



OCHIL VIEW

Your Guide to Homehunt Ochil View



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE



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Information in alternative formats and languages

If you need this leaflet, or any other publication, translated into another language, we will provide it on request.

We will arrange, on request, for an interpreter to be present when necessary, for example at interviews. This includes sign language interpreters.

We will provide material in formats such as large print, Braille, audio tape or computer disk, on request.

We will provide these additional services at no cost to you.

Contact details

You can contact Ochil View to register, apply for a house, and get more information about your registration for any other reason:

By Visiting our Office: Ochil House, Marshall, Alloa FK10 1AB
Our Office is open : Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 9am-5pm.
Tuesday: 9am -12:30pm

We are closed on Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Day and between Christmas and New Year.

By Phoning our Office: Main Number: 01259 722899
Direct line to Choice Based Lettings: 01259 727498

By e-mail: Send your message to enquiries@ochilviewha.co.uk

Home hunting with Ochil View

Choosing your new home is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. We aim to help you choose the home you want to live in, and so we advertise our properties to let you apply for them. We don't have a "waiting list".

We have a "Priority Pass" system that takes account of your need for a house. We must give priority to certain types of applicants such as homeless people, people whose homes are overcrowded, or who live in homes that are in poor condition. We have rules built into our system to make it work fairly. We know that we won't be able to offer a house to everyone that registers with us.

This leaflet explains how to homehunt with Ochil View. You can get more information by visiting the office, telephoning us or sending us an e-mail. Our contact details are in this leaflet.

Our homehunt system is mostly the same for Ochil View tenants who want to transfer. Where the system is different, we have made the difference clear in this booklet or on the Priority Pass Application Forms.

Our available properties and their closing dates are published

- On our website: www.ochilviewha.co.uk
- In our office: Ochil House, Marshall, Alloa FK10 1AB
- In the "Wee County News" - available from Newsagents in Clackmannanshire from Wednesday lunchtime each week
- On the homehunt website: www.homehunt.info

We send details of all our available properties to agencies who work with people in housing need, such as Clackmannanshire Council, Citizens Advice Bureau and Women's Aid.

Properties are advertised on a Wednesday, and the closing date is 12:00 noon on the following Monday. If we are closed on Monday, the closing date is 12:00 noon on Tuesday.

If you need help or advice, please don't hesitate to ask us, we will be pleased to help.

You can also contact:

- Clackmannanshire Council , Housing Services, Lime Tree House, Castle Street, Alloa, FK10 1EX Tel: 0845 055 7070
- Paragon Housing Association: Invergrange House, Station Road, Grangemouth, FK3 8DG Tel: 01324 664 966
- Clackmannanshire CAB : 47 Drysdale Street, Alloa, FK10 1JA. Tel: 01259 723880
- Women's Aid Greenfield Lodge Parkway Alloa FK10 2AF Tel: 01259 721407
Service only available for Women's Aid Clients

PLEASE KEEP THIS GUIDE. IT CONTAINS USEFUL INFORMATION.

Data Protection

Ochil View Housing Association Ltd is a registered data controller within the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. Our registered office, at which any documents may be served on us, is Ochil House, Marshall Alloa FK10 1AB.

The information that you provide to us on your Registration Form, any Priority Pass Application Form and any additional information that you provide us with, together with any information we obtain about you from a third party, will be held and used in accordance with our Allocation Policy and Data Protection Policy. Full copies of these Policies are available on request or from our website at www.ochilviewha.co.uk.

We will use this information only for the purpose of operating the homehunt Ochil View allocations system and for statistical, recording and reporting purposes. We will not disclose any information about you without your written consent unless we are required to do so by law or by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

By signing and returning this form to us, you have given your consent to our processing your personal data, including any sensitive personal data. Sensitive personal data includes information about your racial or ethnic origin, health, religious beliefs, sexual life, committed or alleged offences including Court Proceedings and sentencing, trades union membership and political opinions. This data will only be processed where necessary.

Please inform us as soon as possible of any change in your personal information. We will update our records to keep them complete and accurate.

You have the right to see and obtain a copy of any personal information that we hold and to have any inaccuracies corrected.

Registration

You need to **register** with us before you can **apply** for a house - registration is a quick and simple process. Anyone aged over 16 years old can register. You can register "while you wait" at our office. You can register online, on the phone or by post. If you register online, on the phone or by post, we'll not complete the registration process until you sign your registration form and send it back to us. If you need help with registration or any part of our Choice Based Lettings system, please ask and we'll be pleased to help you.

All we need to register you on our system is:

- Your name, current address and date of birth and the details of anyone who'll move with you.
- Confirmation of a few simple statements so we know that you're eligible for housing under our scheme.

You can get a Registration Form from our office, from the homehunt website, or from Clackmannanshire Council or Paragon Housing Association.

When we get your Registration Form we'll send you a Registration Pack with information about how to apply for Priority Passes and how to apply for advertised houses.

Our Housing Stock

Our housing stock is designed to meet a range of housing needs:

General housing needs: suitable for applicants without any particular housing needs.

Amenity Housing: Particularly suitable for older people, over 55 years of age.

Housing for wheelchair users: Designed to meet the needs of people who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

Most of our housing is in Alloa and Tullibody. The remainder is in other locations throughout Clackmannanshire. Full details of each property are in our property availability adverts.

Applying for Houses

Once you have registered you can apply for any property that is advertised, as long as the property is suitable for you (and your household, if applicable). For example, the house must not be overcrowded and you must meet any requirements on who can apply - these will be clearly stated in the advertisement.

For example:

- Some of our properties are available only to applicants who are homeless and have gold priority passes. The advert will state this clearly.
- If you are applying for a property that is "Amenity" accommodation, you, or someone else who will live with you, must be over 55 years old.
- If you are applying for housing that is specially designed for a wheelchair user, you, or someone else in your household, must need that type of accommodation.

When you see an advert for a property you are interested in, you should apply for it by telling us your registration number and the address. You can do this in person at any of our offices, or by phone, by post, or online - but you must do this before the closing date and time specified in the advert. This will usually be 12 noon on the Monday after the advertisement. Adverts will be placed on Wednesday. If you have a Priority Pass, it will be recognised automatically when you apply.

You can apply for as many advertised properties as you want to at any one time. However, if you qualify for more than one offer at the same time, we will assume that the property you apply for first is your first choice, and so on, in the order you choose to apply, unless you tell us otherwise. If you qualify for an offer on one house, we will disregard any later applications you have made, so the order in which you apply could be very important to you.

Similarly, if there is nothing you like that has been advertised in any week, or perhaps it is not a convenient time to move, there is no need to apply (although if you have a Priority Pass you risk losing it - see **Losing Priority Passes**). All we ask is that you confirm once a year, when we contact you about this, that you wish to remain registered with us for housing.

Offers of Property

Once the closing date and time has been reached, we will look at all of the applications for each property, and will normally make an offer according to the following:

Best Use

The applicant who will make best use of the property by using all of the bedrooms or features of the property (such as adaptations) and who meets any age requirements.

Priority Pass Level

Where there is more than one applicant who would make best use of an advertised property, applicants are then placed in order according to the level of Priority Pass that they hold.

Date of Registration

The date of registration is the date we received your registration form. We consider the date of registration only if there are two or more applicants with the same level of Priority Pass **or** there are no applicants with a Priority Pass. The property is allocated to the applicant with the earliest date of registration **unless** one of the applicants is an Ochil View tenant who wants to transfer, and then the property will be allocated to the transfer applicant.

We will contact you as soon as we can after the closing date, if you have been successful. We'd like to get back in touch with everyone but this would just take too long. If you haven't been successful, we won't contact you. If we try to contact you by phone and letter and can't make contact within 3 working days, we'll offer the property to the next applicant.

We'll check out the information you have given us and take up references on any previous tenancies. We may visit you in your present home. The offer will be confirmed only when we have all the supporting information that we need, and we'll arrange for you to view the available property as soon as possible after that.

If you refuse an offer, we may review any limitations on Priority passes. There are no limits on the number of offers you can get. If you have been awarded a Gold Pass because you are homeless, we will advise the local authority. They may review your homeless status as a result.

Special arrangements will apply if you are, or are related to, a staff member or Management Committee member (or to someone who has recently been a staff member or Management Committee member) of Ochil View. We will explain how this affects your application if this applies to you.

Reporting Allocations

We will publish outcomes information four times each year, on our website and in the Wee County News, showing the profile of applicants we have housed and the needs we have met. This information will be anonymous and will not allow individual applicants to be identified.

We will provide, on request to applicants, feedback on the outcomes of their specific applications and the profile of successful applications that have been prioritised over their application, within the limits of our Data Protection requirements and confidentiality obligations.

This gives everyone some idea of the demand for different properties and can help you make reasonable choices about where you want to live - for example, is it more important to have a home sooner, and go for properties that are in lower demand, or can you wait for the 'perfect' property to come along? At the end of the day, it is better that you make that choice, rather than have someone make it for you.

Priority Passes

Priority Passes are awarded on three levels, Gold, Silver and Bronze.

Priority passes are one of the ways we decide the priority we give to applicants and select applicants for offers of a tenancy. We will encourage you to apply for a pass if you may qualify for one or more passes. You should ask for more information if you believe you are entitled to one or more passes.

If you qualify for:

- Less than three Bronze passes: You will be awarded a Bronze Priority Pass
- Three or more Bronze passes: You will be awarded a Silver Priority Pass
- Less than three Silver passes: You will be awarded a Silver Priority Pass
- Three or more Silver Passes: You will be awarded a Gold Priority Pass

Gold is the highest level of Pass that can be awarded.

You do not need to have a pass before you can apply for housing and you may be successful in applying without a pass.

You cannot apply for a pass and use it to bid for properties that were advertised before you applied for the pass.

If you may be eligible for one or more passes, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you homeless or could you become homeless?
- Does your current housing situation affect your health?
- Is your present home too small or too big for everyone that lives there?
- Are some people sleeping in the living room?
- Is your home in poor condition, for example is it damp, does it lack facilities or amenities that you need?
- Is there any other personal reason for you to move such as need to be nearer to family, support, work or education?
- Is your home too small for your household to live together in it?
- Do you want to move from a flat to a house?

If any of these apply to you, look at the Priority Pass Application forms and fill in the forms that apply to you.

Tell us and we will help you to apply for any passes that you may be entitled to.

Send the form back to us as soon as possible.

If you qualify for more than one pass, you may be awarded a pass at a higher level so you should apply for any pass that you feel you should get.

We award passes for:

	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Statutory Homelessness	✓		
Insecure accommodation			✓
Overcrowding		✓	✓
Property in poor condition		✓	✓
Medical circumstances	✓	✓	
Community Links			✓
Separated households			✓
Underoccupation		✓ Ochil View tenants only	
Transfer from flat to house			✓

In some cases, a pass may be awarded at different levels, depending on the circumstances. Also, we may need evidence to confirm that you are entitled to the pass. This is explained in more detail in the Priority Pass application form.

Limiting your passes

If you are awarded a Priority Pass it may be limited by Ochil View to a specific area or areas, or to a type of property. The table shows how Passes can be limited, and by who they can be limited.

If your Pass is 'limited' (whether by us or by you), it means that it is only valid for properties that meet the 'limited' criteria. You may still apply for properties that do not meet the 'limited' criteria but you do not then get any priority from your Pass. You apply as an applicant with no Priority Pass.

If a Pass is 'limited' you are less likely to get a house, but you are more likely to get a home that meets your requirements more closely. It is partly up to you to decide what is more important (and if you do limit your Pass, you can always change the limits you have put on it if you want).

Gold Passes are valid for six months. If you have chosen to limit your Gold Pass to certain areas or properties and have not applied for all the suitable properties you could have within the six month period, we may withdraw your Priority Pass. If no suitable properties have been advertised, or you have applied for suitable properties but were unsuccessful, then the Pass will be renewed for a further six months automatically. If you are unhappy with our decision to withdraw your Priority Pass, you should ask us for more information and you can make a Complaint.

Silver and Bronze Passes expire after one year - the same rules apply about automatic renewal and cancellation as for Gold Passes.

There are nine categories in which a Pass can be awarded as shown in the table on page 8. Some qualify for just one level of Pass, others for different levels, depending on the circumstances. The table on page 8 sets out the categories and the levels of Passes available.

If you are, or may become homeless, you should contact your local authority for advice and assistance as soon as possible. This is in addition to applying to us as we cannot provide any temporary accommodation for you.

Limiting properties to certain areas

	Can be limited by Ochil View	Can be limited by you
Statutory Homelessness	No	Yes
Insecure accommodation	No	Yes
Overcrowding	No	Yes
Property in poor condition	No	Yes
Medical circumstances	No	Yes
Community Links	Yes	Yes
Separated households	No	Yes
Underoccupation	No	Yes
Transfer from flat to house	No	Yes

Limiting properties to certain types of property

	Can be limited by Ochil View	Can be limited by you
Statutory Homelessness	No	Yes
Insecure accommodation	No	Yes
Overcrowding	Yes	Yes
Property in poor condition	No	Yes
Medical circumstances	Yes	Yes
Community Links	No	Yes
Separated households	No	Yes
Underoccupation	Yes	Yes
Transfer from flat to house	Yes	Yes

Applying from outside our area of operation

Anyone over 16 years of age can register for housing with Ochil View. If you are or may become homeless you should apply to your local authority immediately. However we will recognise a priority pass from any local authority to qualify you for a Gold Homelessness pass.

Losing Priority Passes

Priority passes have an expiry date. If you do not apply for suitable properties (that are suitable to meet your needs and within any limits set on your pass), your Pass will lapse one year after the date it was awarded (6 months for Gold Passes). If you lose a Pass, you cannot apply again for the same circumstances.

You can appeal against our decision to remove your pass (see the Complaints Section below).

If your pass expires, you can continue to apply for properties as a registered applicant.

The best way to keep your pass is to be sure you apply for properties that meet your needs and pass limitations. If you apply and are unsuccessful, your Pass will not be withdrawn.

Who is not eligible for housing?

We may **suspend** your registration so that you remain on the register but cannot apply for available property. We will suspend your registration if:

- You have rent arrears, or any other tenancy related debt, such as rechargeable repairs of more than one month's rent with any landlord and you have not made and kept an agreement to reduce these arrears for at least 3 consecutive months.
- You, or someone who will live with you, have a history of anti-social behaviour, criminal behaviour or drug use. It is up to you to show us that this type of behaviour won't happen in the future.
- You, or someone who will live with you, have a history of harassment of staff. It is up to you to show us that this type of behaviour won't happen in the future.
- Where you need support to sustain your tenancy and that support is not available at this time. We will help you to access support to sustain your tenancy.
- You are an Ochil View Tenant and you have applied to buy your home under the Right to buy legislation.
- You are an Ochil View Tenant and you have not maintained your home in good condition as required by your Tenancy Agreement.
- You have no legal right to reside in the UK.
- You will have a housing need in the future but cannot accept an offer of tenancy at present. For example, you are in prison or in hospital but you are not going to be released or discharged in the near future.
- You are a registered sex offender. We cannot offer you housing until the Responsible Authorities have given approval.
- You own your own home but are not actively trying to sell it.

In all cases where a registration is suspended, the suspension will remain only for as long as it takes to obtain full information or address the situation. If there is no reason for the suspension to remain in place, or if the reason for the suspension doesn't apply to you or your household any more, we will remove it.

If you are unsure whether your registration would be suspended, you can ask us in confidence before you fill in a registration form.

If you are dissatisfied with our decision to suspend your application, you can appeal or complain. More information about our Complaints Procedure is set out below.

False information

We try to have a fair Allocations Policy. If you try to gain an advantage over other applicants by giving false information; we will correct our records as soon as we have the correct information. If you were allocated a house as a result of false information, we will take legal action to end your tenancy. To avoid any possibility of this happening, please let us know of any changes in your circumstances as soon as possible.

Complaints

We aim to give you a first class service at all times and hope that if we do not, you will tell us and give us the opportunity to correct any mistakes and improve. However, if you are dissatisfied, we have a Complaints Procedure that you, or anyone acting for you, can use. We will provide full information and a copy of our Complaints Procedure, on request. You can also get a copy from our website at www.ochilviewha.co.uk