



Housing Applications and Allocations:



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



PARAGON
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

www.paragonha.org.uk

HOUSING APPLICATIONS AND ALLOCATIONS:



We get lots of people asking about how to apply for a house from us and we hope that these FAQs can help to explain how it works. This is a guide to our policy and procedures. You can find the full policy at paragonha.org.uk/policy-library.

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Applying for a Paragon Property?



Everyone applying for a house needs to complete our standard Housing Application Form.

Visit our website at **www.paragonha.org.uk** to download a form - the apply for a home button on the home page will take you there.

Or you can email us at **enquiries@paragonha.org.uk** and we'll post one out to you. We can also make the form available in different formats, or help you to fill it in.

The completed and signed form, must be returned to our Housing Operations and Support Team (HOST) at our office in Grangemouth or you can email it to us.

Our HOST team is here to help you so please get in touch on **01324 664966** if you need any further assistance.

Who can apply?

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 makes it a legal requirement that anyone over the age of 16 is entitled to be admitted to our housing waiting list.

It is important to note that admission to the waiting list is no guarantee of an offer of a property.

The Association operates a "housing needs" based lettings system where each application is assessed according to the household's circumstances. Points are awarded according to housing need e.g. overcrowding, homelessness, insecurity, medical need etc.

Offers of housing will be made to those with the highest level of points for that size of property in that area as they become available.

What information do I need to provide?

We don't ask you to provide ID with your application, but we will ask to see some identification before any offer of accommodation is made.

If your application shows that you need to be considered for certain types of points (for example insecurity) then we do need to see the supporting evidence (for example your notice to quit, or your homeless decision letter). If you do not include this with your application then we will write out and ask to see it before the additional points are awarded.



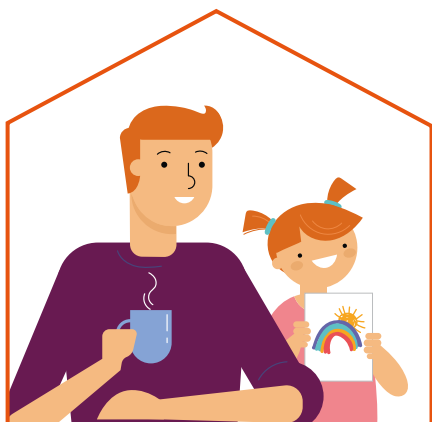
What happens when I apply?

The date we receive the form will be the date of the application.

We will send you an acknowledgement letter advising that we have received your application within 5 working days of receipt. Following this, you will be sent another letter within a further 2 weeks confirming the date of your application, along with details of the points you have been awarded and the size of property you are being considered for.

Your application will be processed in accordance with our Lettings Policy, and if you are assessed as being in housing need, you will be awarded points accordingly.

A copy of our Allocations Policy is available to download from our website at: paragonha.org.uk/policy-library.



What are points awarded for?

All applications are initially awarded 10 points for registration. 'Priority' points are awarded for the following reasons:

01

Under occupation (too many bedrooms) – housing association and council tenants only

02

Over occupation (not enough bedrooms)

03

Insecurity – if you have a notice to quit or don't have a tenancy of your own

04

Children in flats

05

Medical reasons – where existing property not suitable

06

Social reasons – supporting evidence is required



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Property Types and Sizes



The Association uses the following definitions to describe property sizes:

A living room counts as **1 apartment**, then the number of other rooms is added on to describe the property size, e.g. a property with a living room and 2 bedrooms is a **3 apartment**. Kitchens and bathrooms are not counted as apartments.

In some of our properties, there may be a dining room, and this would count as an apartment, e.g. a property with a living room, 3 bedrooms and a dining room is a **5 apartment**.

Most of our properties are **3 or 4 apartments**. We also have some smaller properties which are bedsits that have no separate living room.

Types – we have a variety of property types, and here is a brief description of the main types:

Cottage Type – usually back and front door with internal stairs.

Bungalow – usually back and front door with all rooms on the same level.

Tenement Flats – usually a block of flats sharing a close/stair with common areas outside like back court and bin stores.

4 in a block flats – There are 2 main types. 4 flats in a block with their own entrance door from a close and internal staircase to upper flats and also 4 in a block cottage type flats with their own external access.

Maisonettes – blocks of properties with an internal “upstairs / downstairs”. There is an individual entrance for lower properties and upper maisonettes are accessed from a walkway reached by a shared stairway.





What size of property am I entitled to?

The Association's policy setting out the match between property and household size is as follows:

Single applicant – 1 bedroom / 2 Apartment

Single applicant with proven access to child(ren)
– 1 or 2 bed / 2 or 3 Apartment

Couple – 1 or 2 bedrooms / 2 or 3 Apartment

Household larger than 3 people (including children)
– 2 plus bedrooms / 3 plus apartment.



Apartments taken into consideration are the lounge and bedrooms but not the kitchen and bathroom. For example, a 3-apartment house usually has a lounge and 2 bedrooms.

The Housing Manager may grant a suspension of the normal property size rules in special circumstances. For example, if an applicant has an established need to live in a particular area but no suitable size of property is available in that area.





When will I receive an offer?



The Association works closely with local councils in the 3 local authority areas of **Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling**, where we have properties.

When a property becomes vacant, we approach the relevant local authority to nominate an applicant from their waiting list for half the vacancies. So, it is always worth making an application to the relevant local authority as you might be nominated for a home with us.

When a Paragon property is available to let, we will run a “lettings list” identifying the applicants with the highest points. The applicant with the highest points for that area with a need for the relevant size/ type of property will be contacted to arrange for a verification visit to be undertaken. This visit enables us to check that your application has been correctly pointed. At this stage we are not making you an offer of a home but taking steps to process your application.

If we establish that your points are correct we will invite you to view the property.

Existing Tenants

If you are a tenant of the Association you can apply to transfer to alternative Association accommodation. These applications will be assessed in the same way that new applicants do. Points are awarded on a housing needs basis.

If you are an existing tenant and you have rent arrears, you can still apply for a transfer. However, an offer of accommodation may be withheld until such time as a suitable repayment plan has been set up and adhered to for at least 3 months in line with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Please contact us to discuss this as personal circumstances are taken into consideration.

If you wish to transfer please note that a pre-tenancy termination inspection (PTTI), will be undertaken of your existing home. This will be done at the offer stage and any outstanding repairs that are your responsibility required will need to be completed by you. If you don't do this, we may withdraw the offer.





Can I choose where I want to live?



The Association has properties in the 3 local authority areas of Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling. We provide a list of the streets by area where we have properties. This list tells you about the types and sizes of properties in each area.

When you apply for housing with us, you can select as many areas as you wish, but remember to check what size and type of property we have in that area as you may not qualify for the size of property, or it may not be a type that suits you.

In some areas, properties become available more frequently than in others. To help everyone understand this, we publish an Allocations Bulletin quarterly. This Bulletin can be accessed through the download sections of our website to show you where we have had vacancies. Please only select areas where you would accept an offer of accommodation otherwise, we may offer you something unsuitable.

We suggest that, if you can, you look around areas where you think you might want to live before you make an application.

You can alter your area selections, at any time, by contacting our Housing Operations and Support Team (HOST) in writing or by email. Or you can phone us, and we will email/write to you to confirm the changes.

What if my circumstances change?

Please immediately advise our Housing Operations & Support Team (HOST) so that we can amend your records. Such changes include changes in family size, for example, the birth of a child or change of address. When notifying us of changes in family size, such as the birth of a child, please give the child's full name and date of birth.

If your address changes, you will be required to complete a new application form, and your application will be reassessed because your application is based on your current accommodation. Your date of application will remain the same.

If you don't notify changes of circumstances to us, it may lead to an offer of accommodation being withdrawn.



If you move house and no longer want to be considered for housing with us any more, please let us know. You are helping others on the list waiting for housing to be considered more quickly.

Will I always stay on the housing waiting list?

The Association carries out a “rolling review” of the waiting list. All applicants will be contacted around the anniversary of their housing application to check if they still wish to be considered for housing. This is important so we can update the waiting list and take anyone off the list that no longer needs to be there. It helps others to be housed more quickly.

If you don't reply, your application will be removed from all waiting lists. You can reapply at any time, but you will lose your original date of application.

Can I check to see if my details are correct?

Yes. If you wish to check, please contact our Housing Operations and Support Team (HOST), who will advise what information has been recorded on your application.

How can I find out where I am on the list?

We are unable to provide applicants with a number on the waiting list as it frequently changes, e.g. someone may apply and be awarded more points than you. However, your points will indicate the likelihood of your being offered housing. Keep a check out for our Allocations Bulletin so you can see how properties are moving.

What if I have nowhere to stay or am about to lose my home?

The Council (Your Local Authority) has a legal duty, in certain instances, to secure temporary and/or permanent accommodation for those who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness.

Please contact your local Council if you think you may be/about to become homeless.

We do not provide temporary accommodation. However, we give points for homelessness and the threat of homelessness so you can apply to us. Please make sure you have the necessary evidence so we can consider the points to be awarded.

Former Tenants

If you have previously been a tenant of Paragon, your application will be accepted on to the housing waiting list. However, any outstanding arrears from the former tenancy may lead to an offer of housing being withheld. However, if you set up a suitable repayment plan, your application can be considered once you have adhered to and arranged for a reasonable period, or time that is at least 3 months, in line with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. If this is your situation, don't hesitate to contact our Housing Operations and Support Team (HOST) to discuss this further.



What happens if I move house?

If you move to another property and wish to stay on the waiting list, you must complete a new application form. Your application will be re-assessed, and your points may change or be removed.

Please note that if you have moved house within the last 12 months and your new home is unsuitable for your household's needs, you may be deemed to have deliberately worsened your circumstances. This assessment will depend on how reasonable it was to move and whether your previous home met your household's needs. This penalty may also apply to applicants who have given up secure accommodation to move to an insecure tenancy.

If you are deemed to have deliberately worsened your circumstances, your application may be suspended for 12 months from the date you worsened your circumstances. This means that you will not be considered for any vacant properties during that period. If you are unhappy with this decision, you can appeal. If you would like advice before taking a decision that may affect your points, please contact us on **01324 664966**.

I own my own house; can I still apply?

Yes, you can still apply for a Paragon tenancy if you own your own home. However, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 means that we must consider whether or not owning your own home means you can resolve your own housing need – for example by selling it and buying another property. For this reason, some categories of points may not be awarded to owners.

What if I don't agree with the points I have been awarded?

If you disagree with the points you have been awarded; you can appeal to the Housing Manager. You will need to tell us why you think the points awarded are wrong and the Housing Manager will review your application. You can also make a complaint to the Association and details on how to do this can be found on our website.



Further Information

If you require further information, please contact our Housing Operations and Support Team (HOST) on telephone **01324 664966**.



*Putting the people we serve at the heart of our services
and putting heart into our communities*



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