

# Applying for housing

How to rent a home from us



# Who can apply for housing?

To be able to join one of our open housing waiting lists and be considered for a property, you must meet the following criteria:

- You are aged 16 years or over
- You have been assessed as being in housing need
- You meet the criteria of our banding scheme

You will not be eligible for housing with us if:

- You do not meet the criteria above
- You are not entitled to hold a tenancy due to your immigration status
- You have been evicted for breach of tenancy by a local authority, housing association, another registered provider or private landlord
- We consider that you pose a threat to a local community because you have been convicted of offences like drug dealing, violent or abusive behaviour towards others (including Sanctuary staff), racially motivated attacks or hate crimes.

There are some cases when we may have to suspend or cancel your application, including:

- You have broken any of your tenancy obligations
- You or any member of your household is the subject of an antisocial behaviour order or an injunction on grounds of antisocial behaviour
- You have a previous or current debt with a landlord and have made no plans to repay the debt
- You have previously abandoned a property
- You have given false or misleading information on your application
- You refuse reasonable offers of accommodation.



# How do I apply?

There are a few different ways you can apply to rent a property from us, including:

## **Through your local authority**

Most of our homes are let through local authorities. The easiest way to rent a home from us is to join your local authority's housing list.

## **Directly from us**

We hold our own waiting lists for properties in some areas of the country. You can apply to be put on one of our open waiting lists by calling **0300 123 3511** or filling out the form on our website **[www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk](http://www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk)**. Please note, not all areas have open waiting lists to join. Once we've received and assessed your application, we will write to you confirming your lettings band and housing area you are eligible for. On our website there is also a list of our properties which are immediately available to rent. You can apply for these directly with the local lettings team named on the listing.

## **Choice Based Lettings schemes**

We are members of many Choice Based Lettings schemes across the country and you may be eligible to apply through this route. In most areas you need to apply directly to your local Choice Based Lettings scheme, who will assess your entitlement to join.

## **External websites**

We regularly advertise our properties on external websites, for example Gumtree and Rightmove. There are also properties registered on **[www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)** if you are interested in a mutual exchange.

## **Pre-eligibility Checks**

If you apply to rent a property from us you will go through some pre-eligibility checks as part of the application process, this includes a financial affordability check and we will ask for references from your previous landlords.

# How are homes allocated?

As part of your application, we will assign you to a lettings band based on your housing need. When allocating homes we look at each band in turn, starting with the people in the most housing need. Within each band we would choose the applicant who has been on the waiting list the longest.

During your application, please let us know if you have a medical need. As part of the banding allocation we may need an Occupational Therapist to carry out an assessment to ensure we place you in the correct band.

From the information you provide to us in your application, we will assign you to one of the following bands:

**Band A** - You **will** need to provide evidence to support your application.

Only awarded in exceptional cases where an inability to move will lead to significant and/or imminent harm to the applicant or a member of their household.

**Band B** - You **will** need to provide evidence to support your application.

Awarded if you need to move because:

- you are suffering from domestic abuse
- you are suffering from harassment (including racial harassment)
- you are under occupying a social housing property by two or more bedrooms
- you are overcrowded and need two or more extra bedrooms
- you are ready to move on from supported housing into independent accommodation
- you occupy a bedsit or studio, with one or more children living with you
- you or a member of your household have a medical condition or disability caused or made worse by your current housing. It will only improve by a move to alternative accommodation.

**Band C** - You **may** need to provide evidence to support your application.

Awarded if you need to move because:

- you have received 28 days notice where you live
- your home is being repossessed
- you are suffering serious antisocial behaviour and moving will ease this
- you are under occupying a social housing property by one bedroom
- you are overcrowded and need one extra bedroom
- the accommodation you currently live in is unsuitable for your needs, for example household not living together or property needs adapting to your needs
- you are a non-dependent household member over the age of 18 living in a Sanctuary home. You must be overcrowded and have lived there for the last three years or more to qualify for this.
- you are over 55 and want to move to older retirement living accommodation
- you need to access specialist education, a permanent job or support services because of a disability, because of your age or other welfare related reasons.



# Being offered a home



It's important we make the best use of our homes, so we use the following to work out how many bedrooms you need:

- one bedroom for every adult couple
- one bedroom for any other person age 16 or over
- one bedroom for any two children under 16 of the same sex
- one bedroom for any two children aged under 10, regardless of sex
- one bedroom for any extra child under 16.

We would not normally give homes to people who would then become overcrowded or would be under occupying. We may consider granting an extra room in the following cases:

- a household member needs to sleep in a room alone because of a medical condition
- you need an extra room for medical equipment
- you need an extra room for an overnight carer
- you need an extra room for the purpose of foster care

If we offer you a home, we will invite you to view the property. You can then decide if you would like to accept. If you refuse a reasonable offer, we may reconsider your application.

# Reviewing applications

We review applications regularly and we will contact you by letter to confirm your current housing needs. We do this to make sure the information we hold about you is up-to-date – your circumstances could have changed since you applied or updated your registration. You can also contact us yourself to let us know about any changes to your situation and housing needs.

If you don't respond to a review request within 28 days, we will cancel your application.

If you feel that we have not dealt with your application fairly or you aren't happy with our decision, please raise this with the member of staff who you have been dealing with. If you are not satisfied with the result, you have the right to ask for a further review.



# What happens next?

Should a suitable property become available, we will let you know that you are shortlisted for it. In order for us to progress your application further we will need to see full proof of your identification and income.

When you've accepted an offer and the home is ready for you to move into, you will need to sign a tenancy agreement.

If you are eligible for housing related benefit, please tell your local authority straight away.

The full rent amount will be payable on the day the tenancy agreement is signed and every Monday thereafter, so that your account is always one week in advance. This applies even if you plan on claiming housing related benefits.

Paying your rent by Direct Debit is quick and easy to set up and ensures you don't miss a payment to us. We will ask you to set this up when you sign your tenancy agreement, so please remember to bring your bank details with you.

This leaflet can be translated into other languages, large print and Braille or recorded on to an audio CD. Please contact us for details.

If you need to speak to a Sanctuary member of staff in your own language, please contact your local office and they will arrange an interpreter for you.

**0800 131 3348 (landline) 0300 123 3511 (mobile)**

**contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk**

**www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk**

 **@HelloSanctuary**