

**INFORMATION TO HELP YOU COMPLETE
YOUR APPLICATION FORM**

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Introduction

We have been managing and developing properties since 1986 and have rented accommodation in most parts of Fife. We also have rented accommodation in Perth, Kinross, Milnathort and Falkirk.

This guidance has been produced to help you understand our allocation policy and help you through the allocation process. We hope that the guidelines will help you but, if you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact our **Customer Service Team on 01592 630922**.

Who Can Apply

Our housing list is open to anyone aged 16 years or over. Owner Occupiers can apply to us for housing but they will have to demonstrate that they have a housing need in order to gain points.

Our Housing List

There are three main categories of applicant on our housing list and they are:

- General
- Social and Medical
- Housing with Support

Applicants will be placed in one of the categories and will only compete for housing with applicants in their own category. A brief explanation of each category is given below.

General

Applicants who are able to sustain a tenancy on their own and who do not require specifically adapted housing are normally placed in this category. This is also the category for applicants who may need housing support but do not require it to be provided by Kingdom. Applicants in this group should make it clear on their application that they require support or are currently receiving support and include any relevant information, eg their support provider's contact details, on their application form.

The main categories within the general housing list are:

- Urgent Housing Need - Statutory Homeless, Severe Harassment, Closure Order/Closure for Re-development.
- Poor Housing Circumstances - Lacking Amenities, Unsafe Water Supply, Inadequate Drainage, Rising and Penetrating Dampness, Lack of Central Heating, Over-crowding, Under-occupancy, Sharing Facilities, Children's Social Needs.
- Lack of Security - Time Limited Tenancy, Notice to Quit, Tenants without a Lease, Owners in the process of repossession or being advised to sell. Non-householder (ie people living "care of")

Social and Medical

We recognise that some individuals in the community require access to housing which has been designed or adapted in some way to meet their particular needs. For this reason we have set up a Social and Medical section for people with physical or sensory disabilities who require suitably adapted housing. We will normally give preference to applicants in this category when ground floor and specially adapted properties become available. Priority will be given to those who are unable to have their current accommodation adapted to suit their needs.

Applicants who will be eligible for the Social and Medical Section include:

- Hospital patients who could, with appropriate housing, live independently
- Young disabled people who wish to leave home to live independently
- Families with disabled children who require particular facilities
- Those who, because of an accident or long-term illness, are unable to occupy their present home
- Older people living in housing that no longer meets their mobility needs

Housing with Support

Since our formation we have been committed to the provision of housing for vulnerable people and, have a long established team of suitably trained and experienced staff who assess the Housing Support and Care needs of applicants and deliver an appropriate level of service in order to help them sustain their tenancy.

Our service can be provided from a few hours per week to a twenty four hour package including staff who sleep over in the property or provide a waking night service when required.

We currently provide services for homeless people, those who have learning disabilities, a physical or sensory disability, or a history of mental ill health.

In identifying individuals for support, priority will be given to:-

- Individuals presently living in institutional care who wish to move to greater independence in the community.
- Individuals whose current living situation is detrimental to their mental health or emotional wellbeing
- Those who wish to move from a dependent living situation with family or others in a planned way, thus preventing the need for admission to institutional care in a crisis.
- Individuals referred as priority for Housing Support and/or Care

Can I Choose Where I Want to Live?

Yes, you can choose your own area. You can choose up to six housing developments. These can be in the same area or in different towns and villages but it helps if you only select developments where you would genuinely consider a vacancy. Please prioritise your choices by placing your first choice at the top of the list. In some areas, however, properties are quite scarce and people do not often leave

them. Family accommodation generally has a low turnover and therefore you could wait a long time to be offered a property in a high demand area. Please note, if you do not choose specific developments, your application will be returned to you as incomplete.

Can You Tell Me How Long I Will Have to Wait for a Property?

The honest answer to this question is no. Except in the case of new developments, we generally rely on vacancies being created by people giving up properties before we can allocate them and this is not something we can easily predict. We can give you an idea of the areas where most vacancies occur but this is only an indication and not a guarantee. We sometimes have some properties that are available for immediate let and you can check these out by accessing our website on www.kingdomhousing.org.uk or phoning us on 01592 630922.

How Do I /We Apply?

Direct Applications

You can apply to us by completing an application. Please note that, if your application form is incomplete or you have failed to sign the form, it will be returned to you until it has been completed satisfactorily. We do have staff on hand to answer your questions therefore, if you have any difficulties completing the form, please call on 01592 630922.

Council Nominations

We receive funding from the Scottish Executive to build our houses and because of this we are expected to assist local authorities to meet the demands for housing in the areas in which we work. We therefore have nomination arrangements with the local authorities where we have housing stock and normally offer 50% of our available vacancies to applicants on the local authority housing list who are nominated.

Agreements with Other Agencies

We have agreements with other agencies where we allocate an agreed number of vacancies to applicants nominated by them

What Happens to my Application After it is Returned to the Association?

You will receive a letter of acknowledgement within 5 working days informing you that we have received your application and that it is being processed.

You will also be informed that we will contact you again when your application has been fully assessed and at this stage we will advise you of the number of points that you have been awarded.

You will be input to the list if you have more than one month's rent arrears or rechargeable repairs arrears with your current landlord or previous landlord and no agreement in place, however your application will be suspended until an agreement is in place and you have kept to this agreement for a minimum of three months, or the outstanding balance is less than one month's rent. If you have been evicted for anti social behaviour, have had an anti social behaviour order granted against you or have

had legal action taken against you for anti social behaviour, then your application may be suspended for up to 12 months.

We generally try to process all applications within a month but this is not always possible if further information is required. If you do need to contact us to discuss your application, you will be asked some security questions to confirm your identity.

Change in Circumstances

If your housing circumstances change in any way please notify us immediately as this may effect your application. If you fail to keep us informed of changes in your circumstances, you may receive offers of unsuitable accommodation which wastes both your time and ours. If you do not keep us updated on any changes of address or telephone numbers, your application may be cancelled because we cannot contact you.

How Are Points Allocated?

When we receive your application, we will assess it in line with our Allocation Policy. You will then be awarded points based on your current circumstances. When we are assessing applications and allocating properties we WILL NOT take into account any of the following factors:

- The length of time an applicant has lived in the area
- Any outstanding debt (such as rent arrears) where the applicant was not the tenant
- Any rent or other tenancy-related debt accrued by the applicant(s) in a previous tenancy which are no longer outstanding
- Any outstanding liability attributable to a previous or current tenancy which does not exceed 1/12th of the annual rent
- Any outstanding debts of the applicant or anyone who it is proposed will reside with the applicant which do not relate to the tenancy of a property.

You will be placed on the housing list for the areas you have chosen and may be considered for vacancies which match your choices when they arise. The different categories within the mainstream category are:

Homeless

Our definition of homelessness will include applicants who fall in to the following categories:

- Applicants who are roofless
- Hostel dwellers or people living in bed and breakfast
- Applicants who have been served with a Notice to Quit
- Applicants unable to return to their own home through fear of violence and are currently staying in homeless accommodation
- Applicants placed in temporary accommodation by the Local Authority
- Applicants staying in a touring caravan without any services
- Applicants staying with parents or relatives or who do not have a tenancy agreement

Domestic Abuse

Harassment

We will accept applications from applicants experiencing harassment in their current accommodation. To qualify for Harassment points you will have to submit confirmation or supporting statements of the harassment from a recognised agency such as:

- Police
- Social Work Department
- Women's Aid
- Fife Council Housing Investigation Team
- Housing Authority

Social Needs

We will accept applications from any person requiring to move:

- To secure employment or a place at college
- To be nearer essential services such as day care
- To be closer to schools and other education or training establishments
- To give or receive support

To qualify for Social Needs points, please submit one of the following:

- A letter from your employer confirming that you have employment in the area
- A letter from the college confirming that you have been offered a place at the college
- A letter from the school confirming that your child/children have been given a place at the school
- A letter from the person giving/receiving the support
- A letter of confirmation from a day centre or essential services if you require to move to be closer to access them

Lack of Security

We will accept applications from anyone with any type of insecure tenancy, ie where there is a limit on the length of time you may remain in that property.

Illness and Disability

Medical points are awarded only in situations where the applicant's existing accommodation is causing health or mobility problems and it is considered that a move to alternative accommodation will improve the situation. You should provide confirmation of benefits received.

Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions

We will accept applications from anyone whose current accommodation lacks some of the standard amenities such as inside toilet, bath/shower, electricity, central heating or if the property is affected by dampness.

Overcrowding/Under-Occupation

We will accept applications from anyone whose current accommodation is either too big or too small for their current household use. Where the applicant demonstrates a clear need for accommodation

for a carer on a permanent basis, one extra bedroom will be added to the assessment and therefore points will not be awarded for under-occupation in this instance in the event of a transfer application being submitted in the future.

Bedroom Entitlement

We have various sizes of properties within our stock, details of which can be found in a separate document and can be requested from our Customer Service Team on 01592 630922. The main factors in deciding on the bedroom entitlement for each household are as follows:

- Children aged 7 and over of different sex will be entitled to their own room
- Children aged 13 and over will be entitled to their own room regardless of sex
- A single adult/parent will be allocated a double room

Please note that our allocations will be based on these standards and that we will not deliberately overcrowd any of our properties.

Custody/Access

Children involved in custody cases will be considered as permanent members of a household where regular access can be proved (i.e. at least three nights per week).

Incomplete Applications

Please note that incomplete applications may be returned to applicants or we may send a letter requesting further information. During this time the application will be placed on hold and will not become active until the form or the further information is returned and the application assessed. This will mean that the applicant will not be considered for any vacancies until we are satisfied that the application is complete and all relevant information has been provided. If the application form or the further information is not returned after one month, the application will be cancelled. In cases of homelessness and harassment, the applicant is expected to obtain supporting documentation.

Reviewing Applications

We will review your application every six months. It is important, therefore, that you answer all correspondence regarding the review. Please note that, if you fail to respond to the review within the timescale set out, your name will be removed from the housing list.

Points Calculation

Applicants who qualify for points in more than one category will be placed in the category in which they receive the most points. The only exception to this rule is when applicants qualify for health points. These will be added to the other points that they receive.

How Are Properties Allocated?

In general, properties will be allocated to the applicant who has the highest number of points. Housing staff, however, may allocate a property to someone with less points if they believe that the allocation is in the interests of the development as a whole. The Association has an accountable audit process for applications in order that it can justify all allocations made therefore, although properties are normally allocated in points order, in some instances management factors may override this.

Applicants with Equal Points

If two applicants are being considered for a property and they have equal points, the allocation will generally be made to the applicant who has been in housing need the longest.

Accepting an Offer

If your application is successful, you will be able to view the property before being asked to sign to confirm that you wish to accept the offer. Arrangements will then be made for you to sign your tenancy agreement and other documents.

Refusing Offers

Applicants who refuse two offers of suitable properties will have their application reviewed. If we conclude that it was unreasonable for them to refuse these offers, we will suspend the application for 12 months.

Application to Other Agencies

Even although an applicant is accepted on to our housing list, we cannot define the timescale within which we will be able to meet their housing requirements. Therefore, we encourage all applicants to register their interest with other landlords in the area in which they wish to be housed. A list of other landlords who have properties within our area of operation is available at any of our offices.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to ensuring that people have fair and open access to our housing list and assessment processes. We will work with others to maximise and simplify routes to housing.

Allocations of properties are made irrespective of the applicant's race, colour, religion, age, gender or sexual orientation and we will monitor our applications and allocations accordingly.

We are aware that some tenants may find it difficult to read this document and may have difficulties communicating with us. We undertake wherever possible to provide the following services free of charge:

- Provision of publications in larger print, audio format, Braille or another language
- Provision of a sign language interpreter
- Provision of an interpreter if your first language is not English

Appeals

If at any time you are unhappy with the way your application has been dealt with, then you should contact Marjory Sneddon by writing to her at our Glenrothes Office.

Housing Benefit

You should be aware that Housing Benefit is available to Kingdom tenants (dependent on income and circumstances) to help them with their rent payments. If you require further information on this, please contact our Customer Accounts Team (0800 328 1246), your local Council Office or Citizens Advice and Rights Office.

Pets

Permission will not be granted to keep dogs in properties with a shared entrance. We do allow tenants to keep most pets within reason but all tenants must apply in writing for permission to keep pets.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of information provided by applicants will be respected at all times. We will use the information given by an applicant, and any supporting evidence provided, to process applications for housing. We may pass the information to other agencies or organisations as allowed by the law and in accordance with our Registration with the Information Commissioner. Kingdom is registered under the Data Protection Act with the office of the Information Commissioner. All applicants have the right to access the information we hold on them. Anyone wishing to access this right should contact our office and ask for a Data Subject Access form.

Further Information

Further information and copies of any relevant policies can be accessed on our website www.kingdomhousing.org.uk