



Your guide to our
**LETTINGS
POLICY**



Railway Housing Association

LETTINGS POLICY

- 1.** The Association will let to applicants in greatest housing need from the client group for which the property is designated; making best possible use of available stock and where possible creating balanced communities.
- 2.** The Association will let properties on lifetime tenancies.
- 3.** We aim to let homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way, minimising the length of time that properties are empty.
- 4.** Lettings will be made from the Association's waiting lists and to nominees from the appropriate local council. 50% of re-lettings will usually be offered to applicants nominated by the local council. Each nomination will be assessed in accordance with the Association's published lettings policy and points system.
- 5.** The Association operates a points based system and applications are assessed using housing needs points; giving the greatest number of points to those applicants in greatest need. The system is designed to recognise and balance the housing needs of applicants; and the length of time an applicant has spent in their current circumstances.
- 6.** This policy and the points system give reasonable preference to applicants who are homeless; are occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions; who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability; who need to move to a particular locality where failure to meet that need would cause hardship

(to themselves or to others); who are a member or former member of the Armed Forces in urgent housing need within 5 years of discharge, or bereaved spouses and civil partners who are no longer entitled to stay in Ministry of Defence accommodation and do not have alternative suitable accommodation, or are a member or former member of the reserve forces and suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to their service.

- 7.** The following criteria are used in the assessment of housing need -
 - unsatisfactory housing conditions
 - temporary/insecure accommodation
 - the need for settled accommodation on medical/welfare grounds
 - domestic abuse or harassment
 - the need for settled accommodation due to social/economic circumstances.
- 8.** The Association's published points system reflects the priorities between these circumstances.
- 9.** All applications will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's Equality and Diversity policy; and an annual target will be set for achieving a percentage of lettings to Black and Minority Ethnic applicants.
- 10.** Waiting lists will be maintained by location and property type. Each waiting list will be kept to a number that reflects the expected annual turnover and enables applicants to be re-housed within a reasonable length of time.

11. The waiting lists will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the circumstances of all applicants are up to date. If an applicant does not respond to the annual review within 28 days, their application will be cancelled.

The application will be reinstated if the applicant contacts the association within 3 months of the cancellation.

12. Applicants in the following categories may be excluded from the Association's waiting lists -

Persons requiring accommodation for a short period.

Persons under the age of eighteen. This does not include a nominee to whom a duty is owed under the Children's Act 1989 or care leavers deemed to be ready for independent living by their local authority and with a support package and trustee who will hold the tenancy on their behalf until the age of 18 years.

Persons who owe arrears of rent or associated sundry debts from a current or previous tenancy. Waiting list applicants may only be accepted on to the list if they have made and kept to an agreement to re-pay the arrears for a reasonable length of time (for example, 6 months) and have substantially reduced the amount owed (for example, by 50%). Applicants who are subject to either a bankruptcy order or debt relief order that includes housing related debt will be deemed ineligible until this debt is written off at the end of their moratorium period.

Persons who have deliberately given false information on an application form may be excluded for 12 months from the date that the fraud is discovered.

Persons whose application is a result of their own unreasonable behaviour may be excluded for 2 years from the date of the conviction. This will include people guilty of harassment or domestic abuse.

Persons who have been, or have threatened to be, violent to staff may be excluded for 2 years from the date of the incident.

Residents of Railway Housing Association, other Registered Social Landlords or Local Authorities who have been served with a Notice of Seeking Possession may be excluded until the Notice has lapsed and no further action is to be taken.

Persons who have been convicted of an offence against the community may be excluded for 2 years from the date of the conviction. This would include burglary, theft, criminal damage, assault occasioning bodily harm and drug trafficking.

Applicants may be excluded if within the 2 years prior to their application, the applicant or a member of their household has been convicted of an anti social offence, or had an injunction, anti social behaviour order or tenancy enforcement action has been taken against them for anti-social behaviour.

Applicants who do not have the Right to Rent under the Immigration Act 2014, unless nominated by their local council because they meet the requirements of section 160ZA of the Housing Act 1996 (and any subsequent legislation)

Applicants who do not intend to use the property as their only and principal home.

Railway Housing Association

LETTINGS POLICY

13. Applicants will not be automatically excluded from the waiting lists if their circumstances fit one or more of the above categories. Each case will be judged on its merits.

14. In cases of serious housing need, the Association reserves the right to accept applicants who fall within these excluded categories.

15. Applicants who have deliberately worsened their circumstances may not receive any resultant increase in points for 12 months.

16. We will carry out checks with applicants before an offer of accommodation is made to make sure that the home is affordable, taking into account any current or proposed restrictions on housing benefit. If this shows that the applicant does not have sufficient income or recourse to public funds to pay the rent and it would cause financial hardship putting the tenancy at risk then the final offer may not be made.

17. The letting of some properties is restricted by an age criteria. The majority of our ground floor flats, bungalows and all apartments in sheltered housing schemes are reserved for older people or people with a medical need or disabilities who need such accommodation. Applicants and members of their family who do not meet the age criteria for properties will not automatically be excluded from the waiting list. Each case will be considered on its merits and individual circumstances.

18. Re-letting of properties with major adaptations will be made to applicants in most need of such facilities.

19. An application for a transfer will be considered from any existing resident. All residents wishing to transfer will be assisted in accordance with the points system on the basis of housing need.

20. Transfers will not normally be granted where residents are in breach of their tenancy agreement for example, damage to the property, non access for maintenance and gas servicing, threatening or abusive behaviour, or arrears of rent. Transfer applicants who owe arrears of rent or associated sundry debts will be accepted onto the list but will not usually be made an offer of alternative accommodation until their rent account and any associated sundry debts are cleared.

21. In exceptional circumstances, an application to transfer from residents in breach of their tenancy agreement may be considered. Exceptional circumstances would include transfer applicants who owe rent arrears due to under-occupation that has resulted in a reduction in welfare benefits. Each case will be assessed on its merits.

22. Transfer applications which would result in overcrowding or excessive under-occupation of the property would not be accepted.

23. Residents who have to move out of their home to allow major repairs, refurbishment or development work to be carried out will be given priority over other applicants on the waiting list. If more than one resident needs to move then priority will be given in accordance with the programme of works and then to the resident with the longest current tenancy.

24. Priority transfers may be granted when the resulting vacancy is of similar demand as the property applied for and the move will resolve a management problem that cannot be satisfactorily resolved by any other means. In these exceptional circumstances only one offer of suitable alternative accommodation will usually be made.

25. A transfer to more suitable accommodation may be granted to residents releasing an adapted property because their household no longer requires it and there is demand for the property from other applicant(s). In these circumstances, assistance with removal costs may also be granted.

26. We will let properties to match the size and needs of households. This is to make the best use of our properties in meeting housing needs and to ensure full occupancy in order to avoid any reduction in housing benefit payable to residents.

27. The Association will allocate properties in accordance with the Government's guidelines for the payment of housing benefit. The guidelines state that one bedroom is needed for each person or couple, with the following exceptions —

- Children of the same gender and aged under 16 years are expected to share a bedroom.
- Children under 10 years of age are expected to share a bedroom, regardless of their gender
- A disabled tenant or their partner who needs a non-resident overnight carer will be allowed an extra bedroom.

The number of bedrooms required by a household will be assessed by the number of people to be rehoused, their ages and gender.

The association will also take into account the need for more bedrooms for families approved to adopt or foster children, with each case assessed on an individual basis. Such applicants will be considered for the size of property that will be needed to accommodate the number of children that they have been approved to adopt or foster.

Applicants who share the care of their children equally with an ex-partner will be considered for the size of property needed to accommodate their children.

Applicants who have parental contact with children who live with their ex-partner, will be considered for a property with one extra bedroom so that their children can stay with them.

28. In the exceptional circumstances of an offer of a property being made which is larger than the applicant's needs, we will seek assurance that the applicant has the ability to pay the rent due and sustain the tenancy.

Railway Housing Association

LETTING POLICY

29. In the exceptional circumstances of two cases of equal housing need, preference will firstly be given to members of the Benefit Fund (railway industry staff, working or retired) in accordance with the Association's Trust Deed; and then consideration will be given to the points weighting between the applications and the date of application.

30. There is no limit on the number of offers that will be made to an applicant. However, if an applicant does not accept an offer of suitable accommodation within the area of their choice then no further offers of accommodation in that area will usually be made to them. The exception to this is if the applicant has serious social or medical reasons for refusing the offer, or if there are no other applicants for the properties.

31. Lettings will be made to Board members, employees or their relatives or close friends if the applicant qualifies on the waiting list and the letting has been checked and approved by the Chief Executive (or by the Chair if the letting will benefit the Chief Executive or his/her relatives or friends). The Board member or employee who may benefit from the letting or is related to, or a close friend of, the applicant will take no part in the processing of the application or the letting.

32. Applicants who own their own home or have significant financial resources may apply to the Association for re-housing. However, if it is considered that through the sale of their home or use of other financial resources they are able to buy, lease or rent accommodation that is equal to that provided by the Association (in

terms of both quality of accommodation and security of tenure) then an offer of accommodation will only be made if there is no demand from other eligible applicants.

33. Applicants who are not eligible to register on the association's waiting list or are unlikely to be offered accommodation, will be given advice about alternative housing options such as other social landlords, mutual exchanges, private rented sector, low cost home ownership and shared ownership properties.

34. Residents with a secure or assured tenancy may exchange their tenancy with another resident from a local council or housing association. Permission will not be withheld except on the grounds of Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985.

35. The Association will participate in national and local mobility exchange schemes.

36. The Association will participate in local choice based lettings schemes where this is the local council's means of providing nominations or when it is in the interest of the Association and applicants to do so.

37. Any applicant may appeal against a decision made in respect of their application for housing. The appeal will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's Complaints Procedure.

We will let properties to match the size and needs of households. This is to make the best use of our properties in meeting housing needs and to ensure full occupancy.

We aim to let homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way, minimising the length of time that properties are empty.



Information can be made available in other languages, or other formats such as Braille or Audio Tape, on request. Please ask a member of our staff for more information, or if you need any other help or advice. (They can arrange to speak to you in your own language if you need them to.)

L'information peut être rendue disponible dans d'autres langues, ou en d'autres formats tels que braille ou bande magnétique audio, sur demande. Veuillez demander à un membre de notre personnel pour plus d'information, ou si vous avez besoin de tout autre aide ou conseil. (ils peuvent organiser de vous parler en votre propre langue si vous avez besoin qu'ils le fassent.)

Bilgiler istenildi_inde di_er dillerde de temin edilebilir ayrıca görme özürlülerin kullanabilece_i kabartma alfabetesi veya Teyp kaseti _eklinde de hazırlanabilir. Daha fazla bilgi için veya herhangi bir konuda yardım ve tavsiye ye ihtiyacınız varsa lütfen görevli personelinden birisiyle konu_unuz. (E_er ihtiyacınız varsa personelimiz sizinle kendi dilinizde konu_abilmek için bir tercüman arayabilir).

نستطيع توفير المعلومات بلغات أخرى وصيغ أخرى مثل البريل (لفادي البصر) والشراط الصوتية، حسب الطلب. يرجى الاستفسار من أحد موظفينا للحصول على المزيد من المعلومات أو للحصول على المساعدة أو الإرشاد. (يستطيع موظفونا توفير وسائل أخرى للتحدث معكم بلغتكم اذا احتجتم الى ذلك).

该资料已被翻译为其它的语言，也有诸如盲文或录音磁带的其它形式供选。请询问我们的职员以便获得进一步的资料、其它帮助或建议。(如果你有需要，他们可以安排用你自己的语言来和你交谈。)

در صورت درخواست ، اطلاعات به زبانهای دیگر در نسخه قرار خواهد گرفت و یا به هر شکل دیگر از قبیل خط برجهست و یا صدا. جهت دریافت اطلاعات بیشتر و یا دریاف راهنمایی و کمک، لطفاً از یک کارمند سوال کنید. (آنها میتوانند ترتیبی بهدهند که در صورت لزوم با زبان خودتان با شما صحبت کنند).

زانیاریانه به زمانی خوتان دست ده که ویت، و یا به شیوه کاتی دیکه، له وانه به خه تی گه وره و یا به ده نگ. نه گه ر پیوسته به زانیاری زورتر، یارمه تی و یا ناموزکاری هه یه، تکایه پرسیار بکه له یه کیک له کارمه نده کان. (نه وان کاریکی واده که ن که به زمانی خوت له گه لانا قese بکه ن).

بچندی کران ڈے، جاٹکارا ڈسمریاں بولیاں، جاؤ ہر ٹپاں جی دے کی بچرلے جاؤ آڈاٹیٹ ٹپ ڈے دی ہینڈی جا سکری ہی۔ ہر جاٹکارا ڈسمرے، جاؤ جیکر ڈھاڑنے ہوئے سہاہیتا جاؤ سلاہ دی ٹنڈے ہی ڈاں کیپا کر کے مادے مٹاڈ دے کیسے میٹھر دی پھڈے۔ (جیکر ڈھسیں چھوڑ دے ہو ڈاں ڈھاڈے نال ڈھاڈی آپاٹی بولیاں ہیچ گلہاڈاٹ کران دا پڑیپ کر سکرے ہو نا)

پر معلومات گزارش کرنے پر دیگر زبانوں یا برگ صور توں، جیسا کہ بریل (لائمی ہوئی کھائی، بیوغا شاخص کے پڑھنے کی لکھائی کیاسی ذی اور پیپ پر ہی فراہم کی جاسکی ہیں۔ مزید معلومات یا اگر کپ کو کسی مدیا مشورے کی ضرورت ہو، تو بر او مریانی ہمارے عمل کے ممبر سے بات کریں۔ (اگر کپ کو ضرورت ہو تو وہ کپ سے اپنی زبان میں بات کرنے کا انتظام کر سکتے ہیں)۔

Contact us

Our office in Darlington, Maple House, 11 Tillage Green, Westpark, Darlington, DL2 2GL
is open between 8.30 am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Free phone: **0800 0287428** | Email: info@railwayha.co.uk

www.railwayha.co.uk

 /railwayha

 /railwayhousingassociation

Registered Social Landlord: A1855 | Registered Charity: 1188450
Member of the Housing Ombudsman Service

