



# ICHR

**Inverclyde Common  
Housing Register**



**Guide to Applying for a home with ICHR**

and **THESE HOMES**

## Guide to Applying for a Home with ICHR and These Homes

Inverclyde Common Housing Register (ICHR) is a partnership between Cloch Housing Association, Oak Tree Housing Association, Larkfield Housing Association, Link Housing Association and Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association. The participating landlords provide and manage good quality, affordable homes for people in housing need.

ICHR operates a Choice Based Lettings system and have partnered with a digital lettings platform called These Homes to allow us to make this process easier for our housing applicants.

This Guide contains important information which you must read carefully so that you understand how These Homes works and maximise your chances of getting a new home. If there is anything you don't understand or you need more advice or information, please contact us.

The These Homes Register is shared by several Scottish landlords. You only need to register once then you can choose to be considered by one, or more landlords, depending on where you want to live. Once you have registered with These Homes, you can apply for all suitable homes advertised provided you have chosen to register with the landlord the home belongs to. There will usually be a lot of people applying for the same home and so there are some simple rules to decide as fairly as possible who will be offered the home. The ICHR rules are explained in this guide, other landlords will have different rules.

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## 1. What is These Homes?

These Homes is a digital lettings service used by several landlords operating in different areas throughout Scotland. You can register with any of these landlords, allowing you to apply for new homes in lots of different areas. The advantage of a digital lettings service is that you can see what homes are available at any time and can choose to apply for the ones that are suitable for your needs, and are in areas where you would like to live.

## 2. Registering

You need to register with us before you can apply for one of our homes. Anyone aged 16 or over can register. The easiest way to register is online at [www.inverclydechr.org.uk](http://www.inverclydechr.org.uk). When you complete the registration process, you choose which area(s) you want to live in, and you will be given a list of the These Homes landlords who have homes in your area(s). For ICHR you should select the Inverclyde area. If you need support to complete the registration process, please contact us.

Once you have completed the registration process, you will be given a registration number. You need this number (or your email address) and password to log in to your registration details and apply for available homes. You will also need your registration number if you need to phone or write to us.

If your circumstances change at any time it is very important that you update your registration online because if you successfully apply for one of our homes, then we find that the information we have about you is incorrect you may not be offered it.

## 3. Priority Passes

We want to make sure that we allocate the homes we have available to the people who need them most. So, if you meet the housing need criteria set out in our Allocations Policy then you may qualify for a Priority Pass. You may be in housing need for one of the following reasons:

- You are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- You or a household member are suffering domestic abuse
- Your health is affected by your current housing situation
- You are overcrowded as you do not have enough bedrooms for your family
- Your home is too big, and you need a smaller home
- Your home is unsuitable because of its condition or lack of amenities

If any of these situations apply to you, you will be asked for further information during the registration process which has been designed to collect the information we need to accurately assess your housing need in line with the ICHR Allocations Policy. Please see our full policy for more information about criteria you need to meet to qualify for each Priority Pass. You can download a copy of the [Allocations policy here](#).

You may be eligible for more than one Priority Pass, the property adverts will specify which passes can be used when applying for that particular property. Eg a property with level access may specify that only applicants with a Medical Priority Pass will be prioritised.

#### 4. How do we assess Priority Passes?

The ICHR has 3 types of Priority Pass:

| PRIORITY PASS   | PRIORITY LEVEL(S)        |
|---|--------------------------|
| Urgent Housing Need - Homeless / Domestic Abuse/Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions | Gold                     |
| Overcrowding / Under-occupation   | Gold<br>Silver<br>Bronze |
| Health / Medical  | Gold<br>Silver           |

We will assess what level of priority you are entitled to based on the information you have provided during the registration process so it's important you give us enough information to make a decision. Sometimes we may need more information, in which case we will contact you to let you know.

Once we have assessed your registration, we will confirm this and let you know if you have been awarded a Priority Pass. If you are awarded a Priority Pass it will be taken into consideration every time you apply for a house that falls within any limits set on your Pass.

Priority Passes are only awarded for a significant housing need. If you are not awarded a Priority Pass you think you are entitled to, or if you believe you have been awarded the wrong level of priority, you can appeal. Information on how to appeal a decision is set out at Section 11.

Where we consider that an applicant has knowingly or carelessly worsened their housing circumstances (for example, by moving from a house that was large enough for their household to one that is too small, causing overcrowding), their registration may be suspended. Full details on other circumstances where your housing registration may be suspended please see the suspensions table in our Allocations Policy.

#### 5. Limiting Priority Passes

When you apply for a Priority Pass, there may be times when we set limits on your Pass to a particular type of house or flat, property feature or area. For example, if:

- Following an assessment, you need ground floor accommodation or an adaptation such as a wet floor shower, a wheelchair accessible home or a fully wheelchair adapted home
- Your Pass will be limited for use with available homes that meet the 'limited' criteria. You can still apply for available homes that do not meet the 'limited' criteria, but your Pass will not be recognised, and you will be applying as a registered applicant with no Priority Pass.

## 6. Applying for a home

Once you have completed your registration you can apply for homes that we advertise, provided it is suitable for you. Our adverts appear weekly on [www.inverclydechr.org.uk](http://www.inverclydechr.org.uk). We send a copy of our advert to local agencies such as Inverclyde HSCP, local libraries and community centres. You can also request to receive weekly emails detailing available homes being advertised which match your choices and choose what day of the week you want to receive this.

When you see an advert for a home you are interested in you can apply online by logging in to your registration (remember you will need your registration number or email address, and your password). Alternatively, you can apply over the phone, or in person at any of the ICHR landlords' offices. Our available homes are advertised for 9 days from Friday at 12 noon until the following Sunday at midnight. It is important that you apply before the closing date and time specified in the advert.

It is essential that you only apply for homes that you would accept if you were offered them, so before you apply it is a good idea to check Google Maps 'Explore this Area' for information about the area (<https://www.google.co.uk/maps>). If public transport links are an important consideration you should also look at <http://www.traveline.info> for information about buses and trains. You can apply for up to 3 advertised homes in any one cycle. If you are successful for more than one property you will be required to decide which property you are accepting. If you are on offer for a property with one landlord you will not be able to apply for another property with a different landlord.

If you do not want to apply for advertised homes each week, you do not have to. Each year we will check whether you still wish to remain registered with ICHR and These Homes. You will be contacted to review your housing registration, failure to do so will result in your registration being cancelled.

## 7. Offers

Once the closing date and time for the advert has been reached, the landlord will look at all the applicants who have applied for advertised homes. They will normally consider an applicant for housing according to the following steps:

1. Who would make 'best use' of the home – for example, by using all the available bedrooms or by using disabled adaptations.
2. If more than one applicant would make 'best use', we will offer it to the person with the highest level of Priority Pass (see the explanation of Priority Passes in Sections 4-5)
3. If more than one person has the same level of Priority Pass, the offer will go to the person who has the oldest registration date.
4. If there are no applicants with Priority Passes, the offer will go to the applicant who first registered with ICHR.

If you are successful in applying for one of our homes, you should normally be notified within one week of the closing date of the advert.

Please note that if you refuse an offer of a home you have applied for, you will receive a “first refusal email.” If you refuse a second offer within a 6 month period your registration will be suspended for 6 months from the date of the second refusal. Because of this, it is really important that you think about whether or not a home will suit you before you apply for it.

## 8. Reporting Allocations

We will publish reports on These Homes, to give everyone some idea of the demand for different areas and types of home. This 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 longer for the ‘perfect’ one to come along?

## 9. Who is not eligible for housing?

In certain circumstances, registrations can be suspended. This means you will not be able to apply for any of our homes until the suspended status is removed. As part of the registration process, you will be asked to answer several questions and to confirm this information is correct. The answers you give show whether you meet the criteria to apply for housing with us (see Section 10 - False Information). If any criteria are not met, your registration will not be made ‘live’ until such time as you can demonstrate to us that you can now meet the criteria to apply for housing.

Examples of when registrations are suspended include:

- You have outstanding rent arrears or other tenancy debt, either with ICHR landlords or another landlord, and you have not maintained an agreement to pay them off.
- You have a history of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity (subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act) when action has been taken (or is pending) by Police, local authority, landlord etc.
- You supply false or misleading information – see Section 10 below
- We have asked you for more information and have not yet received it

For a full list of reasons for suspension please check our [Allocations Policy](#).

## 10 - False Information

If you give false or misleading information in an attempt to secure an offer of a new home, we will immediately suspend your application for 1 year, we will withdraw any offer of housing and if you have signed a tenancy agreement, we will take legal action to remove you from the property.

## 11 - How to Make a Complaint or Appeal a Decision

We always aim to provide an excellent service but accept that we do not always get it right, and hope that you will tell us to give us the opportunity to correct any mistakes. If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, we have a Complaints Procedure that you, or anyone acting for you, can use. You can download a copy of each landlord's Complaints procedure from their websites or contact the ICHR for a copy.

You may appeal against a decision made about your application for housing if you are dissatisfied, for example:

| APPEALS   | WHO DEALS WITH APPEAL               |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| I disagree with my Priority Pass award                                    | ICHR Team                           |
| My registration was suspended due to pre tenancy questions being selected | ICHR Team                           |
| My registration was suspended following 2 refusals                        | Landlord who instructed suspension  |
| My application for a property was by-passed                               | Landlord who instructed by-pass     |
| My offer of housing was withdrawn   | Landlord who offered the property   |
| COMPLAINTS  | WHO DEALS WITH COMPLAINT            |
| My housing registration took too long to process                          | ICHR Team                           |
| The details in the property advert were incorrect.                        | Landlord who advertised property    |
| I am unhappy with how a staff member spoke to me.                         | Landlord you contacted or ICHR Team |

### Appeal Stage 1

Appeals should be made in the first instance within two weeks of the disputed decision. (See table above for where you should submit your appeal). We aim to acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 2 working days and to provide a full response within ten working days.

### Appeal Stage 2

If the applicant is not satisfied with the Appeal Stage 1 decision, or has additional information, they can appeal again. Stage 2 appeals should be submitted within two weeks of the Stage 1 decision. We will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within three working days and aim to provide a full response within 20 working days.

### Stage 3

If the applicant is not satisfied with the Stage 2 appeal decision, their final appeal will be dealt with at Stage 2 of our Complaints Handling Procedure.

If you still do not agree with our decision, you can appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).



## 12 - Contacting Us

If you need any help or advice or you have any comments you would like to make, you can contact us at:

Email: [info@inverclydechr.org.uk](mailto:info@inverclydechr.org.uk)

Phone: 01475 807011

Visit or write to us at any of the ICHR participating landlord's offices.

## 13 - Information in Alternative Formats

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

On request, we will arrange for an interpreter to be present where necessary, for example at interviews. This includes sign language interpreters.

We will provide material in formats such as large print, CD or audio file, on request. We will provide these additional services at no cost to you.

## 14 - Data Protection

The ICHR and These Homes take the issue of security and data protection very seriously and strictly adhere to guidelines published in the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulations applicable from May 2018, together with any domestic laws subsequently enacted. The information that you provide us as part of your registration and any additional information that you provide us, together with any information we obtain about you from a third-party will be held and used in accordance with our Allocations Policy and our Fair Processing Notice which explains your privacy rights and how we gather, use and share information about you, Full copies of these policies are available on [www.inverclydechr.org.uk](http://www.inverclydechr.org.uk) or by contacting us.

When you register online, you consent to our processing your personal data, including any sensitive personal data. Sensitive personal data includes any information that we collect about your racial or ethnic origin, health, committed or alleged offences including Court Proceedings and sentencing. This data will only be processed where necessary. Please inform us as soon as possible of any change in your personal information by logging onto [Inverclydechr.org.uk](http://Inverclydechr.org.uk) and updating your registration to keep them complete and accurate.