



THE PAN-LONDON HOUSING RECIPROCAL

Professionals Guide

saferlondon

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PROFESSIONALS GUIDE

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This guide has been produced for professionals referring social tenants to the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal.

THE PAN-LONDON HOUSING RECIPROCAL

The Pan-London Housing Reciprocal supports Londoners with, or owed, a social tenancy who are also at risk of violence in their borough.

Tenants wishing to use the scheme are asked to choose London boroughs in which they are safe to live and wait for a matching property to become available.

Who the scheme supports

The scheme supports individuals and families who are affected by:

- Domestic violence and abuse
- Sexual violence and abuse
- Forced sex-working and human trafficking.
- So-called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.
- Stalking
- Hate crime
- Serious youth violence

Tenants who at risk of serious youth violence must indicate the boroughs where they are at risk. Any safe borough will be deemed suitable options for relocation, subject to a positive risk assessment.

The scheme is mainly for people who already have a social tenancy, but we can also accept applications for people owed one by a local authority, for example as a care leaver.

Nominating officers

We ask professionals to make applications on behalf of applicants. This can be any professional, including a housing officer or support worker.

The professional referring the applicant is called the 'nominating officer'. They act as our main point of contact for the application. For GDPR and safety purposes, we do not have direct contact with any applicants.

All queries regarding applications must go through the nominating officer. An application can have more than one nominating officer. This can be helpful where the main nominating officer is unavailable.

HOW IT WORKS

The Reciprocal is a voluntary collaboration between all of London's Local Authorities and over 50 housing associations. Partners offer properties to the scheme and Safer London matches these properties to applications, prioritising those who have been waiting for a longer period.

Safer London keeps a record of the moves in and out for each landlord. We place a cap on the number of moves a provider can have through the scheme before they must reciprocate a property.

At present, providers can have up to two of their tenants move before their activity is suspended and they must provide at least one property to the scheme before using it again.

We also keep a record of the property sizes offered and to keep the scheme operating fairly we ask that the same sizes are reciprocated. For example, if a landlord has two families move into a one-bedroom and a three-bedroom property, they must reciprocate two properties of this size and not two two-bedroom properties.



MAKING AN APPLICATION

Applications are made via the [online form](#). You can also access the link via our [website](#).

To make an application, you will need to know:

1. Why the tenant needs to move.

You will be asked to tick the reason(s) for referral and provide a brief explanation of the risks. We will remove any identifiable information from the form before registering it. It is not necessary to provide CAD numbers or dates of incidents.

2. What support the tenant has in place.

This is important for providers to know how the risk will be minimized once the tenant has been rehoused and to reassure them of any other concerns, such as a history of anti-social behaviour or any rent arrears in previous properties.

3. The ages and genders of all members of the household.

We require the details of all adults and children of the household.

4. Details of the property currently occupied.

This includes the number of bedrooms and any adaptations.

5. A list of safe and unsafe boroughs.

The requirements for this will depend on the risk category of the application. For most risks we require a minimum of five safe boroughs for an application to be made.

6. Any floor requirements.

Based on evidenced medical needs.



MAKING AN APPLICATION

Once we receive an application, we will respond within three working days. We will assess the application, allocate an enquiry number and contact you via email to request any outstanding information.

We will also request permission from the Named Lead of the applicant's landlord, for the application to be circulated. Due to the number of applications we receive, we are unable to follow up if we do not receive approval from the landlord. It is imperative to be aware that approval can be denied if a landlord has gone over the allotted number of applications without reciprocating accommodation in a timely manner.

It is also important that professionals get back to us promptly, so accepted applications can be circulated as soon as possible.



PROPERTY OFFERS - HOW LONG THEY TAKE

Property offers can take time, especially for family-sized accommodation.

Applications for smaller properties tend to have a shorter waiting time than larger properties, due to the shortage of family-sized properties across London. We strongly encourage applicants seeking family-sized accommodation to consider other options.

For applicants affected by sexual and domestic violence, and where there is no serious youth violence component to the risk, we also provide a priority [Housing Moves](#) pathway which gives applicants further options to find a property quicker.

Applicants are asked to check weekly for new properties on the Housing Moves portal and are informed that they have top banding on all bids they place. Landlords do not owe a property to the Reciprocal if one of their tenants moves through Housing Moves.

Applicants are encouraged to select as many safe boroughs as possible to increase the likelihood of receiving an offer. Most social housing stock in London is in inner-London boroughs and properties for outer London boroughs tend to take longer. Once an application has been submitted you can discuss waiting times with the team, to see if there are any suggestions we can make to try to decrease the waiting time.

When a property is offered, we will contact the nominating officer to provide the details and to arrange a viewing date. Properties often have a quick turnaround time and we require a response as quickly as possible so that the applicant does not lose out. It can therefore be an advantage to have two nominated officer, so that Safer London has two contacts for each applicant.



APPLICATION CRITERIA

There are two types of criteria for applications.

For tenants affected by domestic violence, sexual violence, hate crime and community safety risks:

- Applications must select a minimum of five London boroughs of choice.
- Property offers will be capped at one offer per application.
- All referrals require signposting to a domestic abuse service if one is not currently in place.
- All referrals for domestic and/or sexual violence must register with Housing Moves and actively bid for properties via this scheme. Once the application has been registered, Safer London will provide details for you to create an account for the applicant.
- All applicants and professionals need to note that providers may conduct pre-tenancy checks (ensuring rent balance is in order or being addressed), and that removal and decoration costs are unlikely to be included in the offer and rent in advance may be requested (particularly if the offer is from a housing association).
- Floor requirements are accommodated with evidenced medical needs only.

For all referrals where serious youth violence is the main risk:

- Applicants will have to indicate the borough(s) of risk. All other boroughs will be considered as reasonable options for relocation subject to a risk assessment.
- Property offers will be capped at one offer per application.
- A named professional or organisation that will be providing support to the individual or family, must be included in the application in relation to risk assessing the new property (risk assessment lead) and resettlement support.
- All applicants and professionals need to note that providers may conduct pre-tenancy checks (ensuring rent balance is in order or being addressed), and that removal and decoration costs are unlikely to be included in the offer and rent in advance may be requested (particularly if the offer is from a housing association).
- Floor requirements are accommodated with evidenced medical needs only

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens if an applicant refuses a property?

If an applicant refuses a property suited to their application, they will be withdrawn from the scheme. We ask nominating officers to inform their applicants of the conditions of the scheme, including that properties are offered on a borough-wide level, we cannot accept requests for houses or properties with gardens. If an error has been made outside of the applicant's control, the implications for refusal will be considered on an individual basis.

Can I approach a provider directly to see if they can help my applicant?

Safer London does not have consent to provide the Named Leads lists of our partners, and we encourage you not to directly approach boroughs regarding referrals to this scheme as this can complicate applications as well as disadvantage applicants who have been waiting longer.

However, we do encourage nominating officers to support applicants to explore all methods to achieve a successful outcome including making homelessness approaches to councils where applicable, management transfers or where required, seeking accommodation via the private rented sector.

Can I add or amend information on an application?

You can change information on an application at any time by contacting the team at housingreciprocal@saferlondon.org.uk, and quoting the reference code for the application. We cannot accept requests from applicants to change information and we will redirect to nominating officers if we receive contact from applicants.

What should I do if I am no longer working with the applicant?

Please let us know the name, telephone number and email address of the professional replacing you and we will add them as the applicant's nominating officer. As we use reference codes and no names or addresses, it is difficult for professionals to identify applicants unless there is a handover and clear communication between all involved.

GET IN TOUCH

To speak to one of the Reciprocal team

If you have any questions about the reciprocal scheme, please don't hesitate to get in touch with our team:

housingreciprocal@saferlondon.org.uk

If you need help with our application form

If you have any queries or need assistance with our online form, please email our Front Door team:

referralandassessmentteam@saferlondon.org.uk

Find out more about our work with housing and communities



Scan the QR code or visit our website:

saferlondon.org.uk/places-housing-and-communities

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