

Royal Borough of
Windsor & Maidenhead

**Guidance on how to apply
for Accommodation in the**

**Royal Borough of Windsor &
Maidenhead**

Self Assessment

Before considering an application for housing in RBWM we suggest you check to see if you can make an application.

Those who cannot apply for housing are as follows:

Persons who are adequately housed and have no housing need.

Existing tenants of any Local Authority or Registered Social Provider.

Persons who have been placed in accommodation in the Borough by another Local Authority.

Applicants who are owners/owner occupiers of property. Applicants who have owned a property in the last five years will need to provide proof of equity from the sale of the property before being considered from their new address. If equity plus current income shows no financial hardship, then the applicant will be advised to purchase or rent accommodation. In order that priority is given to those without a home or adequate facilities, owner occupiers will be advised to repurchase by trading down. If their property requires improvement, they will be referred to the Environmental Health Team/Unit for assistance with an Improvement Grant.

Person/s who have, held a tenancy with a Registered Social Provider, within the previous five years from date of application, and have given up that tenancy or have been evicted from that tenancy.

Former tenants who have purchased a Council/Housing Association property through the "Right To Buy" provision (jointly or otherwise), or moved through a Cash Incentive Scheme.

Persons who have a history of rent arrears at any accommodation within the previous five years from date of application.

Persons who have been granted a deposit loan to secure accommodation in the private sector and have not maintained payments will not be nominated for a property until the loan has been repaid and as such will not be considered for housing.

Persons who are admitted to Hospital and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead was not their last address for 2 years prior to that stay/admission.

Persons who have no local connection to this Authority.

A person who has been sponsored to enter this country within 5 years of the date of application and where the sponsor is still alive.

Person/s who have sponsored another person to enter this country.

Persons who are disqualified under the Housing Act 1996 S.160A (these include people from abroad who are ineligible for an allocation of housing).

Persons who have been guilty of anti-social behaviour who have either had a Possession Order sought, or where the Authority believes that the behaviour would lead to a Possession Order being granted if that person or their household were a tenant, and that behaviour has taken place anytime in the 5 years prior to application.

Persons who have physically assaulted a member of staff.

Stage 1

In order to be considered for any accommodation within this Borough you must have a local connection with this Borough.

A 'local connection' means that you must be resident within the Borough and have lived here continuously for a period of 2 years

Or

You must be in full time permanent employment within the Borough and have been employed for a period of 2 years.

Stage 2

In addition to having a local connection the following people may apply for consideration for Housing in the Borough:

Those people who have both a local connection and a demonstrable housing need. Who are aged 18 years of age and over (16 and 17 year olds to whom the Council owes a duty will be assessed outside this framework).

Applicants aged 60 years or more who are resident outside the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (providing they are not owner occupiers), and they have a son or daughter who currently lives in the Borough and has done so for the previous 5 years.

Owner occupiers of mobile homes or houseboats will be admitted to the Housing Register, if they can supply evidence that the value of the property will not allow them to sell and purchase or rent a home more suited to their needs.

Persons in Hospital, whose last settled address (prior to hospital admission) was, for a period of 2 years, within the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.

Persons in H.M.Forces accommodation (see Allocations Policy)

Persons who the Council considers should be eligible persons on a case by case basis because of exceptional circumstances or special needs.

Other applicants who are eligible by law.

Who are recognised Key Workers.

Stage 3

An application form.

You can print the form from www.RBWM.gov.uk or obtain a form by contacting 01628 683800 or by calling into the Town Hall, Maidenhead or York House, Windsor.

Stage 4

Assessment.

Your form will be assessed and you will be placed in 1 of 3 bands. The bands are:

Band A – Urgent requirement to move with the greatest housing need (Reasonable Preference and Additional Preference)

Band B – Requirement to move with a lesser housing need (Reasonable Preference or Additional Preference)

Band C – Desire to move (No Reasonable or Additional Preference)

The way that your application is assessed is by Criteria 1 and 2 being applied to your application. We call this criteria 'Reasonable Preference' or 'Additional Preference'. Set out below is the criteria that is used to make a decision about which band your application will be placed in.

Criteria 1

Reasonable Preference will be given to the following categories of applicants:

- A) Those applicants who have been accepted as statutorily homeless and are owed the full homelessness duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) & the Localism Act 2011.
- B) Those applicants who have been assessed as statutorily overcrowded and where Environmental Health has served Abatement Notices on the landlord.
- C) Those applicants who occupying insanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory accommodation as defined by the Environmental Health Service.
- D) Those applicants who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.

E) Those applicants who need to move to a particular locality within the district to avoid hardship to themselves or others at the discretion of the Head of Strategic Commissioning for Adult Social Care and Housing.

Criteria 2

Additional Preference will be given to the following categories of applicants:

A. Those applicants who have recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service, or is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service.

B. Overriding medical need.

C. Special Needs cases (an individual assessment of need will be made).

D. Racial harassment and other serious cases of harassment.

E. Social problems (an individual assessment of need will be made).

F. Environmental problems.

G. Households who have been approved by RBWM to foster or adopt and have an existing track record of adopting for not less than 2 years.

H. Are training (after a period of unemployment) in the Borough through an employer or educational establishment as re-skilling or training to return to full time employment.

I. Are establishing a business or social enterprise within RBWM and have been employed for a period of 2 years.

J. Is a long term volunteer with continuous service within RBWM's charities or non profit organisations for a period of more than two years and actively engaged in volunteering both at the time of application and at time of any nomination.

In order to make sure that everyone understands how the Housing Bands works everyone will be offered an Options interview to gain the best advice about their situation.

Band C

If you do not have any 'Reasonable Preference' or 'Additional Preference' your application will not be registered as you will not be considered for any properties that become available from local Housing Associations. This will be a Band C decision and you will be offered an Options interview to advise about how you be able to resolve your housing situation, after which your application will be closed.

Band B

If you are given a 'Reasonable Preference' or an 'Additional Preference' for the Housing Register you will be admitted to Band B. If you are in Band B it is recognised that you have a housing need but you do not have an overriding priority for rehousing. There is no guarantee that you will be offered social housing but there may be other solutions available to you, e.g. accommodation in the privately rented sector.

Band A

If you are given a 'Reasonable Preference' and an 'Additional Preference' for housing your application will be placed in Band A. This is where applicants are placed who have the most urgent requirement for housing. Even with an urgent requirement for housing no guarantees can be given about how long an applicant may have to wait for a suitable property to be available for them.

Priority within the Bands

When your application has been assessed and placed in Band A or Band B it will then be awarded 'housing need points'. Your position within that Band will be determined by 'housing need points'. The points that can be awarded are:

BEDROOM DEFICIENCY for 1 bedroom deficient	10 POINTS
Thereafter for each bedroom lacking	20 POINTS
LACK OF FACILITIES	10 POINTS
SHARING ACCOMMODATION WITH RELATIVES	15 POINTS
SHARING ACCOMMODATION WITH NON RELATIVES	25 POINTS
VALID NOTICE TO QUIT	10 POINTS
POSSESSION ORDER	40 POINTS

Please note: Housing Needs points are given based on accommodation which is occupied at the date of application. Any change of circumstances must be notified to RBWM.

Your application will then be assessed for 'size of property' (number of bedrooms) in order that you are placed in the correct list for accommodation.

The Council considers that a separate bedroom is appropriate for the following:-

- A couple living together
- A single parent
- Two children of opposite gender can share one room whilst both are under 10 years of age
- Two children of the same gender can share one room until one reaches 16 years of age

The number of bedrooms used by the applicant is compared with the number they need. However the Council will consider the actual use of all available space in the home. No points will be awarded where the applicant is making poor use of available accommodation.

We will look at everyone in your household and will assess the bedroom requirement accordingly. Those who are considered part of your household are:

Partners

A partner who is living in a permanent relationship with the applicant and can prove that they have done so for at least 12 months, or are married. This includes mixed gender and same sex couples, whether or not they are married or in a civil partnership.

Children

Children born since the registration date and dependant children (under 18) joining the household, where it can be proved that the homeseeker is the sole legal guardian and there is no other option to accommodate that child.

Dependants

A dependant relative who has joined the household because they are unable to live independently and there are no other options for the family, e.g. their extended relative owns a property or occupies a property large enough to accommodate the

family. Advice will be sought from the Medical Advisor on whether the relative needs to live with the family. Where this is not considered essential, other options, such as sheltered housing will be discussed with the family before a decision is made by the Head of Strategic Commissioning for Adult Social Care and Housing, as to whether the relative should be included in the application or advised to make a separate Housing Register application.

Separation

If the applicant and partner are separating, they must provide evidence of who is legally allowed to remain in the property, such as a Court Order detailing to whom the property is assigned. Accommodation for children will be allowed with only one parent, on whom the children are dependant.

Family Members who are not currently living with the Applicant

If members of the immediate family live abroad, they can be included on the application, but the Council will not consider these members unless they have the right to reside in the UK and are not sponsored to enter the UK. If members of the immediate family live elsewhere in the UK, they can be included on the application but we encourage families to consider applying to be rehoused where they live, especially if the demand for housing is lower there.

Applicants who have deliberately worsened their situation i.e. by moving to less adequate accommodation, by introducing family or friends into their household or by giving up secure accommodation without showing good reason, will not receive any points associated with housing need and or insecurity of tenure. Each case will be individually assessed. This will preclude any applicant being afforded reasonable preference or additional preference on the Housing Register.

Persons who knowingly give false or misleading information, or withhold information which has been reasonably requested.

Please refer to the Allocations Policy for more details.

Applicants who are refused Banding and those who are removed from consideration following a decision by the Council have a statutory right to request a review of the decision.

The Council will notify affected applicants of the Council's decision and of their rights, and a request for review must be made within 21 days of the written notification.

Quarterly statistics will be posted on the website showing the numbers and type of nominations made during the course of that quarter.

Sheltered Accommodation for applicants over 60 years of age

Sheltered housing accommodation within the Borough is available for persons over the age of 60 who wish to keep their independence but have the security of help and support available.

Sheltered housing schemes within the Borough are owned and managed by our partner Housing Associations and provide self contained accommodation with emergency alarms to call for help whenever it is needed.

If you are a resident within the Royal Borough and would like more information regarding sheltered housing please contact our Housing Options Team 01628 683 800.

Key Worker and Shared Ownership accommodation

If you are interested in Key Worker Accommodation or Shared Ownership options including Do It Yourself Shared Ownership please see links provided. Your application for this type of accommodation will not be banded or assessed for housing needs points.

Help to Buy South <https://www.helptobuysouth.co.uk/>

RBWM link -

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200118/housing/119/shared_ownership/2

OUT OF OFFICE HOURS

In an Emergency situation,
out of office hours you may contact the

Emergency Duty Team

On **01344 786543**

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in:

- **Large Print**

- Braille

- Audio Tape

- Another Language

Please contact us on 01628 683800

Our Complaints Policy

Here at the Royal Borough we believe that the needs of residents are our top priority and we are committed to providing you with quality services in the most effective and efficient way possible.

However, we realise that, even in the best run organisations, there may be times when things go wrong and you may not be happy with the service you receive. If this happens or you feel that our services are generally not up to scratch then let us know - we will do all we can to investigate and solve your problem as quickly as possible. To help you make your comment or complaint in the most effective way and to the right person we have set up a simple procedure.

If you have a complaint please see:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200127/contact_the_council/898/make_a_complaint