



Information for housing applicants

Thank you for your interest in becoming a tenant with CSHA.

This leaflet will tell you more about our application process and the accommodation and services we offer.



About us

We are a small housing association, providing social housing since the mid-1970s.

Our sheltered accommodation is for people aged 60 and over. We are committed to providing good quality properties and professional services that help our tenants to maintain their independence.

Am I eligible for sheltered housing?

Our criteria

Applicants for our sheltered housing must:

- be aged over 60 (both if a joint tenancy)
- be eligible for social housing in the UK
- live or be in paid employment in one of the following local authority areas: an inner London or Greater London borough; the borough of Dartford; or the district of Sevenoaks
- have no more than £50,000 in assets (including annual income, savings, investments and property)
- be able to live independently
- not be in rent arrears with your current landlord, and
- be willing to rehome any pets.

Is sheltered housing right for me?

Accommodation for the over-60s who need social housing

If you are still working, you can apply, as long as you meet our criteria. We accept applicants who need help with rent via Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. Due to the type of accommodation, you may still be able to claim Housing Benefit if you are of working age and claim Universal Credit.

A settled home

None of our sheltered properties are bedsits and we offer lifetime assured tenancies at the majority of our properties.

Unlike private rented accommodation, your core rent can only increase once a year, in line with a set formula. Charges for additional services reflect the cost of providing them. We tell you four weeks in advance, before changing our charges.

Support to remain independent

We aim to empower our tenants rather than doing things for them. Unlike care homes or extra care housing, we do not offer any personal care, carers, or help with shopping or meals. We have a support planning service instead. We use this to work with you to decide the tools, benefits and advice you need to stay independent. This might include arranging carers in the future, if you need them. You will pay a support charge as part of your rent.

Please note that if you get help with your rent through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, it will not cover your support charge or some other charges. This means our rents may be higher than ordinary social housing.

However, they are still significantly lower than for private rented accommodation.



Peace of mind

You will have access to a telecare system that includes pull cords in every room. You can also opt for an alarm pendant, for a returnable deposit. The telecare system means there is someone on hand, 24/7, to take action in an emergency. Our telecare provider can assist in getting you help with health emergencies, as well as repair emergencies, when our Supported Housing Managers are offsite in the evenings, at weekends and on bank holidays.

You will need to give your consent so your telecare provider can effectively assist with a medical or repair emergency, or an incident such as fire. You can also choose to have a daily welfare call from your Sheltered Housing Manager – either temporarily or permanently.

Safety and security

We pride ourselves on keeping our schemes safe, whilst respecting your right to privacy and the enjoyment of your home. Most of our schemes have secure door entries and CCTV. To keep our schemes pleasant and safe, we prioritise checks on repairs, health and safety issues, and fire risk.

Friendly and approachable staff

We have a permanent Sheltered Housing Manager on site from Monday to Friday, to provide support. The hours they work depend on the scheme.

Community

We have communal facilities and promote social events inside and outside of the scheme. These can include coffee mornings, meals out, games and live entertainment. All tenants are welcome to attend.

Tenant engagement

We provide effective and transparent ways for tenants to give feedback on how we perform and to get involved in how our organisation is run. This includes at Board level.

What happens after you receive my application?

We will ask for your consent at various stages, so that we can collect, store and share information in line with data protection law.

Application checks

We will first check your application against our criteria. If you are a current or recent tenant, we will also contact your landlord to ask about your tenancy.

Interview

When we invite you to an interview, we will ask you to:

- provide identification and proof that you meet our criteria
- tell us about your current housing situation and why you are applying
- tell us about any support needs you have, and
- if you are disabled, tell us what you would need from us to help you maintain your independence. We will complete a risk assessment to help with this.



Further information

Sometimes, we may ask you for more information, for example from your GP or another medical professional.

Processing your application

Once we have all the information we need, we will consider whether you meet our criteria and whether we can meet your individual needs.

We will let you know the outcome in writing. If you are successful, we will tell you which waiting list band we have put you in. The band we select will depend on your individual circumstances and whether you fall into any of our priority categories.

If you are unsuccessful, it will be because you do not meet our criteria and/or we cannot meet your needs. We will explain this and tell you how you can appeal the decision.

We allocate housing in line with our Lettings Policy. Please let us know if you would a copy.

How long will I need to wait?

Unfortunately, we cannot estimate how you might spend on our waiting list. It depends on a suitable property becoming empty, and you being the highest priority applicant. You will gain points for the time you are on the waiting list.

You may be able to reduce your waiting time if you are willing to move to more of our schemes. However, not all schemes are suitable for everyone – for example, if you have mobility problems and there is no lift.

We will only make you two offers of suitable accommodation. If you accept, you may only have a week or two until your tenancy starts.

Please note that not all empty properties are filled from our direct waiting list, as we have to offer some properties to local authorities.

What if the Council put me forward?

The application process is the same once we receive your details from the council or through Choice-Based Lettings. However, your application will be for a particular property rather than putting you on our waiting list. We will only offer you the property if you meet our criteria and it suits your needs.



Tenant responsibilities

When living at the property, you will need to do the following:

- You must only use the property as your main or only home.
- You can share it only with a joint tenant, or someone eligible and permitted by your tenancy agreement, who is also using it as their main home.
- You should pay your weekly charges in full and a week in advance, by standing order. (You can also opt to pay four weeks or one calendar month in advance.)

What you will pay

- **Weekly rent**, which includes:
 - core rent
 - service charges
 - support charges (except Blackmore House).We include a summary of rent charges at our schemes with this leaflet.
 - **Heating and hot water charges** (Stanley Glynn Court, Evelyn Rogers Court, Bertha Hollamby Court and Ursula Lodges).
 - **Utility bills**, including:
 - electricity bill
 - gas bill (Bushell Way and Invicta Close only)
 - water bill (you may be able to get some help from your provider).
 - **Council tax** (you may receive Council Tax Benefit towards the cost).
 - **TV licence** (you may qualify for a concessionary or free licence).
 - **Home contents insurance** (recommended).
- You need to tell us if you are staying away overnight (for fire/emergency reasons). You must also give us notice in writing if you going to be away for 28 days or more.

- You are responsible for passing on change of circumstance details to your benefits agency. We may also pass details to them, for example, if you are away from home for a long period.
- You will need to open your own accounts with utility providers and pay your bills.
- You have to furnish your home, including: carpets (we do not allow hard floors above the ground floor); white goods, such as fridges and washing machines; electric cookers (we do not allow gas cookers); and the furniture you need (unless you accept gifted items in writing). You must make sure these items fit in the property. This includes ensuring your cooker fits the space provided and your sofa fits through the doorways. At the end of the tenancy, you must remove these items (including any you accepted as gifted).
- We expect you to keep the property well maintained and decorated inside. Before you move in, we will check the property. If we decide that work is needed, we may offer you a fixed decorations allowance towards your costs, to be paid after the work is completed. Or we may do some work ourselves.
- You are responsible for some minor repairs, including, for example: changing lightbulbs; replacing lost keys; replacing toilet seats; installing door bells. You must also pay for items broken by you or your visitors; for work carried out that you are responsible for; and for pest control.
- You should promptly report to us any repairs that we are responsible for.
- We require you to keep communal areas tidy and free of hazards.
- If you need extra heating, because you tend to feel the cold, you will



- need to provide your own additional heaters. These cannot use gas or oil. You should also have emergency lighting, for example, a torch.
- You may only carry out improvements, for example, updating your bathroom or kitchen, with our permission.
- Our staff and contractors need reasonable access to the property. We will normally give you reasonable advance notice. However, we may occasionally need to carry out works for which we have a legal duty, or we may need to take action quickly in an emergency.
- We expect you to meet all the other conditions in your tenancy or licence agreement. This includes not causing a nuisance to others and not using the premises for illegal or immoral purposes.
- If you have personal outdoor space you must maintain it.
- You cannot keep any pet without written permission.

Shared facilities

All of our schemes have indoor and outdoor shared areas – for example, communal gardens and lounges for social events. The cost of maintaining these areas is divided between tenants and paid for as part of your service charge. We encourage tenants to make use of these facilities, but we may have restrictions. For example, we do not allow private barbecues.

We do not normally allow plumbed appliances in our properties. Instead, we provide communal laundry rooms. Every tenant pays towards the costs in their service charge. Laundry room opening hours are designed to maximise use, whilst controlling noise levels for any nearby flats.

We do not provide storage outside flats for tenant belongings. We cannot accommodate mobility scooters that require communal storage or charging. We do not allow them to be used inside our buildings.

Some of our schemes have a guest room. You can hire this for a small fee for overnight stays for your visitors. We do not allow guests to stay for extended periods.

Facilities at each of our schemes

London borough	Area	Scheme	Number of flats	Number of floors	Lift	Sheltered Housing Manager	Additional accessible bathroom (communal)	Guest room	Heating	Parking
Bromley	Chislehurst	Bushell Way	25	2	x	Full-time	x	x	Individual gas central	Unallocated bays
		Invicta Close	12	2	x		x	x	Individual gas central	
		Stanley Glynn Court	20	2	✓		x	x	Communal gas central	
	Mottingham	Evelyn Rogers Court	18	2	✓	Part-time	x	x	Communal gas central	Unallocated bays (limited)
Bexley	Sidcup	Bertha Hollamby Court	31	3	✓	Full-time	✓	✓	Communal gas central	Permit parking
		Ursula Lodges	42	2	✓	Part-time	✓	✓	Communal gas central	Unallocated bays
	Bexleyheath	Lingwood	29	2	x	Full-time	x	x	Individual electric storage	Council permit scheme (limited and chargeable)
Lewisham	Forest Hill	Blackmore House	16	2	✓	Part-time	x	✓	Individual electric storage	Street parking

Ending a tenancy or licence agreement

If we wish to end an agreement, we have to do so in line with the agreement itself and relevant legislation (for example, the Housing Act 1988). We will normally only do this because you have broken the terms of the agreement. We will seek possession of the property by going to court.

To avoid legal action due to rent arrears, we recommend building credit on your rent account to prepare for any unexpected difficulties or changes during your tenancy.

If you wish to end the agreement, you must give us four weeks' notice in writing. You will need to pay the rent during this time. This

will be your full rent, if it is no longer covered by Housing Benefit or a similar benefit.

When you leave, you are responsible for clearing all carpets, furnishings, white goods and personal items.

If you are a joint assured tenant and the person you were sharing the tenancy with dies, you can continue living in your home.

If a sole or remaining tenant passes away, their estate will need to continue paying the rent until the tenancy ends.



Contact us

45 Invicta Close
Chislehurst
Kent
BR7 6SJ

Phone: 020 8467 9146

Website: www.csha.org.uk