

# CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

## Housing & Customer Services Manager



Ark Housing logo: QUALITY HOMES, Ark HOUSING, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Making A Positive Difference By  
Empowering People And Communities

If you require this information booklet in an alternative format please contact Laura O'Dowd, Director of Housing at [laura.odowd@arkhousing.co.uk](mailto:laura.odowd@arkhousing.co.uk) or on 02890 752310.

# A Message from the Director of Housing

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining Ark Housing Association as our new Housing & Customer Services Manager.

We have accomplished great things in our first 36 years as a registered Housing Association by taking brave strategic decisions to further our social purpose. We are now one of the fastest growing social housing providers across the UK and Ireland, and through our ongoing investment in new homes and services, we continue to reach many more people in need and have a greater positive impact within the communities we operate.

As a result of our recent growth, we are now seeking the appointment of an experienced Housing Manager, who will play a pivotal role in managing and delivering high-quality, efficient, and effective customer centred services to our tenants.

Reporting directly to the Director of Housing, you will contribute to the delivery of the organisation's strategic and business objectives through the day-to-day management and delivery of our core housing & customer services and teams.

If you feel you are the right person for this role and wish to join a progressive and forward-thinking organisation that makes a lasting difference to people, then we would love to hear from you.

In return, you will be supported by an excellent and highly professional staff team and Board, all committed to delivering Ark Housing's vision.

I look forward to receiving your application.



**LAURA O'DOWD**  
**DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

## About Ark Housing Association

Ark Housing Association is a registered Housing Association with the Department for Communities and Financial Conduct Authority and is an independent not for profit organisation under the Industrial & Provident Society Act (NI) 1969. We are also registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

We were established in 1987 as Down and Connor Housing Association to provide social and affordable homes for people in housing need. In 1999 the organisation was renamed Ark Housing Association to reflect our history and growing ambition.

We are based in Belfast but operate across all district council areas and we build, manage, and maintain homes to meet the needs of a wide range of demographics. In addition to providing homes for general needs families we also provide a range of accommodation and support services to enable people to manage and sustain their tenancies and live independently. All permanent allocations of our homes are made in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme for Northern Ireland which is administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

We operate several successful partnerships with specialist agencies and statutory bodies. These include Threshold N.I; Inspire Wellbeing; Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; Southeastern Health and Social Care Trust; Supporting People and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. We also manage a floating support homeless service for families threatened with or experiencing homelessness.

Our new build developments are funded through a combination of private finance with capital funding grants received from the Department for Communities and we are also revenue funded for some specialist services through the Supporting People Programme.

We currently manage approximately 900 homes, have an active development programme with nearly 300 more currently on site, and we aim to have up to 1,300 homes in management by March 2027. We currently employ 42 permanent and temporary staff across a range of scheme and office-based roles.

## Our Vision, Mission and Values

At Ark Housing Association we pride ourselves on being an innovative and progressive organisation. We nurture open and honest internal and external relationships, and we value partnership, collaboration, and professional development. We empower and trust our people to deliver and in return we actively support them through a myriad of forward-thinking policies and practises.

### **Our vision is:**

“Making a positive difference by empowering people and communities”.

### **Our mission is:**

“In partnership, provide quality homes and support services to meet housing need and contribute to the wellbeing of communities”.

### **Our core values are:**

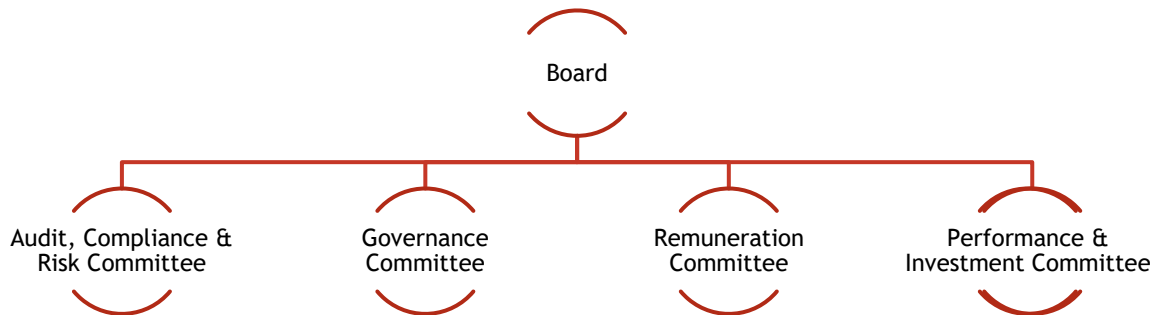
Progressive	<i>Forward thinking, supporting change and transformational</i>
Respect	<i>Treat everyone with dignity and esteem</i>
Integrity	<i>Maintain the highest professional and personal standards</i>
Diversity and Equality	<i>Value diversity and equality in everything we do</i>
Excellence	<i>Strive to deliver the highest standards of quality and customer care.</i>

## Our Governance & Senior Executive Structure

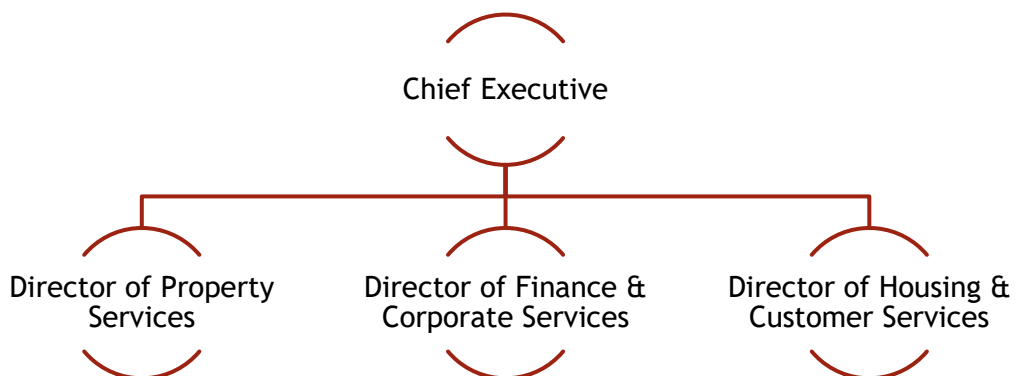
Ark Housing Association is governed by a voluntary Board and its Committees whose role is to lead, direct, and control the work of the Association. The Board ensures the delivery of the organisation's agreed strategic objectives and corporate plans within the framework of statutory and regulatory compliance.

The Board is supported by the Senior Executive Team who is led by the Chief Executive.

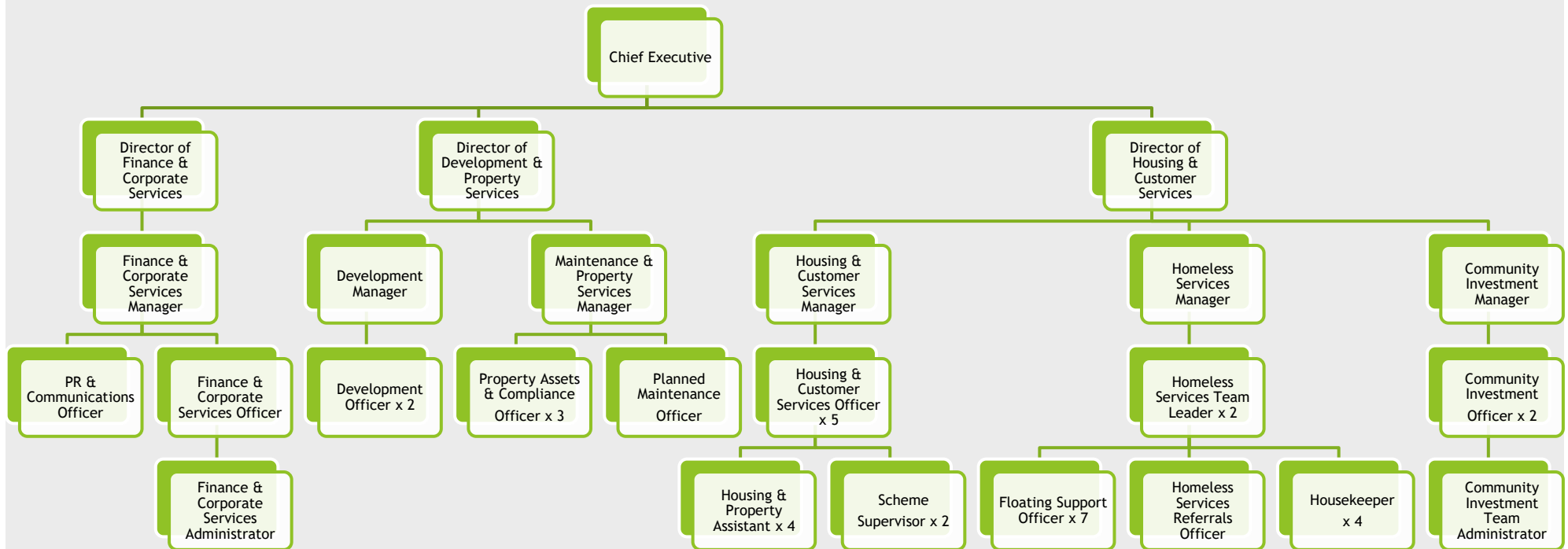
### *Board & Committee Structure*



### *Senior Executive Team Structure*



## Operational Staff Structure



## About The Role

As Housing & Customer Services Manager, reporting to the Director of Housing, you will be responsible for managing the day-to-day operation of all frontline housing and customer services, including leading & managing our newly launched Customer Solutions Team and our team of Housing Officers.

You will play a pivotal role in the development of plans and policies related to your area of operation and ensure that those plans and associated operational objectives and performance indicators are successfully delivered.

With responsibility for a diverse portfolio of housing provision to include general needs family, sheltered, and supported accommodation you will be an experienced housing professional with a deep understanding of housing and social policy in Northern Ireland as well as the legislative and regulatory framework within which the Housing Association sector operates.

You will be customer focused with an eye for excellence, as well as a problem solver with strong leadership skills and the ability to motivate and support your teams. You will be able to identify and drive improvements in service delivery, ensuring that the needs of residents and stakeholders are met efficiently and effectively.

You will work closely with external partners, local councils, and community groups to ensure a collaborative approach to housing management and customer service, while also ensuring compliance with all relevant policies and regulations. Additionally, you will play a key role in monitoring and managing budgets, reporting on performance, and ensuring that all resources are allocated appropriately to meet operational and strategic goals.

As a strategic thinker, you will support the Director of Housing in the development of long-term objectives for the organisation, aligning housing services with broader organisational goals. Your ability to navigate complex challenges and lead change within a dynamic environment will be essential in delivering high-quality housing services to those who need them most.

We are seeking a passionate and proactive individual who is committed to improving housing services, driving innovation, and providing excellent customer care, while leading a high-performing team to achieve the goals of Ark Housing.

### Core Areas of Responsibility

1. Leadership & Management
2. Customer Engagement & Tenant Participation
3. Service Delivery, Service Improvement, & Performance Management
4. Policy Development & Business Planning
5. Procurement & Contract Management
6. PR & Communications
7. Data Protection
8. Equality

## Qualifications, Skills & Experience

- Third level qualification (Degree or equivalent) in a related / relevant discipline
- A minimum of three years' experience from the most recent five years in a similar role in a management / supervisory capacity within the social housing sector.
- Working knowledge of housing legislation; the regulatory framework (in particular the Consumer Standard); and current and emerging housing policy as it applies in Northern Ireland.
- Working knowledge of Data Protection legislation, policy & best practise as it applies to Northern Ireland and corporate bodies.
- Working knowledge of Equality legislation, policy & best practise as it applies to Northern Ireland and corporate bodies.

## Benefits & Main Terms & Conditions of Employment

Contract:	Permanent (Subject to 6 Month Probationary Period)
Hours:	37 Per Week, Monday & Friday. Due to the nature of the role, you will on occasion be required to work outside normal office hours.
Remuneration:	Up to £49,006. (Subject to Review April 2025)
Pension:	NILGOSC contributory pension scheme. Employer contribution is currently 19%.
Annual Leave:	22 days annual leave moving to 27 after 5 years' service and 32 days after 10 years' service.
Statutory Leave:	13 customary holidays per annum.
Occupational Sick Pay:	Maximum of 3 months full pay and 3 months half pay. (Depending on length of service).
Other Benefits:	A range of excellent work and family friendly policies, including hybrid working.  Access to Gym facilities at Head Office.  Access to Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme.  EV Charging Facilities at Head Office with on-site Car Parking.  Essential Car User Allowance & Business Mileage Reimbursement.



## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title:** Housing & Customer Services Manager

**Reporting To:** Director of Housing (DoH)

### **Main Purpose of Role**

To assist the DoH in providing a high-quality, efficient, and effective, housing & customer services in accordance with board, stakeholder, and regulatory requirements.

### **Core Areas of Responsibility**

1. Leadership & Management
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### **Leadership & Management**

- Lead and manage the Customer Solutions Team and Housing Officers and scheme-based staff, providing day-to-day support and guidance.
- Set clear goals and expectations for staff performance, ensuring alignment with departmental and organisational objectives.
- Foster a culture of accountability, teamwork, and continuous improvement.
- Conduct regular performance appraisals and provide feedback to enhance individual and team development.
- Ensure effective resource management to meet operational needs and performance targets.
- Oversee recruitment, training, and staff development to build a high-performing, customer-focused team.

### **Customer Engagement & Tenant Participation**

- In conjunction with the Director of Housing and the Community Investment Manager, participate in the development and implementation of plans, strategies and objectives designed to engage tenants and encourage their active participation in scrutiny activities, decision-making, and policy development.
- To attend the Tenants Forum on a regular basis, preparing performance reports for the same and to work alongside the forum and the Community Investment manager in the delivery of actions arising from the work of the Forum.

- To ensure designated officers organise regular scheme & tenant meetings, information seminars, surveys, focus groups and other means of engagement to gather feedback on services and to keep tenants informed of matters that affect them.
- To ensure that tenants are kept informed of their rights and responsibilities, as well as updates on housing developments and changes to policies through a range of digital and traditional media.
- To promote tenant empowerment by encouraging involvement in service design and improvement initiatives.

### **Service Delivery, Service Improvement, & Performance Management**

- To be responsible for ensuring the delivery of all core frontline Housing Management & Customer Services activities in accordance with policy and to the standards expected by tenants and stakeholders, and to monitor and evaluate service standards identifying areas for improvement.
- In conjunction with the Director of Housing, to develop key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure team performance and service delivery.
- Identify areas for improvement in service provision, working closely with teams to implement action plans.
- To act as stage 1 investigator for all complaints relating to the Housing & Customers Services Department, ensuring that those complaints are handled in accordance with policy and in a timely manner.
- To ensure that customer service standards are met, fostering a culture of excellence and responsiveness.
- To report on performance regularly (through the development and production of management performance reports) to the Director of Housing, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- Implement changes based on data-driven insights and feedback from customers and stakeholders.
- Work closely with Joint Management Partners in the delivery of agreed service standards and Joint Management Agreements in respect to partnership schemes.
- To represent the Association in a legal setting in respect to actions initiated relating to tenancy breaches, and to work closely with the Association's appointed legal advisors in respect to the same.
- To ensure that the services provided by Scheme Supervisors at sheltered schemes are delivered in accordance with the standards set out by Supporting People through the Quality Monitoring Tool (QMT);

### **Policy Development & Business Planning**

- In conjunction with the Director of Housing, to participate in the development and review of housing & customer services related policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose and compliant with regulatory standards.
- To ensure the dissemination to, and the delivery of, staff training on all departmental policy procedures.
- To collaborate with the Director of Housing to contribute to the organisation's business plan and long-term strategy.

- To ensure that housing services align with the organisation's broader goals and objectives.
- To keep up to date with legislative and regulatory changes affecting housing services and adjust policies accordingly.
- To support the implementation of new policies, ensuring smooth integration into day-to-day operations.

### **Procurement & Contract Management**

- To oversee the procurement of services and supplies required for housing management, ensuring value for money and compliance with procurement policies.
- To manage contracts with external suppliers, contractors, and service providers, linked to housing & customer services ensuring performance meets agreed contractual terms.
- To monitor and review contract performance, implementing corrective actions when necessary.
- To maintain effective relationships with suppliers and contractors, negotiating contracts and service-level agreements (SLAs) to meet organisational needs.
- To ensure all procurement processes are transparent, efficient, and aligned with organisational policies.

### **PR & Communications**

- To work in conjunction with the Association's PR & Communications Officer to develop and implement communication strategies to promote the organisation's housing services and initiatives.
- To act as a key point of contact for general media inquiries, or enquiries from elected officials or other stakeholders, ensuring consistent and positive messaging.
- To write and disseminate internal and external communications, including newsletters, reports, and social media updates.
- To ensure that communication with tenants, staff, and external stakeholders is clear, timely, and accurate.
- Represent the organisation at events and in the community to enhance its public profile and reputation.

### **Data Protection**

- To ensure compliance with data protection laws and best practices, safeguarding personal information.
- To oversee the management of resident & tenant data, ensuring it is collected, stored, and processed securely and in accordance with legislative requirements and policy.
- To provide training and guidance to staff on data protection policies and procedures.
- To work in conjunction with the Association's Data Protection Officer to ensure the transparent investigation and effective resolution of any data breaches or security concerns, taking corrective action as necessary.

- To work closely with the IT providers to ensure systems are secure and data protection protocols are followed.

### Equality

- To promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of housing and customer services.
- To develop and implement policies to ensure fair treatment and equal access to housing for all tenants.
- To monitor and assess the effectiveness of equality initiatives, adjusting strategies to meet evolving needs.
- To ensure that housing services policy meets the needs of vulnerable and underrepresented groups, including those with disabilities, elderly residents, and minority ethnic communities and that equality impact assessments are undertaken as required and in accordance with Section 75 requirements.
- To ensure compliance with relevant equality legislation and best practices in service provision.

*Note: This job description provides an overview of responsibilities and is not exhaustive. The successful candidate may be required to perform additional duties as directed.*

## Housing & Customer Services Manager (Personnel Specification)

Qualifications	Essential	Desirable
Third level qualification (Degree or equivalent) in a related / relevant discipline	E	
Leadership & Management Qualification Level 5		D
Chartered Institute of Housing Level 4 Certificate in Housing or above		D
Membership of a Relevant Professional Body		D
Experience	Essential	Desirable
<p>A minimum of three years' experience from the most recent five years in a similar role in a management / supervisory capacity within the social housing sector.</p> <p>Candidates should demonstrate on their application how their experience relates to the core areas of responsibility as outlined in the Job Description.</p> <p>Where candidates cannot demonstrate a relevant third level qualification, then a minimum of five years' experience from the most recent eight years' would be required.</p>	E	
Knowledge	Essential	Desirable
Working knowledge of Data Protection legislation, policy & best practise as it applies to Northern Ireland and corporate bodies.	E	
Working knowledge of Equality legislation, policy & best practise as it applies to Northern Ireland and corporate bodies.	E	
Working knowledge of housing legislation; the regulatory framework (in particular the Consumer Standard); and current and emerging housing policy as it applies in Northern Ireland.	E	

<b>Skills &amp; Abilities</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
Excellent level of IT literacy with extensive experience in the use of a wide range of Microsoft Office products.	E	
Strong communication & organisational skills.	E	
Exceptional interpersonal skills, with the ability to build relationships and negotiate with others.	E	
High level of accuracy and attention to detail.	E	
<b>Other</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
Full driving license and access to own car for travel.	E	

## **Selection Timetable**

The closing date for completed applications is **12noon on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024**. Applications should be sent by email to: [recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk)

Responses will only be accepted on the relevant application form. **Please note that CVs will not be accepted.**

The shortlisting process is envisaged to take place week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 with successful applicants invited for interview week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 (subject to confirmation). Further details will be provided to those candidates invited to participate in this stage of the process.

In the event that a candidate is invited to interview but is unavailable on the proposed date and time due to reasons beyond their control, the panel may endeavour to accommodate an alternative arrangement subject to their own availability, although this may not be possible and is not guaranteed unless an adjustment is required in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

## **Demonstration of Competencies**

Candidates will be required to demonstrate during the selection and assessment process that they satisfy the core requirements of the post as set out in the job description and person specification.

## **Guidance Notes on Completing Your Application Form**

It is important that you read these notes carefully before you complete the application form.

### **Job Description and Personnel Specification**

The Job Description and Personnel Specification will assist you in deciding whether you meet the minimum essential criteria for this position. Please remember that the Association reserves the right to increase the criteria used for the short listing of candidates to be selected for interview without further notification.

You should use the job description and personnel specification to help you consider your relevant experience, qualifications, skills and abilities and ensure that you outline how you meet those requirements when completing the relevant section of the application.

### **Short Listing Candidates**

Candidates will be selected solely on the information provided in the application form therefore you should ensure that you answer all sections fully and address all essential and desirable criteria where possible.

### **Confidential Equality Monitoring Form**

To comply with our obligations under Equal Opportunities and Fair Employment legislation we are required to monitor our recruitment exercises in order to ensure that our recruitment policies and procedures are effective. All applicants are

therefore required to complete the Equal Opportunities Form associated with this application.

You should ensure that you complete the Equality Form and return it in a separate envelope addressed to the Equality Officer and marked Private & Confidential or by email along with your completed application form to: [recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk)

We will not use data from our equal opportunities monitoring form as part of the selection process.

### Supporting Documents

Documentary evidence will be required if you are shortlisted to attend for interview. This will include photographic identification e.g. passport, driving license or other form of acceptable ID.

Copies of your educational qualifications, professional membership and any other documents required to support your application will also be required. You may bring these documents to the office with you on the day of your interview and staff will arrange to copy them for you. Please note that all documents provided must be original.

### Disclosure of Criminal Records

All applicants must complete this section of the form fully and where criminal convictions are disclosed details must be provided of the offence(s) of which the applicant has been convicted and any relevant details relating to the offences.

You should note that Ark Housing are required to carry out checks on all people being considered for employment with the Association through the Access NI scheme.

### Data Protection

All information provided by applicants will be used solely for the purposes for which it is required in this recruitment exercise and will not be disclosed to others except where we are obliged to do so in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations.

### Equality of Opportunity

Ark Housing is an Equal Opportunities Employer, and we welcome applications from all sections of our community. Arrangements can be made for those applicants who require additional support or assistance because of a disability or other consideration which may hinder them in this application process. If you require such assistance, please contact Laura O'Dowd at this office on Tel: 028 90 752310 or Email: [recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@arkhousing.co.uk)

### General Points

The application form, if completed by hand, should be completed in **black ink** and must be legible. If submitted by post, please make sure that you leave plenty of



time for your application to be received by the closing date & time. Please remember that **late applications will not be accepted.**

Ensure that you have signed and dated the application form. Electronic signatories are acceptable on emailed applications.

Do not send any supporting documentation with this application form. We may ask for such documents if your application is successful, and you are shortlisted for interview.

Please ensure that you have the permission of your nominated referees to act on your behalf and that they agree to provide you with a reference.

Canvassing on behalf of your application will disqualify your application.