

St Giles Almshouse – Selection Policy & Procedures

To live in our almshouse you must:

- be a single woman
- be aged 60 or over
- have a low income and limited capital
- have lived or worked in the area of benefit for 10 years (but not necessarily currently)
- be able to live independently with help from carers, if necessary
- have the right to live in the UK.

About St Giles Almshouses

The Almshouses consists of eight self-contained flats situated around a small courtyard garden in the heart of central London.

The accommodation has a living room, bedroom (in one flat a bed-sitting room), fully fitted kitchen, and bathroom with shower. Each unit has full gas central heating, and is fitted with fridge, washing machine/dryer, carpets and window blinds. The almshouses do not have a warden but a Careline alarm service in is operation.

Residents who live in St Giles Almshouses are appointed as beneficiaries of the charity and they do not have tenancy. If you are unsure how this affects you, please seek advice.

Selection Policy

The Trustees aim to make the best use of our Almshouses by making an offer of accommodation to the applicant with most need at the time of the vacancy.

The Trustees recognise that there are many factors that might affect whether or not someone is in need of new accommodation, so the Trustees have developed a points based system, and applicants with the highest number of points will have priority.

We accept expressions of interest at any time, and eligible applicants will be placed on the waiting list. When there is a vacancy, applicants on the waiting list will be informed AND it will be advertised locally. Everyone will be asked to complete a full application form by the deadline.

This new two-stage application process means that we always have current information when making the assessment. It also ensures that we only collect the minimum amount of personal information needed for each stage of the process.

Please note with such a small number of flats, we very rarely have vacancies, and the almshouses are currently full.

The Trustees delegate the initial assessment process to the Clerk and a Selection sub-committee but a final decision on who will be offered accommodation rests with the whole Trustee Board.

Application Process

The charity has several stages to the selection process for St Giles Almshouses:

Stage 1 – Expression of Interest

If you are interested in applying to be a resident of St Giles Almshouses, then we ask you to complete a short Expression of Interest Form. This form helps us to see if you meet the criteria for eligibility.

Within 10 working days, we will write or email to confirm that we have received your form, and let you know whether you are eligible to join our waiting list.

If you have been added to the waiting list, we will contact you every year to check that you want to remain on the list.

Stage 2 – Apply for a vacancy

When a vacancy does become available, we contact ALL people on the waiting list and ask if you wish to be considered for the vacancy (or are no longer interested). The charity will also advertise the vacancy locally and invite eligible people to apply.

If you would like to be considered for the vacancy, we ask you to complete the full Application Form by the closing date. This form helps us to only collect the information needed for the Trustees to start the assessment process.

Stage 3 – Assessment

ALL applications will be assessed to determine priority for accommodation. Ideally, the assessments will be done by two people working independently, and then moderating their scores. The Trustees use a points based system that takes into account the many factors that can affect whether someone is in need of alternative accommodation. It focuses on three areas:

- a) **Eligibility Criteria;**
- b) **Housing Need** - this may be someone ‘at risk’ with an urgent and immediate need for re-housing, or a problem with the current housing conditions including overcrowding, poor state of repair, unsuitable sharing of facilities, uncertain tenure etc; and
- c) **Health or Social Need** – are there personal or medical issues, such as loneliness, isolation from family, accessibility, that are made worse in the current situation.

A full breakdown of the assessment scoring criteria is attached as [Appendix One](#).

The purpose of the assessment is to shortlist the top-scoring applications (usually between 3-5 applications) to progress to the next stage. A list of applicants and their assessment scores will be given to the Selections Sub-committee to confirm the shortlist.

Stage 4 – Home Visits

If you are shortlisted, you will be visited at home by two people – either The Clerk and a Trustee or two Trustees. They will use guidance from the Almshouse Association on ‘Notes for Interviewing Applicants’ to assist them.

During the home visit, you will be asked to:

- Verify the information provided in the application form (including seeing original copies of bank statements and benefits information);
- Talk about why you want to move;
- Show the visitors around your current home;
- Ask any questions about the St Giles Almshouses, so that you fully understand how they work.

The visitors will then prepare a short report and may update the assessment scoring based on any additional information learned during the visit. The reports and updated assessment scores will be circulated to the Selections Sub-committee and they will decide who progress to the next stage. The selected applicants will then be invited to visit the Almshouses and asked to attend an interview.

Stage 5 – Interview and final decision

If you are asked to attend an interview, this should be with two different people from the Selections Sub-Committee (not the people that visited you at your home). You may not be invited to interview if it becomes clear that the vacancy at the St Giles Almshouses is not appropriate for you, or you are already familiar with it.

The interview will help to:

- Clarify any aspect of the assessment process so far;
- Show you around St Giles Almshouses and hopefully the vacant flat;
- Introduce the Residents’ Handbook and ensure you understand all the Almshouse’ policies;
- Answer any questions that you may have.

This interview process is an opportunity for the Trustees and the applicant to gain all the information needed to make a decision about becoming/appointing a new St Giles Almshouse resident.

An assessment report, summarising the needs of all the shortlisted applicants, will then be circulated to ALL Trustees, with a recommendation for the applicant to be appointed. It must be approved in accordance with quoracy for Trustee meetings but may be done between meetings by phone conference or email (so as not to delay the appointment process).

Stage 6 – Offer of Appointment and References

An initial offer of appointment will be made in writing to the selected applicant, subject to references. You will be asked to provide further information at this stage:

- Names and contact details of two people who can act as character references for you – please get their permission.
- Name and contact details of your current GP, and permission to share information with the charity now for a medical reference, and also in the future.
- Name and contact details of your next of kin/emergency contacts – please ensure they know you have given their names.
- Information about any end of life planning in place - that you have made a will, power of attorney and funeral plans.

If you are offered the vacancy, you will have a maximum of two weeks to confirm that you want to be appointed as a resident of the St Giles Almshouse. During this time, you would be able to visit the Almshouses again, if you wish.

Stage 7 – Confirmation of Appointment

Once we receive the references, and there are no other issues to clarify, you will be sent a formal Letter of Appointment, which contains all the terms and conditions of occupying the Almshouse. You will need to sign and return the letter as soon as possible.

Prior to moving in, the charity will need to receive the first payment of Monthly Maintenance Charge. The current rate for 2020 is £700 per month. When this has been received, you can finally begin the process of moving in.

If You Are Not Selected

If at anytime throughout the assessment and selection process your application is identified as not being a priority, then you will be informed in writing within 10 working days. You will be offered the opportunity to remain on the waiting list and be considered for any future vacancies.

Appendix One – Assessment Scoring Criteria

This information will primarily be used at Stage 3 Assessment.

However, we may use the scoring system again - when we receive additional information from the home visits and interviews - to aid the Trustees in making a final decision.

Key Factors	Max Points
1. Eligibility	(30)
Connection to the area	10
Financial Need – level of income and capital	10
Age – 2 points for each 5 years over 60	10
2. Current Housing	(20)
At Risk – genuine homelessness or threatened with homelessness so urgent and immediate need for re-housing	10
Housing Conditions – Factors taken into consideration include overcrowding, undercrowding, sharing facilities, and unsanitary conditions, tenure and state of repair etc	10
3. Personal Factors	(20)
Health needs – medical conditions made worse by present accommodation including accessibility issues	10
Social need – are there personal issues involved such as loneliness, isolation from family or difficulties with day-to-day living	10
TOTAL	70

High score	between 56–70 points	High Priority
Medium score	between 41–55 points	Priority
Low score	between 21–40 points	Not a priority
Very Low score	between 1–20 points	Probably not eligible