

applying for in housing Swindon



March 2005

Applying for Housing in the Borough of Swindon

Our Aim

The Council aims to provide good quality housing for those who need it. Everyone who applies to the Council for housing is treated fairly and equally.

No one will receive less favourable treatment or any other discrimination on the grounds of their race, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion, beliefs, disability, political views or marital status.

How do I apply for accommodation?

You will need to fill in an application form. You can get a form from the Council's Housing reception, making a request in writing, over the phone or by visiting our website. (see page 21 for contact numbers and addresses).

Staff are on hand to help you complete the form in Housing reception should you need it. If you have special problems a member of staff can visit you at home. Each year, you will have to fill in a review form to ensure your details remain up to date.

Who can apply on the Register?

- i) The housing register is open to any person aged 16 years or over.

The transfer list will also include all tenants of Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations).

- ii. People from abroad
 - People with exceptional leave to enter or remain in the UK granted prior to April 1st 2003 (and whose leave is not subject to a condition requiring them to maintain and accommodate themselves without recourse to public funds) continue to be eligible for an allocation of housing under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996).
 - People granted **humanitarian protection** or **discretionary leave** and whose leave is not subject to a condition requiring them to maintain and accommodate themselves without recourse to public funds will be eligible for an allocation of housing under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

People who cannot apply

Other categories of people from abroad will be ineligible to apply for housing, for example short term visitors and people who fail the 'habitual residence test'

Applicants who believe they are no longer ineligible can re-apply at any time.

The following persons will not be accepted onto the housing register

An applicant will be deemed ineligible to be allocated housing if the applicant

- has been guilty of 'unacceptable behaviour' that is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant of the council or housing association.
- demonstrates behaviour that makes the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant at the time of application.

- has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour where the behaviour is such that it would result in an outright possession order under the Housing Act 1985.

Applicants deemed to be ineligible will be informed in writing about the grounds for the decision. The decision of ineligibility will be made by the Lettings Manager or Senior Lettings Advisor.

Applicants can request a review of the decision, in writing, within 28 days of being notified of the decision that they are deemed ineligible.

A senior housing officer, normally the Housing Needs Manager, will review the case within 40 days of the request to review and a written response will be given to the applicant.

What happens when I apply?

Your application details will be entered onto a computer. The Council will notify you by letter within 4 weeks when this is done and inform you of your provisional points total. When you are near the top of the list someone from the Council will visit you to check the details you have supplied and give you any further advice you may require.

Following a visit, your points total will be confirmed.

It is up to you to inform the Council of any changes in your circumstances, as this may affect your application for housing.

The Points Scheme

Points are given to reflect housing circumstances and in particular the extent to which the applicant's current property falls short of their needs. Those people with the most points will be considered first for appropriate empty properties.

TIME IN INSECURE TENURE

Time points are awarded for each complete month in an insecure situation up to a maximum of 200 points

Families	per month
Accepted as homeless and placed in temporary accommodation including hostels, bed & breakfast, private rented, etc.	7

Private tenants in assured shorthold tenancies where a notice has been served.	7
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Staying with relatives, parents or others	7
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These points are only awarded to families with dependent children

Couples and single persons	per month
Roofless	7
In lodgings/B&B/hostel accommodation	3
Staying with relatives, parents or others	2
Private Tenant	0

TENURE

Points are given to reflect the type of permanence of the tenure that you are occupying

Families	total
Accepted as homeless and placed in any temporary accommodation including hostels, bed & breakfast, private rented, etc.	100
Staying with relatives, parents or others	15

Couples and single persons

Roofless	165
In bed & breakfast/hostel accommodation	50
In shared accommodation	25

Notice to Leave

Tenants in an Assured Shorthold tenancy where the landlord has served a valid notice. Evidence will be required.	30
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Bedroom

A separate bedroom should be available to the following and points awarded accordingly

	for each bedroom lacking
Two people living as a couple/same sex couple	20
Dependents having to share with parents	20
Dependents sharing a bedroom where oldest child is 5 years or older	20
No more than 2 persons of any age should share a room	20
A bedsitting room is deemed suitable for one person only	20

Separate bedrooms required on medical grounds	20
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Where a room which is used as a bedroom is unsuitable for that use	20
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Applications may qualify under a number of these categories, but only one set of points will be given, i.e. for the number of bedrooms required to alleviate the overcrowding.

Lounge	total
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Where there is no alternative to the lounge being used as a sleeping area	20
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Children in flats/maisonettes	total
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If an applicant/tenant has a child under the age of 7 years and they live on the 2nd floor or above of a property	20
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These points do not apply if occupying this accommodation as a temporary tenant.

Families living apart	total
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Where joint applicants, who previously lived together/are married or have a child together, are having to live at separate addresses and there is no other option available	30
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Facilities shared	total
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Kitchen	10
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Lounge	10
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Inside W.C.	5
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Bathroom	10
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Facilities lacked	total
Kitchen	20
Lounge	20
Inside W.C.	10
Bathroom	20

Statutory overcrowding	total
<i>Where the accommodation has been deemed statutorily overcrowded by the Environmental Services Department</i>	
For the first 1/2 unit over the permitted number	40
For each additional 1/2 unit	20

Standard of accommodation	total
Disrepair (serious)	30
Dampness/condensation (severe)	20

Ventilation	total
Where the property cannot be naturally ventilated by opening windows (although mechanical ventilation can be allowed in kitchen, bathroom and W.C.)	10

Heating	total
Where the property does not have a proper central heating system that is in working order and permanently fixed to each habitable room.	10

Lighting	total
Where the property does not have natural lighting to all habitable rooms (not including bathroom and W.C.)	10

Water	total
Hot water lacking to all sinks and basins	10
Cold water lacking to all sinks and basins	20

Unfit Properties	total
<i>A category will be awarded following assessment by the Environmental Services Department</i>	
Category A (unreasonable to remain)	200
Category B (prejudicial to health)	80
Category C (remedial works required)	30
Category D (not unreasonable to remain - to be reviewed in 6 months)	10

Medical Priority	total
<i>A medical priority is awarded following an assessment by the Housing Needs Section</i>	
Medical A	200
Medical B	50
Medical C	15
Medical D - no medical priority	0

Need for area	total
Where there is a need for a particular area and this can be supported, e.g. Medical Advisor (Housing), Social Services, Education or other statutory agency	15

Need for property type**total**

Where there is a need for a particular type of property, e.g. ground floor, central heating, mobility unit, parking facilities or a property with a garden and this can be supported, e.g. Medical Advisor (Housing) or other statutory agency.

15

Residency Points**total**

For applicants living in the Borough

200

Residency points will be also be given to:

Forces Applicant } previously resident in the Borough
Prison Inmate } - immediately prior to enlistment
/imprisonment

Person aged 60 years and over with a close relative residing in Swindon

Local connection**total**

For all new applicants not residing in Swindon but in permanent employment in Swindon or who provide significant care needs to a family member who resides in Swindon (evidence will need to be provided).

50



Section 1 New Build

(New Developments - Housing Association only)

Where a development has been built and the properties can only be occupied by persons with a local connection, the following band will be awarded (supporting evidence may be required)

Band A - persons who have lived or worked in the Parish for ten years or more 50

Band B - persons who have lived or worked in the Parish for between 5 and 10 years or whose siblings or adult children have lived in the parish for 10 years or more 40

Band C - persons who have lived or worked in the Parish for between 1 and 5 years or whose parents, siblings or adult children have lived in the parish for 5 years or more 30

Band D - have a previous local "connection" with the area, but don't currently reside or work in the area or have family links. 20

Under Occupying (transfer cases only) for each spare bedroom

Where you have a spare bedroom in your current accommodation 20

Releasing Family Accommodation (transfer cases only) total

Where you are releasing family accommodation and seeking a transfer to a non-family unit. 30

Releasing Disabled Accommodation **total**
(transfer cases only)

Where you are releasing a disabled unit you no longer require 30

Releasing Four Bedroom or Larger Property **total**
(transfer cases only)

This will be in addition to the 30 points for releasing family accommodation if transferring to a non-family unit. 50

Urgent Approvals **total**

Cases requiring **urgent** moves will be awarded 400 additional points following the approval of senior officers. These points will be awarded for the following reasons where an applicant is a Swindon Council or housing association tenant:

Victims of domestic violence

Other forms of harassment

Reciprocal requests (which could also include homeless cases)

Any other emergency or exceptional cases

(All other tenures will be considered under the Homelessness legislation).

Special Approvals **per year**

Cases requiring housing through the of additional points mechanism 200

a) Discretionary succession *Where agreed by Estates Management*

b) Agreed move-on arrangements

c) Allocation to staff vacating tied accommodation

How are homes let?

In letting housing, the Council will make the most effective use of properties at its disposal. Therefore, you will be offered housing whose size matches your need, for example: if you have one or two children (depending on their ages) you will generally be offered a two bedroom property. If you have more than two children, you will generally be offered a three bedroom property.

Children can only be treated as part of your application if their main home is with you.

Points awarded to families are only awarded where dependent children are part of your application. Dependent children are children for whom you receive child benefit.

If you require specially adapted accommodation this will be taken into account before an offer is made.

A couple may be same sex, and families may include same sex couples.

Choice of Areas for Housing & Reasonable Offers

Applicants on the Housing Register will be allowed to choose from three geographical areas of **North**, **South** or **West** Swindon.

Swindon Council and housing association tenants can choose specific areas.

An offer of accommodation or nomination to a housing association will be made on the basis of an applicant or tenant's area and property choice.

Only one offer of accommodation or nomination will be made. If refused without good reason, the application points will be removed for 12 months.

The Lettings Manager or Senior Lettings Advisor will make this decision.

If necessary, Lettings Advisors can advise you on the effects of such choices and your subsequent prospects of an offer being made.

Property Choices

Families with children are generally offered houses, flats and maisonettes, whilst couples or a family without a child are normally offered flats.

Property types will be allocated on a household size basis in accordance with the guidance below:

What the Council considers as a reasonable offer

	Families	Couples	Single	Elderly/ disabled
Houses	✓			
Flats	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multi-storey flats	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bedsits			✓	✓
Cottages	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bungalows				✓
Sheltered housing				✓
Maisonettes	✓			

Sheltered Housing Vacancies

There are usually a number of one bedroom and studio flats in sheltered housing which are available to rent immediately. Applicants must be 60 or over or be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (sorry no pets). An application form must be completed to verify details.

Right of Appeal

You are entitled to a review of the decision that has been made on the assessment of your housing application or offers of accommodation.

Please note,

- ❑ the reasons for the review must be given in writing
- ❑ the review will be considered by a senior housing officer who has not previously been involved in the case and a decision in writing will be sent within 40 working days
- ❑ if you are still unhappy with the decision you can request that the issues are dealt with by elected members
- ❑ You should request a review of any decision in writing within 21 days of being notified of the decision.

Suspending Applications

The Council will only suspend an application if you request it as you are not ready to move at the present time.

Removing application points

The Council will remove application points if:-

- ❑ you fail to provide relevant information despite being asked to do so in writing
- ❑ you are a Council or Registered Social Landlord Tenant in arrears, except under exceptional circumstances, or you owe a housing related debt to the Council or other housing RSL.

- ❑ you are unable to move because of health reasons such as a long stay in hospital or residential care
- ❑ you have refused a reasonable offer of accommodation
- ❑ you or your partner are home owners or have a financial or legal interest in a property. This does not apply to applicants over 60.
- ❑ you are in prison
- ❑ the Council requires further information in order to process your application correctly according to Housing policy
- ❑ you are in tied accommodation or a service tenancy.

Cancelling Applications

The Council will cancel an application if:-

- ❑ your annual review form is not returned
- ❑ you request it in writing
- ❑ you are rehoused by the Council or a registered social landlord
- ❑ you move and do not provide the Housing Department with a forwarding address
- ❑ you cease to be eligible within the Allocations Policy

You will be notified in writing why your application has been cancelled.

Reinstating Applications

The Council will reinstate applications where

- ❑ you make a new application within 12 months of cancellation
- ❑ an appeal has been made and upheld by a principal officer who has not previously been involved in the case or by elected members

Moving From Your Home

Transfers & Exchanges - Council Tenants & Housing Association Tenants

A transfer is an application from those tenants wishing to move to another vacant dwelling. No offer of alternative accommodation will normally be made unless a clear rent account has been maintained.

Where council tenants of different households wish to transfer together to one unit, applicants will only need to submit one application form including applicants from both households. The application will then be assessed in accordance with the Allocations Policy.

A touchscreen is available in the Housing reception area for Council and registered social landlord tenants to identify possible exchanges. Transfer applicants are automatically placed on the computerised exchange register and a list can be obtained from the Housing Department or by telephone if you have an application number.

HOMES

HOMES is a Government funded organisation to aid people to move home in the local authority and housing association housing sectors.

HOMESWAP

This is a national exchange register run by HOMES where Council and Registered Social Landlord tenants can advertise for an exchange outside their own area. Forms to join the register are available from Housing reception where you can use a touchscreen to make enquiries.

HOMES Mobility Scheme

This is a scheme for people needing to move to another area for urgent reasons. They should contact their own local authority who will liaise with the receiving landlord to see if a nomination can be accepted. There is no automatic right of acceptance as the type of accommodation required may not be available.

Further details on any of the above schemes can be obtained from the Housing Advice Team on Swindon 463181

Low Cost Home Ownership

Schemes may be available through the Council or registered social landlords to purchase a property on a part rent/part buy basis.

If you are interested in low cost home ownership please contact the Development and Sales team on Swindon 464413.

The Common Housing Register

Swindon Borough Council maintains a housing register in partnership with the housing associations for people who want social housing within the Swindon area. This register operates within the points system to ensure that the people in the greatest need are housed first.

What is the Common Housing Register?

Swindon Borough Council and the majority of registered social landlords operating in the Borough have agreed to use a common application form for people looking for housing in Swindon Borough. This means that if you want to apply for Council and other social housing you can now do so on one form*.

To obtain a form, please contact one of the following participating landlords:

Anchor Housing Association	(01274) 381660
Bromford Housing Group	(01242) 530053
Guinness Trust Housing Association	(01275) 766300
James Butcher Housing Association	(01672) 515622
Jephson Housing Association	(01793) 537566
John Groom Housing Association	(0117) 9514058
Kennet Housing Society	(01672) 514384
Knightstone Housing Association	(01249) 765600
Raglan Housing Association	0845 0707772
Salvation Army Housing Association	(01793) 541635
Sanctuary Housing Association	0845 6014232
Sarsen Housing Association	(01380) 720027
Sovereign Housing Association	(0117) 958 0111
Swindon Borough Council	(01793) 463181
United Housing Association	(0117) 9424600
Western Challenge Housing Association	(01202) 499300
Westlea Housing Association	(01249) 466150
Wiltshire Rural Housing Association	(01380) 850916

**applies only to participating housing associations*

You will automatically be considered for housing with a registered social landlord unless you specifically tell us that you only want Council housing. You will only be considered for Council housing if you meet the criteria set out in the Council's allocations policy

Confidentiality

The information you give on your application form will be shared with the registered social landlords participating in the common register. Your details will not be passed on to a registered social landlord if you tell us that you only want Council housing. The Council or a registered social landlord may need to make further enquiries into your application. Your application for housing includes your authority for any such enquiries to be made.

What are Registered Social Landlords?

Registered Social Landlord is the new term for housing associations. They are independent non-profit making organisations set up to provide affordable rented housing. The Council works closely with these organisations to ensure that the right type of accommodation is provided in the Borough to meet housing needs of local people. Registered social landlords receive some money from the government and borrow the remainder from banks and building societies.

Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations) with Properties In Swindon*

*who are not part of the common housing register

Key to property types: H=house; B=bungalow; F=flat; BS=bedsit; EO=Elderly Only

These are the only Registered Social Landlords which you can contact directly. If you are interested in housing with any other Registered Social Landlords you should complete the Common Housing Register application form

Housing Association	Schemes	Types of properties				
		H	B	F	BS	EO
English Churches Housing Group West Business Unit 1 Jamaica Street Kingsdown BRISTOL BS2 8JR 0845 - 070 - 7073	Goddard House, Old Town Booker House, Old Walcot, Charlton House Daniel Gooch Old Walcot				✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Hanover Housing Association Gateway House Cornbrash Park, Bumpers Way, CHIPPENHAM SN14 6RA 01249 - 707000	Hanover House, Highworth Hanover Court, Covingham			✓ ✓		✓ ✓
Housing 21 Longwood House Love Lane Industrial Estate CIRENCESTER Glos. GL7 1YG 01285 - 659928	Eric Long Court, Eldene Eldene Drive, Eldene	✓		✓	✓	✓
Methodist Homes for the Aged Epwell House, Stuart Street DERBY DE1 2EQ 01332 - 296200	Epworth Court, Old Town			✓		✓

Making contact:

You can write to or visit us at:

Housing,
Housing Needs Team,
Swindon Borough Council,
Civic Offices,
Beckhampton Street,
SWINDON SN1 2JH

Open: 9.00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. (Monday - Friday)

You can telephone us:

Housing Advice Team
Swindon 463181

8.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. (Monday - Thursday)

8.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. (Friday)

You can contact us on minicom:

Facility for deaf or hard of hearing: Swindon 436659

You can fax us:

Housing: Swindon 463307

Via the internet:

www.swindon.gov.uk

Complaints:

The Council operates a Customer Comments Procedure for people to register dissatisfaction with a Council service or to make a general observation. Forms are available from all Council buildings. Alternatively you can make a complaint by telephoning or writing to the contact numbers above. The Council's target for responding to all written enquiries, including complaints is 10 working days.

Notes

Notes

Notes

**If you require Council Information
in another format, please contact
Customer Services on 01793 463725**

আপনার যদি অন্য কোন আকারে বা রূপে তথ্যের দরকার
হয়, কাস্টমার সার্ভিসেস্কে (01793) 463725 নম্বরে
টেলিফোন করুন।

Bengali

如果您需要用其它语言或方式咨询
这方面的信息，请拨打我们的顾客
服务热线：(01793) 463725。

Chinese

જો તમને બીજા ફાર્મટ (પત્રક) માં જાણકારી જોવતી
હોય તો કૃપા કરી ગ્રાહક સેવા પ્રતિનિધિનો
ટેલીફોન નંબર (01793) 463725 ઉપર સંપર્ક કરો.

Gujarati

यदि आपको अन्य फार्मट (प्रपत्र) में जानकारी
चाहिए तो कृपया ग्राहक सेवा प्रतिनिधि से
टेलीफोन नंबर (01793) 463725 पर संपर्क करें।

Hindi

**Per informazioni in altro formato,
contattare il Servizio Clienti
chiamando il numero: 01793 463725**

Italian

別の構成・形式で資料をご使用される必要があ
る場合には、次の番号の弊社顧客サービスま
でお問い合わせ下さい。電話：01793 463725

Japanese

Jeśli chcesz uzyskać informacje w
innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt z
Wydziałem Usług dla Klientów pod
numerem telefonu 01793 463725.

Polish

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ
ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਸਟਮਰ ਸਰਵਿਸਜ਼ ਠਾਲ
ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ (01793) 463725 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Punjabi

**Hadaad u baahatid macluumaad hab
kale ku qoran fadian la soo xinir
Adeega macmiisha (Customer Services)
oo kasoo wac lambarkan (01793) 463725**

Somali

اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا بڑی لکھائی وغیرہ میں معلومات درکار ہوں تو
براہ مہربانی کسٹومر سروسز سے ٹیلی فون نمبر: 01793 463725
پر رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Urdu