

APPLYING FOR A HOME WITH



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1. Background

Waverley Housing is a Registered Social Landlord, providing homes for rent across the central Scottish Borders. We have just over 1500 homes with around 130 lets a year. Our homes are mainly in the towns of Galashiels, Hawick, Jedburgh and Kelso with a few in surrounding smaller towns and villages. All our homes are for general needs.

We let all our properties independent of any other housing provider, using our own housing allocations system, via a choice-based lettings process. This means that applicants can apply or bid for homes of their choice. We sometimes have other available properties for immediate let on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to meeting certain criteria.

The aim of our Allocations Policy is to help those applicants in greatest need of a home, and to provide quality affordable homes and deliver sustainable communities in which people want to live.

2. How to Apply for a Home

Housing Application

You must complete our Housing Application form, and this must be “live” on our housing list, to enable you to bid for any of our advertised homes, or other available homes which are ready for immediate let.

The quickest way to do this is to complete an online housing application form available on our website at www.waverley-housing.co.uk/find-a-home/property-search/. Alternatively, if you do not have internet access, you can request an application form from us by calling our office on 01450 364200. We are happy to support you in completing an application and to guide you on any matters you may have to attend to, to make your application “live”. Completed applications should be returned to Waverley Housing, 51 North Bridge Street, Hawick TD9 9PX. Upon receipt of your completed application (by post or online) we will process this within two working days and once it is Live, you will be given a unique reference number which you must use every time you place a bid on a property or make an enquiry about your application.

Advertising

Our homes for let are advertised weekly on our website and in our office windows. We also email directly all applicants who have provided us with their email address, with our weekly advertised properties; we can help you set up a new email address if you don't currently have one.

Expressing interest in an advertised property or properties

You can express interest in any advertised property or properties online via our website or by contacting us, to request staff to record this for you. Remember you must do this before the closing date.

Closing dates are generally Mondays at 12 noon.

You should, however, only express interest in a property if it is suitable for your needs, e.g. it would not result in overcrowding.

If you are interested in more than one property advertised in the same week, you must decide which property you would like most and record your interest for multiple properties in order of your preferred choice. We will consider your choice preference in any offer of housing.

Please note that if you bid for a property and are advised of where your bid ranked this does not mean that your bid will be higher placed when you bid for another property at a later date. As an example, if your bid is ranked second for an advertised property and you bid for a similar property the following week then it is not always the case that your bid would be ranked first. Depending on the number and priority of other bids received, your bid for the second property could be ranked lower than your bid for the first property

3. How we Allocate

- **Best Use:** Applicants are considered to meet best use in the following circumstances. These circumstances are ranked in order of priority.
- by having a recognised need for any adaptations or amenities within the property
- If the property is on the ground floor and the applicant has a confirmed and specific need for ground floor accommodation
- if the applicant has a confirmed specific medical need or the type and size of property
- if the applicant would make best use of all bedrooms within the property for the family composition; please note that this applies to bedrooms and not bedspaces.

- **Priority Award:** Some applicants may be granted a priority award, meaning that when shortlisting all bids for a property, where there are multiple applicants making best use, we will then look at applicants who have a priority award, the level of the award, Gold, Silver or Bronze (Gold being highest level of award), and the longest length of time applicants have held priority status.

Please note, any priority status you may be entitled to will not be awarded during the same advertising cycle that you applied for it. You will be able to use your priority status for subsequent advertising cycles. Should there be a change in your personal circumstances, you must remember to inform us as your priority may no longer be valid.

- **Date of Application onto housing list:** If after looking at Best Use and Priority Award level and longest length of time in need, there remain multiple applicants qualifying for an offer, the date of application onto the housing list will determine who has been on the housing list longest as the successful applicant

We offer several of our lets to applicants with no priority award, so it is not essential to have priority to be successful for an offer. We would simply use Best Use and Date of Application to determine a successful applicant where no priority award is in place.

If you receive an offer of a property from us, you will not be able to express interest in further properties advertised with another closing date until any existing offer is concluded. In exceptional cases, we reserve the right to allocate a property for any authorised management moves

Where applicants refuse two reasonable offers, their application will be suspended from the housing list along with any priority for a period between 3 and 12 months. Following expiry of the suspension period, both the application and any priority status will be automatically reinstated. If you are homeless and have been referred to us by Scottish Borders Council, the number of offers is as agreed within the Protocol between us.

Occasionally we have some properties available for immediate let which are allocated on a first come first served basis subject to the needs of the applicant. Please let us know if you are interested. These are on our website, [www.waverley-housing.co.uk/ find-a-home/property-search](http://www.waverley-housing.co.uk/find-a-home/property-search) or we can tell you what's available, if you contact us.

4. Will I qualify for Priority?

You should apply for priority status if any of the circumstances below are applicable to your circumstances for needing a move: -

HOMELESS PRIORITY

- Are you homeless or threatened with becoming homeless within 56 days with unmet housing needs, if so, you must contact SBC Tel (01896) 661 385 / www.scotborders.gov.uk

If you have been threatened with becoming homeless after 56 days or more, i.e. your current landlord has given you notice to quit, you can apply to Waverley Housing for Homeless Prevention Priority

HEALTH PRIORITY

- Is your health or the health of a family member living with you affected by your current housing accommodation?

OVERCROWDING PRIORITY

- Do you need a bigger property to meet the needs of those living with you?

UNDER OCCUPANCY

- Are you the tenant of a social landlord and have spare bedrooms not used or needed by you and any family living with you?

PROPERTY BELOW TOLERABLE STANDARD

- Is your property below the tolerable standard i.e. no heating, damp etc.?

MEMBER OF ARMED FORCES

- Are you a member of the Armed Forces with a discharge date of 12 months or less; or have you left the Armed Forces within the last 12 months and have no settled accommodation?

OTHER COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Do you need to move to another area:-
- to provide or receive care and support
- or does your current property prevent you from accessing essential services
- or do you require to live in a specific area or community
- or have any other valid reason not covered by any of the above circumstances which you consider should qualify for priority status?

We will take account of what you tell us in your application for housing or circumstances qualifying you for priority status, to ensure that you are provided with a sustainable let. For instance, if you tell us that you cannot manage stairs, and this is confirmed by medical evidence, we may only consider you for ground floor you tell us that you cannot manage stairs, and this is confirmed by medical evidence, we may only consider you for ground floor accommodation.

Any award of priority will only apply for lets which meet your needs, so for example if you express interest in a property which is bigger than you require, your priority award will not apply in these circumstances.

You should only complete the priority forms which apply to your circumstances. We will assess all priority forms within 14 working days of receipt of full information, however you will only be awarded one priority level, at the highest priority relevant to your needs.

We will not award priority in circumstances where we consider that you have worsened your housing circumstances by moving from a property within the preceding six months which met your needs.

Please remember that a high percentage of our lets are to applicants with no priority, so it is not necessary to have priority to be successful for a move.

5. What happens if I am successful for an offer?

If you are successful with an offer of one of our properties, we will try to complete our processes to enable you to settle into your new home as quickly as possible from the time you are selected for an offer.

We will therefore normally contact any successful applicant by 5pm the following day after the closing date. Our preferred methods of contact are email, text or phone as these methods are quickest, but where this is not possible, we will send a letter.

Successful applicants are expected to respond to offers within 24 hours of contact. Failure to respond within this timescale could mean that you will miss an offer of housing, so please make sure when you express interest for a property that you are available to respond to contact from us.

6. Suspending Applications

Suspended applicants will not be able to bid for advertised properties until the suspension period has expired. We will treat each case on its merits and the length of any suspension is likely to be between 3 and 12 months.

We will suspend applications in the following circumstances:-

- For refusal of two reasonable offers
- Unacceptable behaviour towards staff
- You have previously abandoned a Waverley Property
- Where you have rent arrears with no repayment arrangement in place or are continuing to engage in antisocial behaviour
- False information provided by the applicant

Please note that our most common reason for suspending applications is where applicants refuse two reasonable offers so think carefully before placing a bid.

7. Housing Options

We recognise that we will not be able to house everyone on our housing list. Waverley works closely with other housing providers in the Scottish Borders, and we will provide you with advice on housing options to assist you in securing a home as quickly as possible.

We also report on a quarterly basis on our website:

- the properties we let by size and area
- the number of applicants bidding for each property
- lets to priority applicants

8. Keeping us up to date with contact details

It is very important that you inform us of any changes of email address, or contact numbers, or property address recorded on your application form, or of any changes in your circumstances, as this may affect our ability to contact you and could result in you missing an offer of let or your application being cancelled for failure to respond to our communication. You could also miss out on gaining a priority status.

Some changes in your circumstances will require you to complete a Change in Circumstances form, and our staff will provide advice on this. Changes in circumstances may affect your priority needs or failure to notify us of changes, may result in withdrawal of any offer of accommodation.

We will carry out an annual review of applicants on our housing list on the anniversary of their application. This is to ensure that applicants wish to remain on our housing list. Failure to respond to this review will result in your application being cancelled.

9. Help and Assistance

If you are unsure about anything contained in this advice leaflet, please contact our Customer Services Team:-

Email: customerservices@waverley-housing.co.uk

Tel: (01450) 364200

Website: www.waverley-housing.co.uk/contact-us/

You can also obtain a copy of our Allocations Policy on request.

Contact Address: 51 North Bridge Street, Hawick, TD9 9PX

10. Complaints

If you are unhappy about the way we have handled your housing application, or any aspect of our allocations process, we encourage you to address this with our Customer Services Team informally in the first instance. If the matter of your concern remains unresolved, then please ask for this to be resolved in accordance with our Complaints Policy, a copy of which is available to you on request.

11. UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR)

We collect personal information about you and members of your household when you or someone on your behalf applies for housing with Waverley Housing by completing our housing application form, and in any contact you have with us regarding your housing application. We will collect more personal information if you subsequently become a tenant of ours.

We also collect and share personal information about you from third parties, e.g., references from current and previous landlords on conduct of tenancies held by you.

We will only collect personal information which is necessary to enable us to process your housing application and to subsequently undertake and perform our obligations and duties to you in any subsequent tenancy agreement.

We will retain your personal information in accordance with our published Data Retention Periods.

It is a legal requirement that we process data correctly; we must collect, handle and store personal information in accordance with the relevant legislation: -

(a) the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (“the GDPR”);

(b) the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 (as may be amended by the proposed Regulation on Privacy and Electronic Communications); and

(c) any legislation that, in respect of the United Kingdom, replaces, or enacts in United Kingdom domestic law, the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679, the proposed Regulation on Privacy and Electronic Communications or any other law relating to data protection, the processing of Personal Data and privacy as a consequence of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union.

Any personal data or sensitive personal data provided by you to us will be processed and held in accordance with the above legislation and will be used specifically for the purposes of processing your housing application onto our housing list and for managing any contract of tenancy with us thereafter. Our Privacy Policy and Fair Processing Notice explain further and are available on our website www.waverley-housing.co.uk/privacy-policy/.

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