

Unfortunately, Hackney Council is unable to offer a home to everybody who applies for council housing. We currently have a very long waiting list, usually with over 8000 applicants. You are unlikely to get a property for a long time, if at all. Our lettings policy aims to ensure those in greatest housing need get rehoused first, and this leaflet explains how the process works.

Who can apply?

Anyone over 16 may apply to join the housing register, which is a waiting list for those applying for council housing

However the law says that we cannot allocate housing to some people who are subject to immigration control. For instance, if you fall into one of the following categories:

- You are an asylum seeker
- You are a sponsored immigrant and do not have recourse to public funds
- You are an overstayer
- You are an illegal immigrant

There are other circumstances where you may be considered ineligible for an offer of housing because of your unacceptable behaviour or the behaviour of someone living with you. For example;

- You owe the Council or another landlord rent arrears
- You have been evicted because of rent arrears
- Any other breach of your tenancy agreement
- Your landlord has applied to the Court for possession of your home because of a serious breach of your tenancy agreement.
- The Council could have obtained a possession order on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour if you were a council tenant.

How do I join the Housing Register?

Everyone who is applying must complete the housing waiting list form in full. We cannot register anyone without all the information and will return the form to you if you have not answered all the questions.

We have to ask lots of questions in order to decide:

- Whether you are eligible for an offer of housing
- What your priority for an offer of housing should be
- What kind of home you need

The Council has a document called "How we let out homes" which sets out in detail who gets what. Please ask us for one. Every application is assessed in accordance with the Council's lettings policy. Put simply, everyone applying to the Council for housing will initially have their housing needs priority assessed within a simple points scheme and a system of 4 bands, which are called Urgent, Priority, General and Reserve. The factors we look at include overcrowding, health matters, and homelessness.

Once your application has been assessed, you will be awarded points and your application will then be put in one of the bands, in date order, with the oldest case being first on the list in its band.

Your priority date will be the most recent of whichever of these events applies:

- the date you applied for housing or
- the date we awarded your present priority e.g. a medical grade was awarded
- the date you told us about a change in your circumstances that changed your band e.g. the birth of a child

Applications that attract the most points are placed in the upper bands (urgent or priority) and have better prospects of being rehoused, whereas those placed in the lower bands (general or reserve) stand little or no chance of being offered housing. Our Lettings Plan, which sets out how many homes we expect to let to each group, gives more detail on this, and is included in "How we let our homes" (see above).

Council and Housing Association Homes outside London

If you are in a lower band, with little or no chance of being offered a property in Hackney, you may want to consider moving out of London. The Council's Special Projects Team can assist you through their links with landlords in other parts of the country. They can be contacted on 0208 356 5739.

What are Housing Associations?

Housing Associations are non-profit making organisations, which provide social housing similarly to the Council. A considerable proportion of all social housing is now supplied by Housing Associations and most of their accommodation is also allocated from the Council's waiting list. They also provide shared ownership, Homebuy and key workers schemes. Please see our leaflet "Shared Ownership, Homebuy and Keyworker Schemes" for further details.

If you want to be considered for a housing association property you do not have to complete a separate application form. Simply complete the Councils housing register form and indicate whether you wish to be considered for housing association accommodation.

What are Housing co-ops?

A housing co-operative is a group of people who have shared responsibility of managing and control of the housing they live in. The rent is usually lower compared to those in the private rented sector and you are unlikely to be asked to leave at short notice. Some Councils lease their properties to certain Co-ops and may only offer tenancies on a short term basis. However, most co-ops are very small, and opportunities for housing with them few and far between. If you are interested in co-ops, please ask us.

“How we let our homes”, a detailed summary of our rules for letting our homes can be obtained from the Hackney Housing Advice Centre or any of the Housing Neighbourhood offices.