



Applying for a home

How we assess your housing need

HS01 Applying for a Home
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www.hart.gov.uk

“Our Engagement and Support Team can provide you with information, assistance and advice to help you to resolve your housing situation, as well as supporting you to tackle wider issues.”

1. Introduction

Hart District Council transferred its housing stock to a Housing Association in 1994. As a result, there is no longer any Council owned housing within Hart. Housing associations, including Vivid, are the primary providers of new and existing affordable homes for rent in the District. By applying to join the Hart Housing Register you are applying to be considered for vacant housing association properties.

2. About this leaflet

This leaflet explains how to apply for affordable rented accommodation within the district, how we will assess your application for housing and how nominations to vacant housing association homes are made. Full details of the current allocations policy can be found electronically on www.hart.gov.uk or in hard format direct from Housing Services.

3. How to apply

You can apply by completing an application form online at www.harthomes.org.uk.

Once your application has been registered, we will send you a letter confirming your registration and advising you which band your application has been placed into. You are entitled to apply to other Councils for housing. If a Council says that you cannot join their Housing Register, you have a legal right to ask for a review of its decision.

4. Can I get help to make an application for housing?

If you think that you need help or assistance to complete a Hart Housing Register application, you are welcome to contact Housing Services at the Civic Offices (contact details at the end of this leaflet) who will be happy to help you further.

5. Who is eligible to join the Housing Register?

Anyone can apply to join the housing register providing they are 16 years old or over and resident in the UK. You would be ineligible to join the housing register if:

- You are subject to immigration control and have no recourse to public funds;
- You are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or the Republic of Ireland);
- You do not have the right to reside in the UK.

You can obtain further information on the ineligibility criteria from the full version of our allocations policy which is available on our website.

6. How do I qualify to join the Housing register?

Once the eligibility of your application has been confirmed, we will also assess whether you qualify to join the housing register. You would not qualify to join if:

- You, or a member of your household, are considered by the Council to be guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make you unsuitable to be a tenant;
- You, or a member of your

household, have provided false or misleading information to the Council to gain advantage on the housing register;

- You are assessed as failing to meet the Council's local connection criteria;
- You are assessed not to have a housing need;
- You fail to meet the Council's financial assessment criteria;
- You threaten or use violence or aggression towards any Council employee, contractor or Council member.

A full list of the council's qualifying criteria is available in the full version of the Allocations Policy on our website.

7. How are applications assessed?

On receipt, your application will normally be assessed within 10 working days, subject to any further information we may require. If you are eligible to join the Housing Register you will be placed into a priority band dependent on your individual circumstances. (Details of the scheme are provided later in this leaflet). You will be registered according to the size of home you need.

8. Bedroom Standard Policy

Household Type	Studio Flat	1	2	3	4	5
Single person						
Single person or couple						
Pregnant woman with or without partner, and no other children						
Parent(s) with one child						
Parent(s) with two same sex children where both children are under 16 years old						
Parent(s) with one girl and one boy both under 10						
Parent(s) with one girl and one boy where one child is over 10						
Parent(s) with two same sex children where one child is over 16 years old						
Parent(s) with three children regardless of age or sex						
Parent(s) with four or more children						

9. Banding Assessment Scheme

Band A

Reasonable Preference cases with an additional priority:
Subject to review every 3 months

Band A	<p>1. Emergency Medical and/or disability because current accommodation is wholly inappropriate to occupy and the medical and/or disability issue is being directly, and negatively, impacted by housing circumstances. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discharge from hospital and property completely unsuitable for applicant to return to and no suitable adaptations can be made within a reasonable timescale.
Band A	<p>2. Exceptional circumstances on welfare grounds with supporting evidence. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptional need to move as there is substantial evidence to show that to stay would be life threatening but a move into alternative accommodation could not be achieved in a reasonable timescale An applicant has been nominated via the National Witness Mobility Service
Band A	<p>3. Severe Environmental Health grounds that cannot be rectified within a 12 month period. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extreme disrepair as assessed by our Private Sector Housing Team Closure / Demolition Order
Band A	<p>4. Emergency Strategic Lettings (Council needs to move tenant in order to create vacancies within the housing stock). For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decants Management Transfer Successions with notice served Transfer applicants with 2 spare rooms or more and the Council has the nomination rights to the resulting vacancy To release an adapted property (subject to certain qualifications and the Council has the nomination rights to the resulting vacancy)

Band B

High Preference Criteria

Reasonable Preference cases with a higher priority:
Subject to review every 6 months

Band B	<p>1. Urgent need to move on medical or disability grounds;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation is not wholly inappropriate but it is unable to address a major proportion of the applicant household's housing needs
Band B	<p>2. Urgent need to move on welfare grounds. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A confirmed current need to live within five miles of a specialist medical facility or special school
Band B	<p>3. Priority overcrowding. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed as being statutorily overcrowded and the accommodation was originally suitable for the applicant household needs at the start of the tenancy.
Band B	<p>4. Priority prevention of homelessness cases. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former tenants that voluntarily gave up their tenancy for special reasons by agreement, and are now ready to be re-housed, and otherwise would become homeless (for example hospital, rehabilitation, supported accommodation, care)
Band B	<p>5. High Priority Strategic Lettings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move on from supported housing (whereby the resulting vacancy is released back to Hart District Council) or to make best use of supported accommodation available on a case by case basis Agricultural Dwelling-House Advisory Committee (ADHAC) cases - where an agricultural worker resident in the district is to be displaced and is entitled to re-housing under the Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976 Transfer applicant under-occupying by one or more bedrooms with the Council having nomination rights to resulting vacancy Separated households (2 existing social housing tenants wishing to become 1 household and neither property is suitable for the household to live in - releasing both properties for re-letting by the Council) Special reciprocal arrangements with other Councils/housing associations Shared ownership applicants living in Hart who need to downsize but do not have the financial capacity (insufficient or no equity) to do this by purchasing a smaller property or staircasing down
Band B	<p>6. Fostering & Adoption:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants who have been assessed as meeting the requirements of the Joint Fostering and Adoption Protocol

Band C

Reasonable Preference Criteria

Other reasonable preference cases and those with an identified housing need

Band C	<p>1. A link between an applicant's health and housing has been established however no confirmation provided that an urgent move is required</p>
Band C	<p>2. Homeless households. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households owed the main housing duty under s193 Part 7 Housing Act 1996 (as amended) Other unintentionally homeless households Applicants who are of No Fixed Abode (NFA) or who are at risk of rough sleeping and are actively engaged with the Council's Housing Options team and with any resettlement plan Applicants who have been asked to leave their current accommodation through no fault of their own Residents of Hart's temporary accommodation scheme
Band C	<p>3. Overcrowding – lacking bedroom(s) in accordance with the Hart Bedroom Standard but not statutory overcrowding</p>
Band C	<p>4. People leaving care - Hampshire County Council Care Leaver who has been assessed as ready for move on into independent accommodation</p>
Band C	<p>5. Unsatisfactory or insanitary housing conditions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of facilities Sharing with household members NOT included within their application
Band C	<p>6. Applicants assessed as suitable for sheltered/extra care housing</p>
Band C	<p>7. Applicants ready to move on from hostels or similar accommodation and/or applicants in Supported Housing Where a written recommendation from the housing and/or support provider confirms that the applicant has engaged with support and is ready for independent living. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refuge accommodation for people fleeing violence or abuse single person's hostel
Band C	<p>8. Applicants who need to move to a particular area in the district of the local authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others). For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant has permanent employment which they cannot continue unless they live within a specific locality within the area and are otherwise adequately housed. The applicant needs to live within the district to be near friends or relatives in order to provide or receive essential care or support.

Band C	<p>9. Other Strategic lettings – where reasonable preference does not apply but we wish to give extra priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants in private rented accommodation (Assured Shorthold Tenants and on License) • Tied tenants seeking alternative accommodation • Transfer applicants in existing social housing with no reasonable preference but the resulting vacancy would be given back to HDC and who meet the “Good Tenant“ criteria • Home owners and shared ownership applicants who have a need to move into larger accommodation but do not have the financial capacity to do so in accordance with the financial criteria
Band C	<p>10. Right To Move</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Housing tenants living in another local authority area within England and having an assessed need to move to the area to take up or continue employment within the district in accordance with the criteria

Band D

Reasonable Preference with Reduced Priority Criteria

Band D	1. Applicants that are not engaging with Housing Options or other relevant services
Band D	2. Social housing tenants from outside the district where Hart District Council has no nomination rights to the property
Band D	3. Applicant households who are serving in the regular forces or who have served in the regular forces within five years of the date of their application, and have been registered without “Reasonable Preference”
Band D	<p>4. Applicant households who have lost their previous accommodation due to a deliberate act or omission on their part but are not excluded by the qualifying criteria</p> <p><i>Applicant households who are placed in Band D on this basis will remain in this band for an initial period of 12 months from the date the tenancy ended</i></p>

Band D	<p>5. Applicant households who have deliberately worsened their circumstances within the last 2 years to gain advantage on the Housing Register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This includes deliberate actions and failure to take reasonable actions or to follow advice which would prevent homelessness or otherwise improve the applicant household’s housing circumstances. For example: • Failing to take up a suitable offer of private or social rented accommodation • Failing to bid for suitable accommodation that was available through the Hart Homes CBL system and that the applicant household would have successfully secured had they placed a bid • Selling a property that is affordable and suitable for the applicant’s needs • Choosing to move from suitable secure and settled accommodation to insecure or less settled accommodation • Choosing to move from suitable secure and settled accommodation into an unsuitable or unsustainable arrangement, including overcrowding • Requesting or colluding with a landlord, friend or family member to issue a notice to quit • Deliberately overcrowding a property by choice • Deliberately withholding rent or failing to adhere to tenancy conditions • Becoming intentionally homeless from accommodation as a result of a deliberate act or omission • Having been found to be intentionally homeless by a local authority <p><i>Applicant households who are placed in Band D on this basis will remain in this band for an initial period of 12 months from the effective date of application</i></p>
Band D	6. Transfer applicants in existing social housing with no reasonable preference who meet the “Good Tenant“ criteria and where the resulting vacancy would be given back to HDC
Band D	7. Single or couple 55+ registered as a result of a qualifying criteria exemption

10. Rural Housing Schemes

In some rural areas, rural housing schemes have been developed on exception sites for those applicants who have a local connection with the village where the scheme is situated.

In such cases the allocation of the properties is in accordance with strict local connection criteria.

For further information about our Rural Housing Schemes, including where they are located, please visit our website or contact the Housing Services team.

Some other rural housing developments may not have such strict local connection restrictions, and applications to these properties will be prioritised in the usual way.

11. What happens if I am nominated to a Housing Association property?

When a nomination is made from the Hart Housing Register to a housing association property, you will be invited to view the property by the relevant housing association. It is likely that you will be interviewed and the housing association will decide whether or not to offer you the tenancy. If you are offered the property, and decide to accept, arrangements will be made for you to sign the tenancy agreement and arrange a handover of keys.

12. Will I be housed within my chosen area(s)?

The Council operates a choice based lettings system whereby the choice to be considered for a property is yours. Areas of choice can be specified on your housing register application form and this enables us to look at areas of demand for future developments. Please note that there is a shortage of affordable rented housing in Hart. Should you require accommodation in a specific part of the District, we may not be able to accurately predict how long you may have to wait for an offer of accommodation.

If you have been accepted by Hart District Council under the provisions of homelessness legislation, whilst we will seek to nominate you to accommodation that meets your preferences, you may be considered for accommodation anywhere in the District regardless of your chosen areas. Please see below for further information.

13. Will the Council visit me at home?

To confirm your housing circumstances, we may need to visit you at home. We will normally notify you in advance of when the visit will take place. At the visit, the Engagement and Support Officer will check your circumstances and your priority Band will be checked according to the circumstances the Officer finds.

A Private Sector Housing Officer may be asked to visit you at home to look at the condition and repair of your accommodation. The Officer will check if your housing conditions mean that you should be awarded any additional priority. Please note that your priority may also be reduced, for example, if your landlord can provide the facilities you are lacking or undertake repairs quickly.

Please note that tenants of Local Authorities or Registered Social Landlords, for example Housing Associations, will need to be assessed by the relevant landlord's maintenance team prior to one of our Private Sector Housing Officers visiting. If you are a tenant of a Housing Association in the Hart area and your home is in disrepair, you should contact your landlord first to try and resolve the problem.

14. Can my health be taken into account?

In order for your application to be assessed for medical priority, you may wish to complete and return a 'Medical Assessment Form' for each person included on your application whose health is being negatively affected by your current housing, or where there is a need for specific housing (i.e. ground floor, adaptations, wheelchair access). You will also be required to provide supporting information confirming the above from any medical professionals involved with your care. Medical Assessment Forms can be requested by contacting the Housing Services team.

15. What if my circumstances change?

It is important that you notify Housing Services immediately of any change in your circumstances from those originally stated on your application – for example, change of address and where your household size has increased or decreased. We would prefer you to put these changes in writing to us, and we will confirm that we have made the appropriate changes to your application. Failure to notify the Council of a change in your circumstances may lead to the incorrect assessment of your Housing Register application, or the cancellation of your application. As part of your Housing Register application form you will be asked to sign a declaration confirming you are aware that you must keep us up to date regarding changes to your circumstances.

16. How do I renew my application?

We will send you a reminder for you to renew your application each year. This will usually be around the time of the anniversary of your registration. It is your responsibility to renew your application. If you fail to renew, your application will be closed.

17. Can the Council decide not to consider me for a property?

Your Housing Register application can be deferred, overlooked, or suspended. This means that whilst you may not lose your position within a Band, your application will not be actively considered on the Housing Register and offers of accommodation will be withheld. Examples of circumstances where your application may be deferred, overlooked or suspended include where your application is being investigated, where we are reviewing your application following a change in circumstances or where you have outstanding money owing to a current or previous landlord or to the Council's Bond Guarantee Scheme. A full list of exclusions can be found in Hart's Allocations Policy.

18. If I've been accepted under the Provisions of Homelessness Legislation - how am I affected?

For applicants accepted as homeless and placed into temporary accommodation, automatic bidding will commence 3 months from the date of which the homelessness decision was taken or the tenancy start date (whichever is earlier) if the applicant has not already secured

accommodation through the Hart Homes CBL system, for themselves, or as a result of a compulsory PRSO.

Where households residing in temporary accommodation refuse an offer of accommodation either through the Housing Register or in the private sector, the Council will discharge its duty to them under the Housing Act 1996, Part VII (as amended), and possession proceedings will commence. Their Housing Register application will be suspended until they have vacated the accommodation.

Those applicants who are not engaging with the Housing Service will be demoted into Band D with their original effective date until the Council is satisfied they are realistically exploring their move on options. To clarify, you will be seen to be not engaging if you are not actively bidding on suitable properties, if you withdraw bids, if you do not attend interviews with the Housing Service as arranged, and if you are not able to demonstrate that you are actively exploring realistic move on options (i.e. Private Sector or alternative options other than relying solely on the Housing Register). For more information and how to request a review please see the full Allocations Policy.

19. Can my application be cancelled?

Your application can be cancelled and removed from the Housing Register in certain circumstances, for example:

- At your request;
- If you fail to return an application form or requested documentation within 28 days or within another specified time limit;
- If you have moved and not informed us of your new address and we are unable to contact you;
- If you fail to renew your application;
- If you have deliberately given false and/or misleading information;
- If you are assessed as guilty of unacceptable behaviour making you unsuitable to be considered as a tenant;
- If you accept an offer of accommodation through the Housing Register;
- If you cease to be eligible for assistance;
- If you cease to meet the Local Connection Criteria;
- If you cease to be eligible in line with the Council's financial assessment criteria;
- If you cease to be eligible due to being assessed as having no housing need.

20. How do I make enquiries about my application?

You may call in person at the Civic Offices, write, email or telephone to enquire about your application.

When you are writing to the Council, please make sure you quote your name, address and reference number clearly. This will enable staff to reply to your correspondence quickly.

21. Am I able to see and review the information I have provided as part of my Housing Register application?

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) you have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold about you and to correct any inaccuracies in your information. The personal information you provide will be used to process your Housing Register application and may be shared with internal departments and external agencies. We need your permission to process this information so that you can be placed on the Housing Register. More information on how we would use, store and process your personal information is provided on the application form.

22. Do I have the right to request a review of the Council's decisions?

You can ask us for a review of the following decisions:

- You do not qualify to join the Housing Register
- Your details are removed from the Housing Register
- You are made an offer of accommodation and do not consider that the accommodation is suitable for your needs
- Changes are made to your priority band, for example priority is reduced
- You are unhappy with the banding priority awarded to your application
- You have been overlooked within your allocated band

You may ask us to review any of the above decisions within 21 days of being notified of the decision. For more information regarding the review process please see the Council's leaflet 'Hart Housing Register: Asking for a review of a Decision'.

23. Can a Housing Association refuse to house me?

A housing association may operate a policy which means it cannot house you, for example, if you were previously a tenant of the association and you still owe rent arrears or you were evicted by them. If an association decides it will not house you, you should be provided with the reason(s) in writing with an explanation of how you can appeal. If you are not happy with the outcome, you can approach the Independent Housing Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk or **0300 061 0614**).

24. Equal opportunities

It is the aim of the Council to ensure that no-one applying for housing is treated less favourably for any reason. The Council is therefore committed to giving equality of opportunity and ensuring that it does not discriminate against any person on the grounds of sex, disability, race, religion or ethnic origin. To assist us to ensure that we are administering the Housing Register fairly, you will be asked to complete a monitoring questionnaire at the end of the online application form. We will treat this information in the strictest confidence and it will not affect your application in any way. You do not have to answer any of these questions if you do not wish to.

25. How to complain

If you wish to complain about your application, you should first talk, email, or write to the Engagement and Support Manager at the Civic Offices. If you remain unsatisfied, you should talk, email or write to the Head of Housing and Community Services. If you are again unsatisfied you should ask for our complaints procedure and form. Finally, if you are still unhappy, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk or **0300 061 0614**). Please note that the Ombudsman will not normally consider a complaint that has not been through the Council's complaint procedure.

26. What happens if I give the Council false or misleading information?

If you knowingly or recklessly provide false information, or knowingly withhold information when you make an application for housing, you are committing a criminal offence. In all such cases, the Council will consider taking appropriate action, including prosecution. If prosecuted by the Council and found guilty you could be ordered to pay a fine of up to £5,000. If a tenancy is granted as a result of a false statement, it is possible for housing associations to take action to seek possession.

27. Can the Council help me with private rented accommodation?

We have a list of letting agents and landlords who operate in the area and further advice is available from our Engagement and Support Team.

28. How do I apply for Homebuy properties in the Hart District?

Homebuy schemes (part buy / part rent) are administered by Help to Buy South, the Government appointed Zone Agent for Homebuy in Hampshire. For further information about these schemes, please contact Help to Buy South on **0845 604 1122**, email info@helptobuysouth.co.uk or go to www.helptobuysouth.co.uk

29. How can I contact the Engagement and Support team at Hart District Council?

The Engagement and Support team operates a duty housing advice service. Our Duty Engagement and Support Officer can be contacted by either:

- Calling us on **01252 774420**
- Visiting us between Monday and Thursday, 8.30am to 5pm, or Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm
- Emailing housing@hart.gov.uk

Contact details

Address: Hart District Council,
Civic Offices, Harlington Way,
Fleet, Hampshire,
GU51 4AE

Tel: 01252 774420

Email: housing@hart.gov.uk

Web: www.hart.gov.uk

Facebook: [/HartDistrictCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/HartDistrictCouncil)

Twitter: [@HartCouncil](https://twitter.com/HartCouncil)

Instagram: [@HartCouncil](https://www.instagram.com/HartCouncil)

All Housing Advice Leaflets are available in the Hart District Council reception area or via our website at [**www.hart.gov.uk/housing**](http://www.hart.gov.uk/housing)