

Local Connection

The current B-with-us policy does not include any local connection criteria, meaning that anyone in the country can be eligible to have a B-with-us application to apply for social housing in Pennine Lancashire.

The new policy plans to add in local connection criteria which applicants will have to meet to be able to qualify to have a B-with-us application – if they don't meet this criteria, their application will be closed.

The aim of this is to benefit local people who have a connection to Pennine Lancashire.

Applicants will have a local connection if they:

- Have been continuously resident in Pennine Lancashire for six of the last twelve months, or
- Have been resident in Pennine Lancashire for three of the last five years, or
- Have a family member who is resident in Pennine Lancashire and has been for a minimum of five years – family members include parents, siblings, children, adult children, grandparents and other special persons (the applicant must have an ongoing relationship and be in contact with the person providing the local connection), or
- Have been employed in Pennine Lancashire for the last six months and the work is not seasonal or temporary and the applicant must be working at the point an offer of a tenancy is made

Evidence of the local connection will be required.

The benefit of this change is that we anticipate that there will be fewer applicants on the B-with-us housing register, and the social housing available through B-with-us will be allocated to local people.

The risk of this change being implemented is that some applicants who are currently active on the B-with-us housing register will have their application closed as they will no longer be eligible.

The following applicants will be exempt from requiring a local connection:

- *Statutory homeless applicants and applicants who are victims of domestic abuse, threats of domestic abuse or those escaping domestic abuse*
- *Applicants who are in a reasonable preference category under section 166A of the Housing Act 1996, and a prevention or relief duty is owed by one of the local authority partners*
- *Applicants who need to move to take up an offer of permanent employment in any of the five local authority areas - proof of the offer of employment will be required and applicants will need to demonstrate that they are unable to accept the offer of employment without moving into one of the five local authority areas (see appendix one for more information)*
- *Applicants who have a continuing care responsibility for someone who is resident in the five local authority areas (evidence will be required)*

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- *Applicants who have or are due to undertake training or higher education in any of the five local authority areas with a duration of at least six months (evidence will be required)*
- *Applicants who are looked after, accommodated or fostered by Lancashire or Blackburn children service authorities in any of the five local authority areas*
- *Applicants who were looked after, accommodated or fostered by any other children service authority in any of the five local authority areas, providing they were resident in any of the Lancashire County Council district plus Blackburn with Darwen for a continuous period of 16 weeks or more*
- *Applicants who were accommodated under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and granted leave to remain in any of the five Local Authority areas/Pennine Lancashire*
- *Applicants who are serving or former members of the Armed Forces or the Reserve Armed Forces (or their bereaved spouse or civil partners who are leaving military accommodation, where the death of their spouse can be partially or wholly attributed to the armed forces) - evidence of service will be required*

Her Majesty's Armed Forces can be defined as any of the military services which are tasked with the defence of the United Kingdom and its overseas territories and the Crown dependencies. Her Majesty's Armed Forces consist of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the British Army and the Royal Air Force.