

Renting a home from us

Introduction

This is a guide about how we rent our properties. We aim to meet with the performance standards set out by the Tenant Services Authority

Our aims

We aim to operate a fair and non-discriminatory letting policy, which gives people choice. We aim to achieve a balance between offering properties to people who have the greatest need, while making the best use of our properties.

Equal opportunities

We are committed to making sure that no-one who applies to us for housing is treated less favourably than anyone else because of their race, ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, sexuality or age.

Who can apply?

We will consider applications from everyone except:

- people who are homeless - we do not have emergency housing available, so if you are homeless you need to contact the local authority's housing department;
- people under 18;
- people who are not eligible to hold a tenancy because of their immigration status;
- people who cannot provide satisfactory landlord references and the necessary documents and proof we ask for;
- tenants who have a current or previous debt and have made no agreement to clear this debt, or if they have made an agreement but not kept to it;
- tenants who have abandoned a property or been evicted; and
- tenants who have had any legal action taken against them for antisocial behaviour.

We will also take into account whether you are able to live alone, and may need assurance about the

support available from other sources such as social services, the probation service and other agencies.

How to apply

- Contact us for an application form or download one from our website.
- You should answer all the questions fully so we have full understanding of your circumstances. We may send your form back to you if you do not fill it all in.
- If you need help to fill in the form please ask us.
- We will always ask for proof of your circumstances, and will carry out checks to make sure the information you have given us is right. Things we will ask for proof of include proof that you live where you say you live, salary details, custody details including proof of Child Benefit, valid notice to quit, medical evidence, police reports and so on.

What happens to your application

When we receive your filled in application form, we will firstly assess if your application qualifies to be registered on our waiting list. If it does, we will then assess your application based on the information you have provided.

We will then place it in one of four bands - A, B, C or D - and within each band we will put it in date order of when we received the application.

Once we have assessed your application, we will tell you which band we have put it in within 10 working days of us receiving the form. If we need more information to assess your application properly, we will write to you telling you what we need within 10 working days of receiving it. If you do not provide the proof we need, we will put your application on hold and you will not receive any offers of accommodation. We will cancel all applications on hold after 12 weeks.

If there is a high demand for certain areas, we may close the waiting list and will not be able to accept

applications. If we cannot accept you, we will write to you immediately.

What references and proofs will I need?

We are committed to making our estates places where people want to live. When you apply we will contact any previous landlords, agencies and the police if necessary. We have the right to refuse to accept someone onto the waiting list if we feel that they will not be a responsible tenant. We may also ask you to provide references or letters of support from your employer, social worker or other agencies we feel can give us the information we need.

You have the right to appeal against any decision not to register your application, and should put your appeal in writing to the housing services director.

We may ask for the following proof.

- Proof of identity - driving licence, passport
- Proof of your current address – gas, water or electricity bill, bank statement, driving licence
- If you are pregnant - certificate of confinement
- If your home is for sale or sold proof from the estate agent or solicitor
- Harassment - police reports or reports from other relevant agencies (or both)
- Medical problems - our medical form filled in by your GP or consultant, or a letter of support from your care or support worker
- End of tenancy – notice to quit from your landlord, an eviction date from court

What happens then?

Once we have everything we need we will then write to you to tell you whether we have refused your application or registered it on the waiting list. If we have registered it, we will also confirm which areas you have been put on the list for. When your application is at the top of the waiting list for any of the properties and areas you have asked for, we

will either visit you at home or ask you to call into our office for an interview to discuss your circumstances in more detail.

At the interview, we will ask you to provide current proof of where you live and we will check your current landlord references. When we are satisfied with the information you have given us, and you are at the top of the band you are in and are eligible to be made the offer, we will contact you.

What properties can I apply for?

We will have already sent you a list of our properties. Some of our accommodation has restrictions relating to age and pets, and occasionally the list may be closed due to high demand.

Please note that, for one-bed apartments, we will only normally consider single people and couples. If you have access to your children but not the main custody of them, we will consider you for one- or two-bed apartments.

For houses, we will normally only allow tenants to have one bedroom more than they actually need.

How long will I be waiting before you make me an offer?

This depends on the band your application is in, and the properties and areas you have asked for. Generally, if you will consider more areas or are registered for an apartment, it is likely that you will receive an offer sooner. The waiting times are longer for family homes.

How many offers will I receive?

If you refuse more than two reasonable offers for properties that you have asked for, we may remove your application from the waiting list. The housing services director will make this decision.

How often do you review the list?

We review all applications six months after the date of the application. We will send you a letter asking

you to confirm you still want to be on the waiting list and that your circumstances are the same. If you do not return the review slip, we will cancel your application.

Is there anything else I can do to improve my chance of being rehoused?

We normally offer 50% of all our empty properties to Golden Gates Housing and these vacancies are advertised in the 'Choose a Home' section in local newspapers. If you are registered on their waiting list, you can also express your interest when you see any of our properties advertised.

If you are a Golden Gates Housing tenant, you cannot apply direct to go on our waiting list. You must express your interest in any vacancies that are advertised, and if you are successful Golden Gates Housing will then pass your details to us to consider.

We will deal with all nominations in the same way as direct applications.

Transfers

Our tenants can apply direct for a transfer and are treated in the same way as other applicants. If you want to move, you should fill in a transfer form. Your rent account must be clear at the time you apply and before your application can be registered. See our transfer leaflet for more information.

Exchanges

Tenants of the local authority and housing associations have the right to exchange their tenancies, as long as both landlords approve. See our exchange leaflet for more information.

Applying for a Home



warrington housing
association

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