

# Homes for Rent

How we let our homes



# Homes for rent

This is one of a series of Places for People information booklets that we hope will be useful to you. There is a complete list inside the back cover.

You can pick up copies of the other booklets from your local area office.

The booklets are also available to download from our website [www.placesforpeople.co.uk](http://www.placesforpeople.co.uk)

Places for People manages a wide range of homes across the UK which you can rent, buy or part-own. This booklet explains how we decide who to rent homes to.

## Keeping your details confidential

When you apply for a home, some of the details you give us will be confidential. You can see any of the information we

keep about your application for a home – but we will not allow other people to see it.

We will only use the information you give us to:

- deal with your application for a home
- make sure we are following our equality and diversity policies

## How to apply

Anyone can apply for a home with us. Our aim is to build and sustain communities by letting homes to people from every walk of life.

To help us do this fairly, we have three different routes through which you can apply.

If you would like this in another language or in a different format such as large print, braille or on tape, please telephone our Customer Contact Centre on 0800 432 0002 or email: [equalityanddiversity@placesforpeople.co.uk](mailto:equalityanddiversity@placesforpeople.co.uk)

We call these:

- general stream
- community stream
- economic stream

You can apply under one or all of these streams, depending on your reason for moving.

### General stream

This stream is for people who need to move because the place where they live now is not suitable for them. We give you points depending on why you need to move. The more points you have, the more chance you have of getting a home.

### Community stream

This stream is for people who:

- want to live in a particular community because they can help or benefit from that community
- are choosing to move home, although they do not need to

When you apply through this stream, your name goes on a waiting list. We normally deal with community stream applications in date order.

### Economic stream

This is for people who can afford to pay rent without help from housing benefit. They may be working or have savings.

As with the community stream, you will normally get a home based on how long you have been on the waiting list.

We try our best to give you a big enough home in an area where you would like to live, but there is a lot of demand for some areas, so your choice might be restricted.

### Which stream to apply through

You can apply through more than one stream. Read through the descriptions of them all to see which is best for you.

### General stream

This gives points depending on the problems you have with where you are living now. The more points you have, the more chance you have of getting a home.

#### You do not have enough bedrooms

No more than two people should have to share a bedroom. We consider a separate bedroom is needed for:

- each couple living together
- a parent in a single-parent family
- each child aged 10 or over who is sharing a bedroom with a child of the opposite sex
- each single person aged 16 or over

#### You have too many bedrooms

For each bedroom you don't need, you get 5 points.

#### Your family is living apart

You get 25 points if this is the case.

You need to send us proof of this with your application form.

#### Living above or below ground-floor level

You get 10 points if you live above or below ground-floor level with a child under 10 years old.

#### Health and medical needs

You get 50 points if you, or someone in your household, has a medical condition that would be improved by moving from your present home. You need to tell us on the form why it would help, and we may contact your GP.

#### You are homeless or your current home is unsafe

You get 50 points if:

- you have no home
- you will lose your home in the next month
- your home is unsafe to live in, for instance after a fire or flood

You need to send us proof with your application form. This could be a court order, eviction notice or notice to quit.

### You are being harassed

You get 50 points if you are being harassed and the harassment would stop if you moved to a different area.

You need to send us proof that you are being harassed. This could be from an agency you are currently dealing with, the police, your landlord or social services.

### Domestic violence

You get 50 points if you or a member of your family are being abused or attacked by your partner or someone else in your family.

If this is so, we realise it might be difficult to prove. So we would make thorough but discreet enquiries.

You need to give us full details, and any proof you have, with your application form.

### You lack some basic amenities

You get points for each of these amenities you lack:

Living room	10 points
Kitchen	10 points
Bath or shower	10 points
Toilet	10 points
Hot-water supply	10 points

### You have to share some amenities

You will get points if you share these amenities with people who are not in your household:

Living room	5 points
Kitchen	5 points
Bath or shower	5 points
Toilet	5 points

### Your home is in a poor condition

If your home is in a poor condition, you get 10 points.

If your home needs major repair, you get 20 points.

You have to list these problems on the application form.

### Community stream

This stream is for people who can help, or benefit from living in, a particular community. This could be for a number of reasons, such as:

- you have long-term family connections in the community
- you give support to someone in the community
- you get support from someone in the community
- you want to be closer to a community in which you are active
- you do paid or unpaid work in the community

This stream is also for existing tenants who want to transfer to a different area.

When you fill in the form, you need to give detailed reasons why you have chosen the area, and describe your connection with it. If you are accepted, you will go on a waiting list, and your application will be dealt with in date order.

### Economic stream

This stream is for people who are able to pay rent without housing benefit.

They may:

- be working
- be moving to start a job
- have a private income or savings

As with the community stream, you will get a home based on how long you have been on the waiting list.

When you fill in the form, you have to give details of your work and income.

### How we decide

Each area has a Local Lettings Plan that we have worked out with tenants who already live there. The plan takes into account various factors that affect a local community, such as the age of existing residents and the number of children

living there. It then looks at whether the community needs to be more balanced.

The plan also takes into account any agreements we have with the local council to house some of the people from its waiting list.

When a home becomes empty, we use the Local Lettings Plan to decide whether it should be rented to someone from the general, community or economic stream. We closely monitor lettings to all three streams to make sure people are treated fairly and in accordance with the Local Lettings Plans.

In most areas, we let homes in the following way:

General	75 per cent
Community	15 per cent
Economic	10 per cent

After deciding which stream to use, we then decide who to

let the home to. If it is someone in the general stream, the home will normally go to the person with the highest points who needs this kind and size of home. If it is someone in the community or economic stream, it will normally go to the person needing this size of home who has been on the waiting list the longest. At least two people will make the decision.

For the general stream, if two or more people have the same number of points, we also look at:

- how long they have been on the waiting list
- how safe they are in their present home
- who has been living in unsatisfactory conditions the longest
- who would benefit most from moving home

Occasionally we may give the home to someone who does not have the highest number

of points. These cases will be recorded and monitored closely.

We may refuse to let a home to people who:

- have a history of anti-social behaviour or crime
- are likely to be a threat or nuisance to our tenants or staff
- have left a home but still owe rent or mortgage payments

If your application is not successful because you are in rent arrears, you can apply again once they are paid off.

If you've had difficulty running your own home, we can only give you a property if you get the support you need. Sometimes we can arrange support for you. Please contact us to find out more.

There are other reasons why we may not give people a home. We will send you details if you want to know more.

## Transfers

If you are already one of our tenants, you can apply to transfer to another of our homes.

You may wish to transfer if you need a smaller, larger or different type of home. If so, you go through the general stream and get points for problems you have with your present home.

If you want to transfer through your own choice, you go through the community stream.

If you apply for a transfer, you will go to the top of the waiting list:

- if someone needs your home
- if someone in severe need could move into your home

## Exchanges

If you live in a home owned by us, another housing association, or a local council, you may be able to exchange homes with another tenant. A booklet

called 'Swapping homes' provides useful information on how to swap homes with another tenant.

### Specialist accommodation

We also provide supported accommodation for older people. When you apply for this type of housing we will need to assess if we are able to offer the type of support you require. This is usually done by visiting you in your own home. Other specialist supported accommodation is available in some areas. For these schemes we have eligibility criteria that relate to the services we are offering. Please ask for details of schemes in your area.

### When you apply

When you have completed your application form, return it to the address on the back of the form. We will start to deal with your application and send you an acknowledgement within 10 working days.

All accepted applicants will receive an application reference number. When contacting us to talk about your application, you must quote this reference number for security purposes. If you lose your reference number, please inform us, and we will write to you with the information. We will only discuss your application with you if you provide the reference number.

We can't tell you exactly when you will get a new home. We can only tell you in general terms whether vacancies are common or rare in the area where you want to live. In areas where we have regular vacancies, we will be able to help you much more quickly. In some areas, vacancies are so rare we may not be able to help you for several years.

Before we can consider you for a property, a member of our team will meet you to discuss your application. We will also

check the details you have given on your form. If we cannot successfully check the information you have provided, we may have to refuse your application. We normally meet you shortly before we offer you accommodation.

We will contact you when we have a property for you to consider. You will be able to look over the property before deciding if you would like to accept it. Wherever possible, we aim to ensure that a member of our team goes with you to look round, to answer any queries. We will give you at least 24 hours to decide if you would like to live in the property.

We review our Register of Applications twice a year. We will ask you to confirm that you are still interested in renting a home from us. If we do not receive this confirmation, your application will be cancelled.

### If things go wrong

Sometimes things can go wrong. If this happens, you may want to complain. We take complaints very seriously. We will always listen to your complaint, as long as it is not made in an unreasonable, threatening or hostile way.

If you have to make a complaint, we will:

- deal with your complaint as quickly as possible
- investigate your complaint fully
- handle everything fairly and politely
- keep your complaint confidential at all times
- give explanations that are clear and easy to understand

### Get in touch

If you have a problem, or are concerned about something that has happened, please let us know. We will respond straightaway and do our best to put things right.

If you are not satisfied, and

want to take the matter further, there are two things you can do.

1. You can fill in the form at the back of the 'Suggestions and complaints' booklet, giving details of your complaint, and send it to us, or hand it in at your local office.
2. You can telephone us to tell us about your complaint.

If you need help or advice on making a complaint, please contact your local office.

## What to expect

If you send in the form, or a letter making your complaint, we will write to you to let you know we have received it, within two working days.

We will pass your complaint to a manager to consider. No matter what your complaint is, we will send you a written reply within 10 working days. If we cannot do this, we will write and let you know when to expect a reply.

If you telephone or visit us, we will deal with your complaint in just the same way.

## If you're not satisfied

If you are not satisfied with our reply, and want to take things further, you can put your case to an appeals panel, which is made up of customer representatives.

We will invite you to meet the panel and present your case. If you wish, you can take a friend or representative with you. The panel will listen to your case, consider it carefully and give you a decision.

## Still not satisfied?

If you are still not satisfied after meeting the appeals panel, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman. This is a free service that looks at complaints against housing organisations. We will give you details of this at the appeal.

## Learning from complaints

We keep records of all the complaints we receive. We check complaints regularly, to make sure we are dealing with them effectively and consistently. We use your complaint to identify areas of our service where we need to make changes so that the service you receive continues to improve.

## The standards you can expect

### Applying for a tenancy

When you ask for an application form, we will send it to you within three working days. You can ask for an application form at any local office, or telephone the Contact Centre.

You can also ask at your local office for help to complete the application form.

We will send you an acknowledgement that we have received your application

within 10 working days. We will tell you your application reference number, which stream you have been accepted for, the number of points (if applicable) and which area you are registered for.

You can contact us by email at [enquiries@placesforpeople.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@placesforpeople.co.uk) and we will reply within two working days.

Before we offer you a property, we will interview you to check your application form. This will be at your home or at our local office. We will make sure that any properties that we invite you to view are clean and free from rubbish. We will ensure that all necessary repairs have been done.

You will have at least 24 hours to decide if you want the property. Our tenant support worker will help you to set up your home, if you need this. If we have Local Lettings Plans, we will publish them. To enable you to speak to us our Contact

Centre is open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

The telephone numbers are listed at the back of this booklet. All calls are free of charge when telephoning from a landline. At busy times you may have to wait in an automated queuing system. This does not cost you money (if calling from a landline) and our staff will answer your call as quickly as possible and introduce themselves by giving you their name.

If you call a local office (during normal office hours), your call will normally be answered within 20 seconds by a member of staff who will tell you their name. If you leave a message, we will return your call at the earliest possible opportunity.

### Coming into the office

We will ensure that our offices are welcoming, clean, tidy and safe. There will be up-to-date information available and staff will be helpful and friendly.

If you have an appointment to see us, we will not keep you waiting longer than necessary. If you have not seen a member of staff within 15 minutes of your appointment time, you can choose to make another appointment or see another member of staff.

### Visiting you at home

Any members of staff calling at your home will tell you who they are and show you an identity card. We will call within 15 minutes of the appointed time, and will attempt to contact you in advance if we cannot keep an appointment. We will respect your home, your privacy and your customs and culture.

### General points

If you have any specific requirements, we will try to help. For instance we can arrange Language Line translations, offer private interview facilities or arrange for someone of the same sex to meet you if that would be helpful.

### Please write to us at:

Places for People  
18 South Rings Business Park  
Craven Drive, Bamber Bridge,  
Preston, PR5 6BZ

## Booklets available include:

### Anti-social behaviour

Tackling it together

### Customer service standards

What you can expect from us

### Gas safety

Keeping your home safe

### Harassment

How we can help

### Homes for rent

How we let our homes

### Housing benefit

How to get help to pay your rent

### Know your rights

A tenant's guide

### Living with a disability

Adapting your home

### Managing your money

What to do if you can't pay your bills

### Moving home

Things to remember

### Paying your rent

How to manage your rent account

### Personal records

Your right to information

### Repairs to your home

What to do if you need a repair

### We're here to listen

How to make a suggestion, complaint or compliment

### Swapping homes

How to swap homes with another tenant

### Service Standards for

#### Homeowners

What you can expect from us

### Getting Involved

Making your views count

### Homeowners Handbook

An essential guide to your home

## Freephone contact numbers

### Our Contact Centre

is open 24 hours  
(all calls are free  
from a landline)

### Places for People Homes

0800 432 0002

### Places for People Individual Support

0800 432 0003

You can pick up copies of our booklets from your local office, download them from our website: [www.placesforpeople.co.uk](http://www.placesforpeople.co.uk) or to receive them by post, telephone the Contact Centre on the numbers above.

### Minicom

0800 432 0008

### Homeowners line

0800 432 0009

If you ring these numbers and English is not your first language, we can use the Language Line Service to communicate with you.



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