



## **Your guide to retirement housing**

This booklet gives an overview of our shared ownership, rental and supported retirement housing options for people who have served or worked for the Church.



**Registered charity No: 236627**

**September 2020**



## How we help retiring clergy with housing

We understand that retirement poses significant housing challenges for our clergy, above and beyond those that other pensioners may experience. To help with this, we offer modest, affordable, retirement housing to those who need our help, through the Church's Housing Assistance for the Retired Ministry (CHARM) schemes.

We offer more than just 'bricks and mortar'; we provide a range of support to ensure a smooth and easy transition from active ministry to retirement.

## Who we help

Our retirement options are open to:

- retired clergy,
- deaconesses,
- licensed lay and church workers,
- Church Army officers,
- spouses/civil partners, widows and widowers of beneficiaries,
- those with non-stipendiary ministry service, \*
- Brothers and Sisters from Anglican religious orders, \*
- those who receive a pension from the National Church Institutions. \*

*\*Supported housing only.*

We can offer,

- the opportunity to start planning your retirement housing up to five years before
- a choice of retirement housing and support so that you can choose a property from a range of options that meets your needs and circumstances
- clear, timely and accessible information and guidance to enable you to make informed decisions,
- support in accessing any additional financial support that you may be entitled to,
- a single point of contact regarding your property,
- support if your housing needs change during retirement - for both existing and new customers.

**We strive to offer excellent service, taking time to understand your needs, and how we can best help.**



## Housing types

We offer three types of housing:

- **Shared ownership properties-** for those who cannot afford to buy on the open market but have enough savings to buy a 25% share of a property, with the Pensions Board purchasing the remaining share.
- **Rental properties-** for those who don't have enough savings to buy a property through shared ownership.
- **Supported housing-** for those looking to live semi-independently.

Each option has its own eligibility criteria, including minimum type and length of service requirements, detailed in the following pages.

## How the process works

If you are thinking of applying for help from us, the first step is to contact our Housing Team, using the details below.

We will ask you for some initial information, so we can confirm your eligibility.

Once you have got in touch, we may be able to suggest one of our housing offers based on your personal circumstances including finances, health and any considerations about family circumstances.

More information can be found on our website:

[www.churchofengland.org/housing](http://www.churchofengland.org/housing)

How to contact us	
Telephone	0207 898 1824
Email	<a href="mailto:housingservices@churchofengland.org">housingservices@churchofengland.org</a>
Post	Housing Church of England Pensions Board PO BOX 2026 PERSHORE WR10 9BW



## Shared ownership properties

### CHARM shared ownership

Our shared ownership scheme offers you the opportunity to buy at least a 25% share of a home, with the Pensions Board buying the remaining percentage, up to £150,000.

You would pay us a service charge and a monthly rent. Your rent would be based on the interest rate we are paying on the mortgage for our share.

You can find details of the current interest rates on our website.



### Eligibility criteria

To be eligible you must:

- be (or have recently been) living in a 'tied' house;
- have at least 5 years stipendiary service by the time you retire;
- have enough savings to buy a minimum of a 25% share of a property;
- have enough savings to cover the legal fees for a purchase; approximately £4,000;
- be able to pay for any building work the property may need before you move in;
- be able to afford to live in your home long-term.

### How the shared ownership scheme works

Once you have got in touch with us and we have confirmed you are eligible, we would meet with you to talk through how the scheme works. If you feel the scheme is for you, then you should start searching for a suitable house or flat using estate agents, 12 months before your planned retirement date.

We can only consider properties that are well built and maintained and that will be suitable throughout your retirement. Properties can have up to two reception rooms and three bedrooms and there are some overall size limits. More details on the types of properties we will consider under shared ownership can be found in our *shared ownership booklet* available on our website.

Once you have found a suitable house or flat you would send the details to the Housing Team, who would negotiate the price and make an offer to the seller, provided the property meets the requirements of the scheme. If the offer is accepted, we would then manage the purchase through our solicitors. You would appoint your own solicitor to manage your side of the purchase. The buying process is not always straightforward, but a member of the team would be on hand to support you through it.



## Rent and other expenses

You would pay a monthly rent for the share we own, the buildings insurance and an administration fee, which is reviewed annually. If your home is a flat, you may also need to pay an additional monthly service charge which we pass to your managing agent. You would also need to pay for contents insurance, full maintenance costs and all utility and council tax bills.

## Rental properties

### CHARM rental housing

If you can't afford to buy a share of a home, CHARM rental housing offers you the opportunity to rent a modest, unfurnished home *that we already own*, under a tenancy agreement. This would mean you could stay in our property for as long as you were able to. This is known as an Assured Tenancy.



### Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for one of our rental properties you must:

- be (or have recently been) living in a 'tied' house;
- be in need of affordable retirement housing i.e. are not able to buy a home of your own or a share of a home under our shared ownership scheme (with your application also including a means test) and,
- have a minimum of 15 years stipendiary service by the time you retire.

### How the rental scheme works

Once you have got in touch with us and we have confirmed you are eligible, we will arrange a video conference call with you to talk through more about how the scheme works. In this call, we will also discuss your application to ensure we fully understand your needs and requirements.



You will be able to find your retirement property through one of the following routes:

#### *Property bulletin*

Our available properties are advertised on our property bulletin which is circulated regularly by email. Properties are listed together with their location, the rental charges, photos and a floor plan. If you see a property you like, you can then express your interest.



#### *Direct offers*

If you are within 18 months of retiring (or needing housing) we will directly offer you a property that we already own, which is available *and* suitable for your needs.

#### **Our properties**

Our portfolio includes a range of typically 2 and 3 bedroom houses and bungalows, with some flats. Properties in more expensive areas, especially London, tend to be considerably smaller than rural areas.

In putting in your application, you will be asked to consider more than one area to move to, in order to help you find a suitable property in time for your retirement. Ideally, in considering possible retirement locations, it would be helpful to identify one or more dioceses that could be suitable, rather than determining a very specific, individual area.

*Remember, you would need permission from your bishop or archdeacon if you wanted to include your current parish as one of your areas.*

Although our portfolio of available properties changes relatively frequently, we would not be able to guarantee that we would have a particular type of property available in a very specific area. The more flexible you can be on location, the more choice you will have.

#### **Reserving a property**

If you are interested in any of the properties advertised or offered to you, you will be able to let us know by returning an 'expression of interest' form to us via email or post.



If more than one applicant expresses an interest in the same property, we will prioritise arranging viewings according to the banding allocated to you and your application date.

Having viewed the property and decided it is for you, it can be reserved through a simple form. You can reserve your planned retirement home (rent free) for up to 5 years, ready to move into when you retire. If your retirement date is some years away, we may commercially let the property for a limited period. We will ensure that the property is refurbished in full in line with our Lettable Standard so that it is ready for you in good time for your retirement.

### **Getting the property ready**

We bring customers' chosen homes up to a good standard before they move in. Where needed we will decorate, upgrade kitchens and bathrooms and provide adaptations. All properties are unfurnished.

### **Rent, Service Charges and other expenses**

Thanks to grant funding from the Archbishop's Council, we are able to charge rents for our properties that are lower than normal market rents for similar homes.

It is important to note that the rent you pay will vary dependent upon the location of the property, the size and type of the property you are offered. We charge our rent on a calendar month basis and we ask you to set up a monthly direct debit for the rent charged. We increase our rents annually in April of each year, usually in line with inflation.

### **Service Charges**

If your home forms part of a block of flats or is on a private estate, you may be required to contribute to some communal services that are provided by the freeholder or managing agent.

### **Other Expenses**

You are also responsible for the council tax for the property, your utility bills including gas, electricity and water. In addition, you are responsible for your telephone and broadband bills, along with any other household costs you incur, as well as contents insurance for your personal possessions. You would need to pay for moving costs, furnishings and white goods.

### **Repairs and Maintenance**

As the landlord, we undertake repairs and maintenance of customers' homes apart from white goods, cleaning, gardening and internal decorations, carpets and soft furnishings. Full details of our obligations as a landlord will be set out in your tenancy agreement and resident's handbook.



## Supported housing

We operate 7 supported housing schemes around the country. Our supported housing is available to both new and existing customers, at any stage of their retirement. Unlike our other schemes, which are generally designed to support clergy leaving tied accommodation, these services are available to a wider group.



We can help:

- those with stipendiary service,
- those with non-stipendiary ministry service,
- Brothers and Sisters from Anglican religious orders,
- Church Army officers,
- those who receive a pension from the National Church Institutions, and
- their spouses and civil partners.

### Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for one of our supported housing schemes you (or your spouse/partner) must have at least 5 years service.

### Rent and service charges

If you have savings of £16k or above, you will be expected to cover the full costs of the service; if not, you may be eligible for housing benefit.

If you are a member of the clergy and have at least 5 years stipendiary service, you may be eligible for subsidised support costs.

## Next steps

If you would like to see if you are eligible for shared ownership, rental or supported housing, or to find out more about how we could support you with retirement housing, please call 0207 898 1824 or email [housingservices@churchofengland.org](mailto:housingservices@churchofengland.org).