

guide to accommodation



Thank you for choosing to apply for a home with Melin Homes

This booklet has been produced to explain the services that we offer and how we allocate our homes.

About Melin Homes

Melin Homes is a registered social landlord providing high quality homes at affordable prices throughout South East Wales. We manage almost 3,000 properties, including general housing, sheltered schemes and leasehold properties. We also operate low-cost home ownership schemes, helping you to get on the property ladder.

We are committed to creating homes that you choose to live in. We work with you and your neighbours and together we strive to make each Melin home part of a desirable neighbourhood to live in.

Aims and objectives

Our aim is: To provide homes and services of the highest quality at affordable cost, for those in need. We know it is difficult being on a waiting list, so we try to give you an honest assessment of your prospects at the outset.

Our homes are allocated to those in need, irrespective of their ethnic origin, sex, race, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability or religion. We seek to ensure that all members of the community are able to access our services. Information will be made available on audio format and in Braille. To comply with our commitment to fairness, we also provide a language line service and provide information in Welsh and other languages upon request.

Who can apply?

We accept applications from any person over 18 years of age. If you are under 18 we may still be able to help, but we will need to make special arrangements.

We reserve the right **not to** register applications from those with a poor tenants' history. For example:

- Former residents who have been evicted by any housing association or local authority for breach of tenancy.
- Anyone who has been convicted of a criminal act taking place within any housing association or council property, or an act aimed at any housing association or council's property, staff, residents or neighbours.
- Former residents of a housing association or local authority who have left owing rent or any other debt, unless the debt has been subsequently repaid or adequate arrangements are in place to repay the debt.
- In very exceptional circumstances, we may exclude applicants who would be unable to manage a tenancy without support, where we have failed to secure this support from relevant agencies.

Other services that Melin provides

1. Low-cost home ownership

Melin sometimes builds homes that can be bought at less than market value.

- Typically, the buyer would contribute 70% of the purchase price through a mortgage and / or personal savings. We would provide the remaining 30% in the form of an interest free loan or grant.
- Please contact our Home Ownership Co-ordinator on 01495 745925 to find out more.
- Alternatively, to register your interest, please tick the box in Section 6 of the application form.

2. Mortgage Rescue

If you currently own your own home but are having difficulties maintaining your monthly mortgage repayments and are threatened with repossession, Melin Homes may be able to help you remain in your home.

- Please contact our Home Ownership Co-ordinator on 01495 745925 to find out more.
- Alternatively, to register your interest, please tick the box in Section 6 of the application form.

3. Homes for older people

We provide homes for older people, which have access to 24 hour emergency lifelines.

- To register your interest, please tick the box in Section 3 of the application form

4. Care & Repair

Care & Repair Torfaen and Monmouthshire are managed by Melin Homes. They offer advice, support and assistance to homeowners over 60 with priority needs. For example, people who are disabled, living alone or on a low income.

Assistance can be obtained in matters such as home improvements, grant works, electrical works, central heating, plumbing and security.

- To register your interest, please tick the box in Section 6 of the application form.

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness

We do not have emergency accommodation, you should contact your local council for advice and assistance. We may be able to help once your council has verified your case.

The application form

How we allocate our homes

We offer our vacancies to a range of people on the waiting list, but we have a duty to give priority to those in greatest need, so we have set up a banding system in the interests of fairness.

Allocation of property

- **Nominations from local authority waiting lists**
50% of lettings
- **Exceptional need banding**
20% of lettings
- **Medium need banding**
30% of lettings
- **Low need banding**
will be offered advice and assistance only
- **No housing need banding**
No access to the waiting list

How we keep you informed when you are waiting

We realise that it can be a frustrating time when you are on a waiting list. In recognition of this, we will do all we can to provide you with information that will help you make an informed choice of where you want to live. We also aim to give you an indication of how long you may have to wait and your chances of being successful. We also review our waiting list regularly; if we contact you please make sure you reply.

What happens when you have completed your application?

We aim to process all applications within 21 days. You will then be notified in writing of the banding awarded.

If you have been excluded from our waiting list, we will also inform you in writing in 21 days.

What to do if your circumstances change

Please let us know if your circumstances change. If you don't let us know, we will be unable to reassess your application and you may miss out on being allocated a property.

Offers of accommodation

A member of the Housing team will invite you to view the property. Offers will be confirmed in writing. If you wish to accept or refuse the property you must let us know within 24 hours. We will provide applicants who accept an offer advice and assistance with their new tenancy as well as a complimentary welcome pack.

What if you refuse an offer?

Successful applicants will receive a maximum of 2 suitable offers within a 12 month period. If these offers are refused, you may be suspended from the waiting list. This decision will be made by the Head of Housing.

If you need to complain or appeal

If you are unhappy with the way your application has been dealt with, you should put your points in writing to the Head of Housing. You will receive a reply within 10 working days. If you are not satisfied with the Head of Housing's decision, you can ask for the matter to be dealt with under our Complaints Policy.

What about pets?

Generally, we do not allow pets in blocks of flats. If you are allowed to keep a pet, you must ensure it does not cause a nuisance to neighbours.

Your guide to self assessment

We operate a banding system to reflect the housing needs of those registered on our waiting list.

- **Exceptional need:**
Homeless, living in unfit housing, medical or vulnerable cases, statutory overcrowding.
- **Medium need:**
Sharing, private renting (affordability), disrepair, older person's home no longer suitable, non statutory overcrowding, children in high rise flats.
- **Low need:**
Private renting inadequate property, minor space restrictions or disrepair.
- **No need:**
Adequately housed, no disrepair, home large enough for family.

1 About you, your partner and your family

This section must be completed with both your details and your partner's if necessary.

Please ensure that National Insurance numbers are included. We need this information to ensure that we comply with our obligations under the Data Protection Act, 1998.

In Section 1 we also need details of any children that live with you.

2 About the home you live in now

This section is used to assess any overcrowding, under-occupation and whether your current home is suitable for children.

With regards to overcrowding, we normally assess bedroom requirements according to the following:

- **Single bedroom:**
For every person over the age of 5.
- **Double bedroom:**
For every couple or a single parent with children.

Previous addresses:

For question 5 in Section 2 you must provide full details of previous addresses in the last 5 years.

3 (A) About the home you would like

Please use the Melin Areas of Choice booklet. Please note if you wish to live in Monmouthshire or Torfaen a separate Common Housing Register application will be sent to you.

You can choose a maximum of three areas by ticking the appropriate boxes.

- If one particular area does not interest you, please complete the relevant information and specify any areas that you would not consider.

3 (B) Health & support

If you note that your current accommodation severely affects your health a separate medical form will be sent to you.

4 Criminal convictions

Failure to disclose criminal convictions could result in you losing your Melin home in the future.

5 Any other information that you feel will help your application

These are the criteria that determine how your application will be banded.

In order for you to be considered for the * reasons marked with an asterisk in section 5 on page 6 you will need to provide evidence.

For example poor housing condition will require confirmation under the Housing Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRS) that there is a Category 1 hazard that is not fixable by the landlord.

6 Further information

Are you related to anyone connected with Melin Homes?

You must indicate if you are related to a member of staff or a board member of Melin Homes.

Other Information

Please indicate if you are interested in any of the other services provided by Melin Homes or information on alternative landlords.

7 Declaration & signature

Please remember to read the declaration, sign the form and include any necessary supporting information.

How to contact us

Allocations Hotline:

- **Call:** 0800 9753 151
If interested in Blaenau Gwent or Torfaen
 - **Call:** 0800 9753 148
If interested in Monmouthshire, Newport or Powys
- If you are calling from a mobile phone, omit the first zero in the above numbers when dialling.

- **Main Switchboard:**
Tel: 08453 101102
- **Email:** enquiries@melinhomes.co.uk
- **Web:** www.melinhomes.co.uk
- **Fax:** 08453 101104

By Post

- Melin Homes, Ty'r Efail, Lower Mill Field, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 0XJ