

St Giles Almshouse – Selection Policy & Procedures

About St Giles Almshouses

Our Almshouses are a small community of eight self-contained flats nestled around a lovely courtyard garden in the heart of central London – an oasis of calm in busy Covent Garden. Each resident lives in a private flat and is free to come and go as they please.

The homes are on the ground and first floors. Each flat consists of a living room, bedroom (one flat is a bed-sitting room), fully fitted kitchen, bathroom with walk-in shower and gas central heating. All are equipped with kitchen appliances, carpets and window blinds. The only communal space is the beautiful courtyard garden. There is no warden on-site although the charity's offices are a short walk away and a Careline alarm service is in operation.

Almshouse Eligibility

To live in our almshouse, you must meet the following criteria:

- Gender: be a single woman
- Age Requirement: be aged 60 or over.
- Financial Need: have a low income and limited capital.
- Local Connection: have lived or worked in the local area for at least 10 years.
- Live Independently

Our area of benefit is very small (see map). For the Almshouses, we consider the local area to include Bloomsbury, Fitzrovia, Covent Garden, Seven Dials, Soho and St Giles. If you live or have lived in these areas as an adult for over ten years, then you are eligible to apply (you do not need be living in the area currently). Please note that you are eligible to apply if you work or have worked in the local area, but this will be assessed as lower priority.

Living Independently – at the selection stage this means able to live on your own without any external support or care packages. Please see Independent Living policy for more details.

Selection Policy

St Giles Almshouses has a small number of flats and therefore vacancies are very rare – and we never know when a flat will become available. All residents are given a licence to occupy their home and are appointed as a legal beneficiary of the charity. Therefore, 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.

Our selection process has been designed to collect information from applicants in a timely and appropriate manner and provide them with an opportunity to visit the Almshouses.

Selection Process

As we do not know when a vacancy will arise, we use a two-stage application process – an initial Expression of Interest and then a full application when there is a vacancy.

The Trustees delegate the selection 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, and their decision is final.

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 decide if you meet the eligibility criteria – see above.

An expression form can be sent at any time, and eligible applicants will be placed on the waiting list. When we receive an expression of interest form, we will respond in writing (within 10 working days), to confirm receipt and let you know whether you are eligible to join our waiting list. Please note the waiting list this is just a list of people who we contact when there is a vacancy at the Almshouses – it is not numbered, and you do not reach the top.

If you have been added to the waiting list, we will contact you every year to see whether you want to still be on the list or if your circumstances have changed and you are no longer interested.

Stage 2 – Apply for a vacancy

When a flat does become available, we inform everyone on the waiting list. The charity will also advertise the vacancy locally and invite the Housing Department to encourage any eligible people on the Housing List to apply.

If you want to apply for the vacancy, you should complete the full Application Form by the closing date. This two-stage process means that we always have up-to-date information when making the assessment. The form helps us to collect the information needed for the Trustees to undertake the assessment so please ensure that you include all relevant information.

Before the application deadline, the Charity will try to ensure that any applicants who want to visit the Almshouses can do so. This will usually be in the form of a drop-in Open Morning or Open Afternoon – details of which will be circulated in advance.

Stage 3 – Assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to shortlist applications to progress to the next stage.

ALL applications will be assessed following our scoring criteria. The Trustees recognise there are many factors that can affect whether someone needs alternative accommodation, and they have developed a points-based system to help find priority applications. It focuses on three areas:

- a) **Eligibility Criteria** – strength of connection to local area, financial circumstances and living independently.
- 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, and uncertain tenure etc.
- c) **Health or Social Need** – are there personal or medical issues, such as loneliness, isolation from family, accessibility, which are made worse in the current situation.

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

Please note that applications from people who already have secure accommodation with another Almshouse charity, a Housing Association or a local authority are unlikely to be assessed as a priority. We do recognise that this housing is not always ideal and people may be dealing with difficult situations such as noise problems and neighbours. Unfortunately, the housing crisis in London means many people are in far worse situations.

In addition to the information provided by the applicant, one person will also complete due diligence checks by researching the applicant on the internet.

The assessments will be done by a minimum of two people working independently. They will decide the top-scoring applications and agree between 3-5 applicants to progress to the next stage. An initial assessment report will be circulated to the Selections Sub-committee to confirm the shortlist.

If your application is not shortlisted, then you will be informed in writing within 4 weeks of the application deadline. If appropriate, you may be offered the opportunity to still be on the waiting list and be considered for any future vacancies.

Stage 4 – Home Visit Interviews

If you are shortlisted, you will be visited at home by two people – either The Clerk and a Trustee or two Trustees. The purpose of the home visit is to find out more about you and your current housing situation to complete the assessment process.

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.

In addition, the visitors will:

- Introduce the Residents Handbook and ensure you understand all the Almshouses policies.
- Answer any questions you have about St Giles Almshouses.

The home visit interview is an opportunity for the Trustees and the applicant to gather all the information needed to decide about appointing/becoming a new St Giles Almshouse resident.

Following all the visits, a Trustee will use any additional information they have learnt to update the assessment scoring. They will prepare the final assessment report summarising the needs and issues of all the shortlisted applicants. It will highlight the top-scoring applicant and make a recommendation about which applicant should be appointed.

The report (and updated assessment scores) will be circulated to ALL Trustees. The report and recommendation must be approved in accordance with quoracy requirements for Trustee meetings but may be done between meetings by phone conference or email (so as not to delay the appointment process).

If you are not selected after the home visits, then you will be informed in writing within four weeks of the visit. If appropriate, you may be offered the opportunity to remain on the waiting list and be considered for any future vacancies.

Stage 5 – 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 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, Lasting Power of Attorney and funeral plans.

The Charity will contact the two referees and ask them to provide a written reference about you. The Charity will also contact your GP and ask for a medical reference and confirmation that they would expect you to be able to live independently (without support) for two years.

This stage can sometimes take a week or two as we have to wait to hear back from all your references. If there are any questions arising from the information you have provided, then we may be in touch to clarify this.

Stage 6 – Confirmation of Appointment

Assuming there are no problems with the paperwork stage, you will then be formally offered the vacancy, and the date of occupation can be agreed. You will be sent a formal Letter of Appointment, which contains all the terms and conditions of occupying the Almshouse. If you want to be appointed as a resident, then you will need to sign and return the letter within two weeks.

The Monthly Maintenance Charge (instead of rent) is paid one month in advance and the amount due in 2025 is £800 per calendar month. There is no deposit payable.

The Clerk can help to calculate the amount of MMC due for the first month (if the date of occupancy is not the first of the month).

The charity needs to receive the first payment of Monthly Maintenance Charge before you can begin the process of moving in.

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