



Bedroom Standards

Information for council tenants and housing applicants

We have changed our Housing Allocations Policy in 2022 to comply with legislation and the current demand on the Housing Register. There have been changes to 'overcrowding' points and the points weighting for households. These changes have been introduced to create fairness across the Housing Register. These changes will not affect the Mutual Exchange Policy (swapping homes with another tenant). All other definitions, such as what is meant by a child living with you, remained the same and can be found in our Housing Allocations Policy.

This leaflet tells you:

- 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 and have adjusted the standard in 2022 because of the increasing demand for two and three bedroom homes. We have aligned the Housing Allocations Policy with the Government's bedroom standard.

The Dacorum Bedroom Standard allows a bedroom for each:

- Married or cohabiting couple
- Adult aged 18 years or more
- Pair of children aged 0-16 years of the same sex
- Pair of children aged under 10 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

This 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.

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. This is also known as 'Bedroom Tax'.

Universal Credit:

Universal Credit, Housing Costs Element is paid according to the **Government's** Bedroom Standard. Your Housing Costs Element can be reduced if you have more bedrooms than you need. Your Housing Costs Element will be reduced by an amount equivalent 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:

Overcrowding is recognised by Dacorum Borough Council by using its own bedroom standards and the Governments Bedroom Standards, from the Statutory Code of Guidance 2012. The Dacorum Bedroom standards reviewed with the Housing Allocations Policy changes aligns itself with the Government standards for:

- A Pair of children aged under 10 years regardless of sex

Dacorum has matched this criteria to ensure that demand for properties is best managed and proportionate in relation to the local housing demand and statutory framework.

What do I need to do?

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 potential 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. As your landlord, we are responsible for keeping the main structure of the building and the shared areas in a satisfactory condition, carrying out maintenance, repairs and major work where needed. We send you invoices every year to cover the cost of this maintenance and repair work.

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