bedrooms to determine how many bed spaces they contain.

For example: A tenant with a son and a daughter aged four and six years may apply for mutual exchange to properties with two, three or four bedrooms.

Housing Benefit

Housing Benefit is paid according to the **Government's** Bedroom Standard. This means that if part or all of your rent is paid by Housing Benefit, you would lose an amount equivalent to 14% of your rent if you have one extra bedroom until your child(ren) reach the age(s) set out in the Government's standard and 25% if you have two extra bedrooms.

Overcrowding

In recognition of the high demand for our two-bedroom properties, we also use the Dacorum Bedroom Standard to define overcrowding and now allocate rooms to different and same-sex siblings at earlier ages than the bedroom standard previously used, which came from the Government's statutory Code of Guidance 2012.

What do I need to do?

If you wish to benefit from the wider choice of properties available for residents who fall between the two standards that we recognise then you need to contact the Housing Options team so that they can update your details.

Please take a careful look at your outgoings before choosing to bid on larger properties, especially if you receive Housing Benefit. Whilst a move to a three or four bedroom property may seem appealing, the rent will be higher and loss of Housing Benefit would be more likely to cause you financial problems.

If you wish to remain in your present home or do not wish to be able to bid on larger properties then you do not need to do anything.

For more information about overcrowding, **Housing Allocations** and the **Housing Register** or to update your Housing Register application, please contact the Housing Options team by email: housingoptions@dacorum.gov.uk or telephone **01442 228000** and ask for **Housing Options**.

For more information about **Mutual Exchange** please contact the Tenancy team by email: housing@dacorum.gov.uk or telephone **01442 228000** and ask for **Housing**.