**Frequently Asked Questions: Housing**

1. **How are points broken down for individual tenant needs on the Transfer List? How does the ‘band’ system work and how are points awarded?**

The council tenant transfer queue is open to existing Wandsworth Council tenants who are eligible and a qualifying person for allocation and who are seeking to move to alternative accommodation.

Applications within the council tenant transfer queue will be assessed according to the main points scheme and then will be placed into one of four bands based on priority (A (highest) B, C, D (lowest)). Priority between applicants in the same band will be determined by time waiting. Offers will be made in date order from date of entry into the band, subject to suitability considerations and targets within the annual Allocations Plan.

Below is a table outlining the points scheme. The more points accrued, the higher your position on the transfer queue.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Overcrowding** | For one bedroom lacking | 50 |
| For two bedrooms lack | 150 |
| For three or more bedrooms lacking | 200 |
| **Statutory Overcrowding** | Additional overcrowding points for households statutorily overcrowded | 20 |
| **Unsanitary** | Lacking a living room, kitchen, bathroom | 30 |
| **Sharing** | Sharing a living room, kitchen or bathroom with persons outside of your household | 15 |
| **Unsatisfactory Housing** | Two or more children having to share bedroom with a parent or parents | 25 |
| Exception to the above points: single persons assessed as requiring a self-contained studio flat |  |
| **Medical Need** | Diagnosed ill health or disability, but not of significance to current or future housing needs | 0 |
| Diagnosed ill health or disability, with minor relevance to current or future housing needs | 25 |
| Diagnosed ill health or disability, with moderate relevance to current or future housing needs | 75 |
| Diagnosed ill health or disability, with major relevance to current or future housing needs | 150 |
| The above points award will be made in respect of the person in the household whose ill health has the greatest relevance to current or future housing needs. Five additional points may be added for each additional person within the household affected by diagnosed ill health or disability which is relevant to current or future housing needs |  |
| **Tenure** | Households who are homeless, including rough sleepers, within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) excluding cases accepted within the ‘Homeless Queue’ | 25 |
| **Hardship** | Households with an established need to move to a particular locality within the borough where failure to meet that need would case hardship (to themselves or others) | 10 |
| **Back Boiler** | Additional points for overcrowded households who use the living room for sleeping purposes and a back boiler is located in this living room | 25 |
| **Working Households** | Households awarded points under any of the criteria above with at least one household member who is 16 years old or over and working 24 hours or more per week in paid employment | 50 |

The number of points you receive will determine your priority band for re-housing, with band A being the highest and band D being the lowest:

* Band A - 300 points or more
* Band B - 150 to 299 points
* Band C - 50 to 149 points
* Band D - 1 to 49 points

For the most up to date information, refer to [the allocation scheme](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/media/1269/wandsworth_allocation_scheme.pdf).

1. **Private renting – How can we advise families who are considering alternative private accommodation but may struggle to afford the high rents?**

The quickest way to find a property is to ask friends and family or search online. You can also check local estate agents and newsagents. Renting from a landlord or letting agent will depend on your budget and what services you might want. You can find a list of websites to search for properties on the Council website.

[Finding a place to rent - Wandsworth Borough Council](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing/homelessness-and-temporary-accommodation/preventing-homelessness/your-housing-options/finding-a-place-to-rent/)

If you’ve found a private rented property and are having problems with paying the deposit or upfront costs you may be able to apply for financial assistance through our rent deposit scheme (eligibility, terms and conditions apply).

[Renting and financial help - Wandsworth Borough Council](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing/homelessness-and-temporary-accommodation/preventing-homelessness/your-housing-options/renting-and-financial-help/)

You can also find advice on private renting from independent charities and organisations, like Shelter: [Housing advice from Shelter - Shelter England](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice)

You should consider asking any prospective tenants these questions before considering accommodation options:

1. Where did you live before? How long did you live there?
2. How long have you lived in the borough? \*They have to have lived in the borough for at least three years
3. What is your income? Better chance of renting privately if they are working part time.
4. Have they got an expenditure sheet? What does this say? What’s their budget?
5. Who is currently in your household
6. Have you ever had an eviction? Was this because of rent arrears?
7. Are there any issues I should know about before I run a background screening for all the adults in the household?
8. Do you have any questions for me about the process?
9. Have you got any dependents?
10. **Main Housing Association Contact Details…**

*Wandle*

Phone: (0208) 682-1177
Email: allocations@wandle.com
Address: 232 Mitcham road, Tooting, SW17 9NN

*Optivo*

Phone: 0800 121 6060
Email:
Address: Colwell House, 376, Clapham Road, London, Surrey, SW9 9AR

*Peabody*

Phone: (0207) 021 4000
Email: 1stadmin@peabody.org.uk
Address: 45 Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7JB

*L&Q*

Phone: 0844 406 9000
Email: lqdirect@lqgroup.org.uk
Address: 1, Kings Hall Mews, London, Kent, SE13 5JQ

1. **What is the process of a transfer if their Housing Association doesn’t have this within its scheme?  For example, Wandle H/A stopped internal transfers in 2018.**

Some Housing Associations, like Wandle, no longer operate a choice-based lettings system. This means that those in need of a housing transfer will need to register directly with Wandsworth Council.

In these cases, the person seeking housing will have to apply directly through the council to join the housing waiting list. You can find out more about how to join the housing waiting list by following this link: [Apply to join the housing waiting list - Wandsworth Borough Council](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing/apply-for-housing/apply-to-join-the-housing-waiting-list/).

1. **Does Wandsworth provide contact links to other London Councils? This would be beneficial as many families who are housed in Wandsworth by other Councils struggle to contact them.**

We don’t have a directory for roles applicable to Housing in other local authorities. You will have to source these contact details by visiting the relevant council’s website.

1. **Where can information be found about Private Letting?**

You can read this Private Letting leaflet provided by Communities and Local Government to find out more information about the process.

[Letting your home (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/9427/324582.pdf)

The leaflet outlines your responsibilities as a landlord, answers questions about tenancy issues, repairs and your tax position.

1. **What schemes are available to help residents move to the coast?**

Homefinder

This scheme helps tenants move nationally, perhaps for a better job or to be nearer to family. Through the scheme you can find a variety of properties to exchange with or rent throughout the UK.

You can register to apply if you are:

* An existing Wandsworth Council tenant or
* Living in temporary accommodation (where the council has accepted a homeless duty)

Find out more about the Homefinder scheme here: [Move around the UK - Wandsworth Borough Council](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants-and-leaseholders/council-tenants/council-tenant-re-housing-options/move-out-of-wandsworth/move-out-of-wandsworth-around-the-uk/)

House exchange

The Mutual Exchange Scheme helps existing council and housing association tenants living anywhere in the UK to move to another home by swapping their properties with each other.

You can swap homes provided:

* Both households agree to move
* You have each received written consent from your landlord before you move

To find someone to swap homes with, you can register for free with House Exchange.

You can also advertise and search for someone to swap with by using newsagents' windows or local newspapers.

If you find a swap or would like further details, please contact the accommodation placement team on allocationteam@wandsworth.gov.uk.

Find out more about the House Exchange Scheme here: [Swap your home - Wandsworth Borough Council](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants-and-leaseholders/council-tenants/council-tenant-re-housing-options/swap-your-home/)

Seaside and country homes scheme

The scheme's landlords manage approximately 3,500 bungalows and flats along the coast, from Cornwall to Norfolk as well as Lincolnshire and across the countryside from Dorset to Cambridgeshire.

To register for this scheme you need to be:

* A council tenant
* Aged 60 plus
* Living in London

Find out more about the Seaside and country homes scheme here: [Move to the seaside or country - Wandsworth Borough Council](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants-and-leaseholders/council-tenants/council-tenant-re-housing-options/move-out-of-wandsworth/move-out-of-wandsworth-seaside-or-country/)

1. **Bedroom sizes – When a family requests Social Housing and they have older children do we take these into account when determining how many bedrooms the family are entitled to?**

The number of persons living at the property will be taken into consideration when determining the number of bedrooms regardless of their age.

The size of accommodation offered depends upon the size and composition of the applicant’s household. With the exception of the council’s interest queue, this will apply across all access queues, as follows:

* Single person households may be offered either a studio flat or one-bedroom accommodation.
* Accepted homeless households consisting of a single person or couple and one child who is younger than three years of age will, as long as they are not expecting a second child, be offered self-contained one-bedroom accommodation.

Thereafter one bedroom is required for:

* a couple
* each un-partnered adult aged 21 years or more
* each pair of adolescents aged 10-20 years of the same sex
* each pair of children aged under 10 years regardless of sex
* where none of the above applies, a person aged 10-20 years will be paired with a child aged under 10 years of the same sex
* any remaining unpaired person will be allocated a separate bedroom.

More information can be found in [The Housing Allocation Scheme.](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/media/1269/wandsworth_allocation_scheme.pdf)

1. **What is the process of a Housing Application request?**

**Eligibility**

Housing will only be allocated to applicants who are registered on the council’s housing queues for social housing. To be registered an applicant must be: (a) eligible for social housing in England (b) a qualifying person for social housing in Wandsworth (as determined by the provisions of the housing allocation scheme). (c) Be 18 years old or over, unless applying under the homeless, supported, social care queues, or accepted under the New Generation scheme.

**Application**

An application for the allocation of accommodation by the council must be made by accessing the online form at www.wandsworth.gov.uk/hcs/housingoptions.

**Allocation plan**

Within each queue, all eligible and qualifying applicants are placed within one of four bands, with band A being the highest priority and band D being the lowest.

Applicants are placed into bands on a basis of how many points they accrue. The point scheme is used to assess the needs for a property, taking into consideration factors such as overcrowding and medical need. The more points you are given, the higher priority band you are likely to be.

**Applicant Queues**

Most applicants will, if accepted, be registered on the general needs queue. However, dependent on circumstance, you may be placed on a different priority queue.

**Offer**

If we are considering making you an offer, you may be visited or contacted by an officer to discuss and verify the information you have provided.

Once you accept the offer, you will need to sign a tenancy agreement – you will normally be given an introductory tenancy.

Refer to [the Allocation Scheme](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/media/1269/wandsworth_allocation_scheme.pdf) for more information.

### Council Rent Deposit Scheme

The Rent Deposit Scheme can help those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness find a home in the private rented sector. We may be able to assist you with the cost of a deposit and rent in advance if you:

* Have a [priority need](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing/apply-for-housing/qualifying-and-priority-criteria-for-social-housing/) for housing
* Homeless or threatened with homelessness in the next 28 days
* Have recourse to public funds

You will be required to submit a [homelessness application](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing/homelessness-and-temporary-accommodation/preventing-homelessness/our-homelessness-duties/apply-for-a-housing-options-assessment/) and be subject to an assessment. If we notify you that you would qualify for this scheme we will assist you with finding private rented accommodation. Please note that depending on your assessed affordability this may not be within the borough.

For further information contact housing at applications@wandsworth.gov.uk.

1. **How to contact the Housing and Regeneration Department and Ombudsman**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **General enquiries** | (020) 8871 6840  |
| **Housing options and assessment team** | housingapplications@wandsworth.gov.uk020 8871 6161 |
| **Out of hours emergency social services** | 020 8871 6000 |
| **Wandsworth Emergency Control** | (020) 8871 7490 |
| **Allocations team** | allocationteam@wandsworth.gov.uk020 8871 6161 |
| **Home ownership team** | housesales@wandsworth.gov.uk 020 8871 6161 |
| **Housing management: council tenants and leaseholders** | hms@wandsworth.gov.uk  |
| **Local Government Ombudsman** | Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EHTelephone: 0300 061 0614 |
| **Tenancy Support Service**  | shsbusinesssupport@richmondandwandsworth.gov.ukSupported housing services business support team: 020 8871 8198 / 5388Emergency response officers: 020 8871 7741 |
| **Housing Ombudsman** | Housing Ombudsman Service, 81 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HNTelephone: 0300 111 3000Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk |
| **Central Area** | Tel: 0208 871 5333If you want to find out who the Estate Manager is then please contact this tel. and they will tell you who the Estate Manager is, and their email address.  |
| **Southern Area** | Tel: 0208 871 7288 If you want to find out who the Estate Manager is then please contact this tel. and they will tell you who the Estate Manager is, and their email address. |
| **Eastern Area** | Tel: 0208 871 7439If you want to find out who the Estate Manager is then please contact this tel. and they will tell you who the Estate Manager is, and their email address. |
| **Western Area** | Tel: 0208 871 5520If you want to find out who the Estate Manager is then please contact this tel. and they will tell you who the Estate Manager is, and their email address. |

If you are not happy with the decision, you can contact one of the relevant department from the table above in order to receive a review.

1. **What are the different housing queues?**
2. Homeless queue

Homeless applicants will be assessed under the allocation scheme when the council accepts it has a duty. Applicants owed this duty will then be placed in the homeless queue, unless already matched to private rented sector offer.

Accepted applications within this queue will be placed into one of two bands, A (highest) or B, and priority between applicants in the same band will be determined by time waiting. Read more on page 23 of the Allocations Scheme.

1. General needs queue

The general needs queue will include qualifying applicants who are:

* 1. Homeless but not owed the principal homelessness duty
	2. Not an existing introductory or secure council tenant seeking transfer
	3. Not applying for specialised adapted or supported accommodation
	4. Displaced persons; e.g. households who lost their accommodation due to demolition
	5. HM Forces applicants not threatened with homelessness or accepted as being owed the duty referred to in (a)
	6. Accepted by the council as a qualifying person and eligible for an offer under the New Generation Scheme (NGS)
	7. Accepted by the council as eligible for an offer under the Housing into Work scheme.

Read more on pages 23-24 of the Allocations Scheme.

1. Old persons housing queue (sheltered housing)

The council maintains a separate queue for older people seeking sheltered housing.

Any eligible and qualifying person aged 55 years or over can apply for sheltered housing. Factors that may be taken into consideration are:

* Whether appropriate and satisfactory risk and support plans are in place
* Whether the applicant would be able to live in a sheltered scheme without any risk to existing residents or staff.

Read more on pages 26-28 of the Allocations Scheme

1. Physical disability queue

The council maintains a separate queue for people seeking specially designed or adapted property suitable for persons with physical disabilities. All applications are subject to assessment by the council’s occupational therapy service (OT).

Read more on page 29 of the Allocations Scheme.

1. Supported queue

The council maintains a separate queue to provide general needs housing to assist care management processes for those households consisting of, or including someone, with a particular need for housing on welfare grounds. Applicants within this queue will include persons nominated by social services under inter-department co-operative working arrangements, persons suffering mental ill health and persons with learning disabilities who require specific support.

You can read more on page 30 of the allocations scheme.

1. Social care queue

The purpose of the social care queue is to provide housing for families with children or other persons nominated by children’s social services under joint protocol arrangements within the council.

You can read more about the social care queue on pages 31-32 of the allocations scheme.

1. Council’s interest queue

This queue is open to existing introductory or secure (including flexible) tenants of Wandsworth Council who are either:

* 1. Required to leave their homes at the request of the council because of the need to carry out major works or essential repairs
	2. Need to move from a situation of immediate risk
	3. Under-occupiers who wish to “downside” under the Room to Move scheme
	4. Requested to move in pursuance of other stated policy objectives, for example concerning community wellbeing, crime reduction

You can read more on pages 32-35 of the allocations scheme.

**Wandsworth’s Legal Duty to Provide Homelessness Services**

Someone approaches the council seeking homelessness services…

The person approaching is **already homeless…**

The person approaching is **threatened** **with homelessness…**

Relief Duty

If the person is already homeless, or we have been unable to prevent their homelessness within 56 days, we will work to help relieve their homelessness and find them a home.

For up to 56 days, well will set out agreed actions to help secure an alternative home for at least six months. These steps will be put in a personal housing plan.

Prevention Duty

For up to 8 weeks (56 days) we will set out agreed actions to help the applicant either remain in their existing home or to help secure alternative accommodation. These steps will be pet in a personal housing plan.

*Personal Housing Plan:*

*During the prevention and relief stages, we will provide the homelessness applicant with a personalised housing plan. This sets out the actions that should be taken to prevent them from losing their home or to help to find an alternative home for at least 6 months.*

If homelessness has not been prevented after 56 days…

Main Housing Duty

We will have a duty to find suitable alternative accommodation for those who are owed the main housing duty. An offer of accommodation is likely to be in the private rented sector, could be outside of Wandsworth and possibly outside of London.

After 56 days, the relief duty comes to an end. If we have not been able to find and secure accommodation, we will assess whether a main housing duty will be owed to the applicant after the relief duty ends. The main housing duty is only owed to those who remain homeless after the relief duty has ended and are in priority need and have not made themselves intentionally homeless.