



HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME

SUMMARY INFORMATION

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The allocations scheme is the housing policy we use to prioritise households that are in housing need for an offer of social housing in the Harrogate district.

The allocations scheme seeks to make best use of the low number of properties owned by the council (and partner Registered Providers of social housing) that become available to let each year.

Currently, there are seven times as many people on the Housing Waiting List as properties that become available each year. Even if you are accepted onto the Housing Waiting List, this does not guarantee that you will be made an offer of accommodation.

Only housing applicants that are eligible for housing and who qualify for an offer of accommodation, will be able to join the Housing Waiting List. If an applicant has already been accepted on the Housing Waiting List and is found to be no longer eligible and/or qualify for housing, they will be removed from the List and notified.



Who is eligible to join the Housing Waiting List?

Applicants must be aged 16 or over to join the Housing Waiting List. Applicants aged 16 and 17 years old must have an identified trustee who can hold a tenancy on their behalf until the age of 18. Trustees can be a person or an organisation.

Only applicants with a local connection to the Harrogate district will qualify to join the Housing Waiting List. A local connection applies if:

- An applicant currently lives in the district and has done so for at least two years
- An applicant has previously lived in the district for a continuous period of ten years
- An applicant has close family living in the district, who have done so for at least five years, e.g. children, parents, brothers and sisters only
- An applicant has employment in the district. Employment must be for a minimum period of 12 months, at least 16 hours per week, and the main place of work must be within the district

Residence in hospital, prison, residential schools, student accommodation (where it is not their principal home) and Approved Premises under licence do not gain a local connection.

The only exceptions to this are:

- Households accepted as homeless under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, to whom the council has accepted a full duty to house
- Members of the Armed Forces, former members of the Armed Forces who were serving at any time in the five years preceding their application for housing, and bereaved spouses or civil partners who can no longer live in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death in service of their spouse or partner
- Social housing tenants in England that need to move into the district to take up an offer of employment under the Right to Move Regulations 2015

Certain applicants may not qualify to join the Housing Waiting List and these include persons:

- Who are ineligible because they are subject to some aspects of immigration control, who do not have recourse to public funds, or who cannot prove they have recourse to public funds, or do not meet the Habitual Residence Test
- With rent arrears and/or anti-social behaviour issues that have caused, or is likely to cause serious nuisance to neighbours
- Who own their own home or reside with a household member who is a homeowner
- Who have savings of over £120,000
- Who have a combined household income of £60,000 per annum
- Who have provided false information and/or deliberately withheld information
- Who have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances with the intent of increasing priority
- Who have refused two suitable offers of accommodation

Some applicants may be accepted into the Housing Waiting List, but be deferred from active consideration for a fixed period of usually three or six months whilst pending further investigation of information, or to allow repayment of rent arrears to landlord/ former landlord.

Under our allocations policy, we give reasonable preference to the following:

- People who are homeless
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing, or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship

We operate a points system whereby points are awarded to reflect housing need.

Choice

Applicants are able to express a choice on the type and location of their preferred accommodation, although they must choose a minimum of four out of the 16 letting areas across the Harrogate district and one of those areas must include either Harrogate, Knaresborough or Ripon.

Applicants will be restricted to the size of property that meets their housing need. A separate bedroom will be allowed for:

- A married or cohabiting couple aged 16 or over
- A pair of children of the same sex aged under 16
- A pair of children of the opposite sex aged under 10
- Any other adult aged 16 or over
- Any foster child staying
- Any other child (but not if their main home is elsewhere)

In the case of part-time residency of children, the children will not be regarded as being part of an applicant's household, as they have an existing home with one parent and the applicant will be restricted to a property that meets their size requirements.

In exceptional circumstances, an additional bedroom may be considered in the following cases:

- For a carer that provides overnight care for the applicant and/or their partner
- For a child that has a serious disability and cannot share a bedroom as a result
- For an approved foster carer, who has fostered within the last 12 months

If the council accepts a full housing duty to you under the Housing Act 1996, you will be made one offer of suitable accommodation. If you refuse this offer, you will be responsible for finding your own accommodation.

Applicants will be considered for all social housing vacancies, regardless of whether they are in the council's own housing stock, or that of partner Registered Providers.

Medical needs

If an applicant has a medical condition affected by their current accommodation, they will be sent a medical self-assessment form to complete. This information will be used to assess their entitlement to medical points. If their condition deteriorates significantly, a further medical assessment can be undertaken, but this will not normally be done for at least six months after the date of the original assessment.

Social and welfare needs

Applicants who have a social and/or welfare need to move to another part of the district may receive additional points. This may be a need to move to give or receive support, to access employment and/or training, or to meet the specific needs of a member of the household, such as a child who needs to attend a special school. The points system provides for low and high level needs.

Disrepair

Applicants currently living in accommodation which is in disrepair may be entitled to additional points. The points are awarded following a home visit and reflect low, medium and high levels of disrepair.

Moving on from supported accommodation

Applicants who have completed an approved support plan in a recognised housing scheme and are ready to move to independent accommodation may receive additional points. The support plan will normally have been completed over a period of 12 to 24 months, but in all cases be a minimum of six months. The applicant's Support Worker will need to provide evidence of the completed support plan. A list of housing schemes is available from the Allocations Team and these may change over time.

Financial resources

Applicants with a combined annual household income of £60,000 or above, savings of £120,000 or above* and owner occupiers will not normally qualify to join the Housing Waiting List and will be given advice on alternative housing options available.

However, we recognise that some older people, who are aged 60 plus and who own their own home, cannot either stay or adapt their home and need to move into specialist accommodation (e.g. sheltered or extra care housing) and they will be assessed as to whether they have sufficient resources to meet their housing needs elsewhere.

** This excludes any lump sum received by a member of the Armed Forces as compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active duty.*

Right to move

Existing social housing tenants in England may receive additional points if they need to move into the Harrogate district to avoid hardship and they work, or have been offered work in the district and have a genuine intention to take up the offer of work. We will consider a number of factors to determine whether a tenant needs to move for work related purposes, such as the distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home, the availability and affordability of transport and other personal factors, such as medical needs and childcare arrangements. We will set aside 1% of our lettings each year solely for Right to Move applicants.

Right to review

Applicants have the right to request a Review, in writing, of the following decisions:

- i) That they are ineligible and/or do not qualify to join the Housing Waiting List
- ii) In respect of any information which is being taken into account in considering whether to make an offer of accommodation

Applicants have the right to information to enable them to determine whether they have been granted reasonable preference and how long they may have to wait for an offer of accommodation.

Housing Allocations Points Scheme

1. SECURITY OF TENURE

If your tenancy is for a fixed period of time you will be awarded additional points if you are either:

- Not under immediate threat of losing your current accommodation **5 points**
- Under immediate threat of losing your current accommodation **15 points**

In addition, if the council has accepted a full homelessness duty to you under the Housing Act 1996, you will be awarded 100 points on the date that the duty is determined and 10 points calendar monthly thereafter.

2. APPLICANTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 13

- Living in a flat above ground floor **10 points**
- Without a garden/enclosed play area **5 points**

(You will not be awarded these points if the council has accepted a full homelessness duty to you).

3. MEDICAL PRIORITY (awarded after assessment)

- Priority 1 Medical condition not affected by present accommodation **0 points**
- Priority 2 Medical condition affected minimally by present accommodation **5 points**
- Priority 3 Medical condition affected moderately by present accommodation **10 points**
- Priority 4 Medical condition significantly affected by present accommodation **20 points**
- Priority 5 Medical condition severely but not exceptionally affected by present accommodation **30 points**
- Priority 6 Medical condition is severely and profoundly affected by present accommodation **45 points**

4. SOCIAL NEEDS

Additional points may be awarded if you need to live in an area for particular social/welfare reasons, e.g. for employment, because of an educational need, or to give support to, or receive support from a relative.

Min **10 points**

Max **20 points**

Existing social housing tenants in England that meet the Right to Move criteria will be awarded 20 social needs points.

5. UNDER OCCUPYING SOCIAL HOUSING TENANTS

Under occupying by 1 bedroom

100 points

Under occupying by 2 bedrooms or more

200 points

6. TIME ON WAITING LIST

Points are awarded annually provided that the applicant is awarded points in categories 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

4 points per year

Max **20 points**

7. LOCAL CONNECTION

You will receive points for a local connection to the specific letting area in which you wish to be rehoused if you:

25 points

- Currently live in the letting area and have done so for at least two years
- Have previously lived in the letting area for a continuous period of 10 years
- Have close family living in the letting area, who have done so for at least the last five years (e.g. children, parents, brothers and sisters only)
- Have employment in the letting area. Employment must be for a minimum of 12 months, at least 16 hours per week and the main place of work must be within the district

8. SEPARATION OF FAMILY

For families living separately due to a lack of suitable accommodation.

25 points

9. DISREPAIR

Following an inspection points will be awarded in the following categories:

- Severe disrepair – serious damp/water penetration, dangerous wiring, dangerous access/internal stairs etc., demonstrating danger to health and/or safety of the applicant **30 points**
- Moderate disrepair – non-functioning heating/hot water facilities, moderate dampness problems, which may result in health problems **15 points**
- Low disrepair – windows/roof repairs, leaking gutters, blocked drains etc., which are inconvenient/unpleasant, but do not present a risk or danger **5 points**

10. AMENITIES

Points are awarded if your current home does not have (is lacking) the following facilities or you share them with other people (not members of your household):

| | <i>Lacking</i> | <i>Sharing</i> |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Living room | 5 points | 2 points |
| Separate kitchen | 10 points | 5 points |
| Separate bathroom | 10 points | 5 points |
| Toilet | 20 points | 5 points |
| Piped water supply | 20 points | - |
| Hot water supply | 10 points | - |
| Required number of bedrooms | 10 points | - |

Applicants lacking one or more bedrooms will also be awarded five points per month (from the date of overcrowding), up to a maximum of 75 points. This applies from the date of application.

(You will not be awarded these points if the council has accepted a full homelessness duty to you).

11. SPECIAL CASE

In exceptional circumstances discretionary points may be awarded.

Unlimited

12. MOVING ON FROM SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Applicants who have completed a resettlement programme within a recognised supported housing scheme and are ready to move into independent living.

50 points

13. ARMED FORCES

Ex Forces/Armed Forces personnel will be awarded additional points if they have a recognised urgent housing need e.g. are homeless, living in unsatisfactory conditions, need to move on welfare or medical grounds AND meet one of the following:

35 points

- Is serving in the Armed Forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to the person's service
- Formerly served in the Armed Forces
- Has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the MOD following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the Armed Forces and whose death was attributable by that service
- Is serving or has served in the Reserve Forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to that person's service

