

WAITING LIST POLICY

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1 Statement of Intent

- 1.1 Maidenhead and District Housing Association (the Association) operates in an area of extremely high housing demand. This policy is part of a series of Lettings Policies that outlines the way the Association operates and manages the lettings of empty properties, in order to maximise scarce resources in the most equitable and ethical way.

2 Aims

- 2.1 The Association aims to provide good quality housing at affordable rents, which will be let to those applicants most in need. The Association will ensure that vacant dwellings are let to new tenants as quickly as possible in order to speed the re-housing of those applicants most in need, and minimise rent loss. In attempting to achieve its aims the Association will have regard to the existing housing circumstances of applicants, and will assist relevant local authorities in meeting their responsibilities towards homeless persons.
- 2.2 In order to meet extremely high demand and to facilitate choice for applicants, the Association will let its properties on the basis of both housing need and waiting time.
- 2.3 The Association aims to:
- Empower applicants so that they can exercise choice in both where they live and the type of property in which they want to live.
 - Create an open, transparent and accountable lettings service that is easily understood by applicants.
 - Help create and maintain sustainable and balanced communities.
 - Let homes quickly and efficiently.
 - Reduce housing management costs.

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3 **Waiting List**

3.1 All applicants who do not currently hold a tenancy with the Association or Windsor Housing must apply to the Waiting List, via the Common Housing Register.

3.2 **Common Housing Register**

3.2.1 The Association works in partnership with local authorities and other housing providers to maintain a common register of applicants for housing. This register is the responsibility of and is managed by local authorities. This list is purely administrative, and contains all active and inactive applicants. Active applications will be placed on either the Statutory Housing Register, or the Association's Waiting List.

3.3 **Statutory Housing Register**

3.3.1 The 1996 Housing Act placed a statutory duty on local authorities to establish a statutory housing register, which also forms part of the common housing register. Local authorities have established a number of nominations agreements with housing associations, which allow local authorities to nominate applicants who are registered on their Statutory Register to relevant local housing associations.

3.4 **MDHA's Waiting List**

3.4.1 The Association has its own waiting list, enabling applicants from out of the area to move to Maidenhead. This waiting list is a points based system; points are allocated according to current circumstances and housing need, and are detailed in Appendix One.

4 **Eligibility**

4.1 Anyone over 18 years of age can apply for housing on the common housing register, but cases will only be admitted to the active section if the applicants can show that there is a housing need.

4.2 To be eligible for the Statutory Housing Register, applicants must have been resident or worked full-time within the local authority area, for a minimum of six months. Furthermore, applicants must not be owner-occupiers (unless they have an overriding priority need as detailed in Priority Cases section below), have ever taken advantage of the Right to Buy scheme, or hold a current housing association or local authority tenancy.

4.3 To be eligible for the Associations Waiting List, applicants must not be owner-occupiers (unless they are over the age of 60, and wish to apply for sheltered housing, or have an overriding priority need as detailed in Priority Cases section below) or have ever taken advantage of the Right to Buy scheme.

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- 4.4 The Association will not accept any applicant onto the Waiting List, who has previously been evicted by the Association, or who has any outstanding former tenant's arrears. Similarly, the Association will not accept a nomination from the Statutory Housing Register for anyone who has previously been evicted by the Association, or who has any former tenant's arrears outstanding.
- 4.5 The Association will not offer a tenancy to any applicant who has deliberately attempted to obtain housing fraudulently, e.g. by knowingly falsifying information during the applications process (if such information comes to light after the tenancy has been signed, the Association may, subject to the available evidence, seek possession of the tenancy via the County Courts).
5. To counter fraud the Association requires that all applicants for housing provide a photograph of themselves. This photograph should be provided by the applicant at the time of signing up for the tenancy. The photograph can be provided in the following ways:
- 5.1 Provision of a recent passport sized / standard photograph;
- 5.2 Provision of a passport or photo ID driving license (which will be copied by the Associations staff), and National Insurance number or;
- 5.3 The Associations staff will take a photograph of the applicant/s at the time of the tenancy sign-up using the Associations equipment.
- 5.4 Photographs will be held on the tenancy file and will not be shared with any person or organisation external to the association.

6 Housing Need

- 6.1 The following is a list of the types of housing need considered within this lettings policy:
- Applicants have fewer bedrooms than they need
 - Applicants have facilities that are either lacking or are shared
 - Applicants are part of a separated household
 - Applicants live in accommodation that they must vacate if they leave their job
 - Applicants have young children living above ground floor level
 - Applicants have young children and no play area or garden
 - Applicants are elderly and living above ground floor
 - Applicants have priority grounds for housing
 - Applicants are elderly and require sheltered housing accommodation

7 Applicants under 18 Years of Age

- 7.1 Applications will only be accepted from anyone between the ages of 16 and 18 years following a Social Services referral and a rent guarantee.

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8 Elderly Persons Requiring Sheltered Housing

- 8.1 Applicants for sheltered housing do not necessarily need to have a separately identified housing need and additional points can be awarded for under-occupation, isolation and age.

9 Owner-Occupiers

- 9.1 Applications received from owner-occupiers will be registered onto the inactive part of the common housing register. However, owner-occupiers above 60 years of age will be accepted onto the active list for sheltered accommodation only.
- 9.2 Owner-occupiers under 60 years of age may be accepted onto the active list if there is an overriding priority need, which they are unable to resolve themselves. Further information on priority housing is given in section 6 below.

10 Priority Cases

- 10.1 Housing applications with an urgent overriding need for re-housing can be considered for priority housing via the Association's Waiting List. However, if awarded a priority, they will only be entitled to receive one offer of accommodation.
- 10.2 Priority cases could include the following:
- a) **Overriding Medical Need**
Priority housing will be considered when the Association's medical advisor considers that there is a serious permanent illness or disability which is made significantly worse by the current living conditions and will be remedied by a move, or the accommodation is no longer suitable for medical reasons and immediate re-housing is vital.
 - b) **Special Needs Cases**
Such cases will normally be referred to the Association by Social Services and can include instances where there is a need for a specially adapted property to meet the needs of a disabled person and where the existing property cannot be adapted.
 - c) **Harassment**
Such cases are usually referred to the Association by Social Services or the Police, and can include any form of harassment, including racial harassment.
 - d) **Social Grounds**
Such cases will normally be referred to the Association by Social Services or the Police, and can include instances where a person has been granted custody of a child and the present accommodation is inadequate.

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e) Environmental Grounds

Such cases would normally be referred to the Association from the Environmental Health Unit of the local council and can include situations where the present accommodation is unfit for continued occupation, or where there are statutory over-crowding issues.

f) Domestic Violence

Such cases are likely to be referred to the Association either by Social Services or by the Police, and can include any form of violence within a household.

- 10.3 Applicants to the Association's Transfer Waiting List may seek priority on grounds (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f). Such decisions may be jointly made by the Association's Independent Medical Adviser, Lettings Manager, Area Housing Officers, Assistant Director of Housing Services, and Neighbourhood Manager, and will be based on the evidence presented.

11 Waiting List Points System

- 11.1 All housing applicants registered onto the active part of the housing register have a need for housing. Because of the high demand for housing and the small number of properties that become available, the Association and Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) must try to ensure that the most urgent cases for re-housing are housed first, and so awards points for different types of housing situations.
- 11.2 Offers of suitable accommodation will always be made to either approved priority cases (see above section on *Priority Cases*) or to those applicants with the highest number of points.
- 11.3 The points system is demonstrated in Appendix One.

12 Offer of Accommodation

- 12.1 Once an applicant has gained sufficient points on the register and accommodation suitable to the applicant's needs is available, the Association will carry out a visit to the applicant's present accommodation to confirm that the correct details have been used to assess their need for housing. If this is satisfactory, an offer will be made by the Association.

13 Appeals Policy

- 13.1 If an applicant feels dissatisfied with a decision made concerning their housing application, then they should discuss the matter in the first instance with the Association's Lettings Manager. If they are still dissatisfied, then the complaint will be dealt with through the Association's Complaints Procedure, details of which are available on request. Complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days and fully investigated. The complainant will be informed of the outcome within 15 working days and informed if the Association is unable to meet this timescale.

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14 Monitoring

- 14.1 In order to ensure that the Association provides housing on an equitable basis, ethnic record keeping and monitoring systems are maintained. Applicants are asked at the time they complete their application to indicate their ethnic origin, as they would describe themselves. This information enables the Association to monitor its procedures for the selection of tenants and the letting of properties.

15 Equal Opportunities

- 15.1 The Association is committed to a policy of fair and equal treatment for all its members, tenants, employees and applicants, regardless of religion, sexual orientation, age, class, racial origin, sex, disability or marital status as determined in the Association's Equality and Diversity Strategy.

16 Review

- 16.1 This Policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions Group policy.

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Waiting List Policy Appendix One – Waiting List Points

Bedroom Requirements

The Association lets accommodation according to the number of bedrooms needed by applicants and their family, as follows.

Person to be accommodated	Basic Minimum
Single person	Single room accommodation
A couple	1 bedroom accommodation
Two persons of the same sex	1 bedroom accommodation
Two persons who are unmarried and not cohabiting (e.g. brother & sister, widow & son)	2 bedroom accommodation

Bedroom Deficiency

The list shown in section 3.1 is used to decide whether an applicant has a bedroom deficiency in their present home. The Association will also ensure that the best possible use is being made of the available space within an applicant's home.

A separate bedroom is considered to be necessary in the following instances.

- Children of different sex when their ages total 8 years or more;
- Children of the same sex where the eldest is aged 8 years or over;
- Any person who needs their own room on medical grounds;
- A dependent relative.

The number of bedrooms currently available to applicants is compared with the number that we consider the applicant needs and points are awarded as follows.

Factor	Points Awarded
For each bedroom lacking Note 1: Bedrooms which are shared with people not included on the application form are not counted. Note 2: Bedrooms that are less than 50 sq. ft in size are not counted for the purpose of this section.	20
Opposite Sexes Sharing a Bedroom Note: Points are awarded where opposite sexes are obliged to share a bedroom, provided they are both over the age of 5 years and are not partners.	5
Inadequate Accommodation: Where facilities are lacking points are awarded as follows:	
Living room	20
Kitchen	20
Toilet (or external only)	20
Running hot water	5
Sink or wash-hand basin	5
Where facilities are shared with relatives* the following points are applied:	
Living room	5

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Kitchen	5
Toilet (or external only)	2
Bathroom	2
Where facilities are shared with non-relatives* the following points are applied:	
Living room	10
Kitchen	10
Toilet (or external only)	4
Bathroom	4
Note: Relatives are immediate family only i.e. grandparents, parents, brothers or sisters.	
Separated Households: Points are awarded when a couple with no children or a family is unable to live together either on medical grounds, or where living together would cause statutory over-crowding in both homes. Note: A family is considered to be either a parent or parents with a child less than 18 years.	15
Tied Accommodation: Accommodation which applicants are required to occupy as a condition of their work (including armed forces).	20
Children Above the Ground Floor	
Points are awarded when children under the age of 14 years are living in maisonettes or flats above ground floor level	5
Additional points are awarded for each floor that the property is above ground floor level where there is no lift.	2
Children Without Gardens or Play Area	
Points are awarded where children are under 14 years of age and have no access to a garden or play area.	5
Elderly Applicants Residing Above Ground Floor:	
Points are awarded where at least one person is over the age of 60 years and living above the ground floor level and there is no lift.	5
Additional points are awarded for each floor above ground floor level.	2
Note: Applicants living in a basement are awarded the same points as if the property was on the first floor.	5
Medical All evidence will be submitted to the Associations medical advisor, and at his / her discretion, priority may be awarded as follows. Where there is an urgent overriding need for housing on medical grounds, the housing application can be considered for priority housing.	
Where the Medical Advisor considers that an individual's health is affected by their housing condition, but is not classed as an overriding medical predicament. Note 1: If housing is required because of ill health or disability, support from a GP may be requested. Applicants should be advised that neither the Association nor the Council will pay GP's for information supplied. Note 2: Medical points will not be awarded where social points have already been awarded.	15
Social Grounds.	

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Where there is an urgent overriding need for re-housing on social grounds, the housing application can be considered for priority re-housing. The final decision of agreeing social priority will be made by the Lettings Manager, Assistant Director of Housing Services, Neighbourhood Manager, or Area Housing Officer.	
Where a housing application is referred to the Association by Social Services or the Police, but is not classed as having an overriding re-housing need. Note: Social points will not be awarded where medical points have already been awarded.	15
Statutory Overcrowding Where an applicant was previously in the top priority category (see section 2.6 Priority Cases) but has refused one reasonable offer of accommodation and their property is still statutorily overcrowded as defined in the Housing Act 1985.	20
Time In Housing Need (Excluding Tied and HM Forces Applicants) Points are awarded according to the number of years there has been a housing need as follows.	
For each year of housing need, up to and including four years.	2
For each year of housing need, from year 5 onwards.	4
Time In Housing Need (Tied & HM Forces Applicants Only) Note: a maximum of 24 points can be awarded in this category.	
For each year of housing need, up to and including four years.	2
For each year of housing need, for year 5 onwards.	8
Local Connection Note: Applicants who can demonstrate some other form of local connection with the Royal Borough, will also be considered for these points. Other examples of local connection would be residence within the Borough of at least 10 years duration over the last 15 years, or having close family living within the Borough whom will either give support to the applicant or receive support from the applicant.	
Applicants who currently live and work within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will qualify for local connection points.	20
Time On List (Applies only to Applicants who were previously registered on the Council's date order list) Points have been awarded on a one-off basis to housing applicants who were previously registered on the Council's date order waiting list. The points shown below are not cumulative and applicants who have been awarded these points will not be entitled to any local connection points.	
Up to four years on the Council's date order list.	25
Over four years, but less than seven years on the Council's date order list.	30
Over seven years on the Council's date order list.	40
Sheltered Accommodation Where at least one of the applicants is over 60 years of age and has requested sheltered accommodation, additional points may be awarded as follows:	
Under Occupation	10

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The points shown are awarded for each bedroom that the applicant currently has in excess of their requirement.	
<p>Isolation Additional points can be awarded where the applicant has no easy access to, for example, relatives, transport or other necessary facilities. Each case will be considered on its merit, and are generally intended to help the elderly or vulnerable people who have support needs.</p>	10
Age (Additional points are awarded as listed below in respect of the eldest person within the household):	
Over 60 years but under 70 years	2
Over 70 years but under 80 years	4
Over 80 years	6
<p>Insecure Tenancies Points are awarded in the following instances, where an applicant is threatened with homelessness and the Council has no statutory duty to provide housing. Note: The points awarded under this heading are cumulative, giving a possible maximum of 35 points. It should be noted that these points will only be awarded whilst the threat of homelessness exists.</p>	
Where the landlord has served a legal Notice to Quit.	5
Where the landlord has been awarded a Possession Order.	10
Where the Court has issued an Eviction Warrant.	20
Points are awarded to applicants who are currently living in hostel or bed and breakfast accommodation where the Council has no statutory duty to provide housing.	20

Waiting List Policy Appendix Two - Nominations Agreements

Maidenhead & District Housing Association has the following nominations agreement with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead:

- 51% of all voids will be allocated by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, from their Statutory Housing Register
- 49% of all voids will be allocated by the Association, of which:
 - 40% from the Association's Transfer List
 - 9% from the Association's Waiting List

Generally, for all new developments within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead:

- 33% of new developments will be allocated by the Association from the Transfer List
- 67% will be allocated by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, from their Statutory Housing Register

For each new development the Association takes on outside of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, an individual nominations agreement is prepared for each development – however the relevant local authority generally retains 100% of the nomination rights.