



# RACING HOMES

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Homes for racing's people in need



# Home Straight

## Considering your housing options

**This booklet has been produced by Racing Homes**

If you require any help you can contact us at the following address:

Racing Homes, Robin McAlpine House, 20b Park Lane,  
Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 8QD

Telephone: 01638 560763 [www.racingwelfare.co.uk](http://www.racingwelfare.co.uk)

This booklet has been produced by Racing Homes as a guide to housing options that may be available to those working in or retiring from the thoroughbred horseracing industry. The aim is to help you think about the ways to find a new home and contains links and information to help you make considered choices about the options available to you.

## **Who are Racing Homes?**

Racing Homes provides quality, safe affordable housing for people entering the industry, and people who have retired from racing having dedicated a lifetime to the sport. Currently Racing Homes has 150 properties in its portfolio making us the largest housing provider in racing.

We work closely with Racing Welfare who provide advice and help to anyone working or who has worked in the thoroughbred horseracing and breeding industry and their dependents. All who approach Racing Welfare are invited to meet with a Welfare Officer who will assess the individuals' situation and develop a plan that empowers the person to address their situation and support them as needed. They can also help if you have a problem with your existing housing.

Racing welfare offer a confidential and non judgmental service; see our confidentiality code and what it means to you. This gives people the assurance to come forward and talk to us about their issues.

For more information visit [www.racingwelfare.co.uk](http://www.racingwelfare.co.uk) or click [here](#) for a map of our regional network and contact numbers.



## Getting Started

Making decisions about your future housing can be a daunting and stressful time, whether you are retiring or leaving a job where your home is provided for you, or faced with having to move on from your current accommodation for other reasons such as disability.

The type of housing options available to you will depend on your circumstances. Factors such as whether you are single or have a family, your current housing situation and whether you have some money you can use to secure a new home will all be important considerations. However as soon as you know you need to start looking for a new home you should take action straight away and begin to consider the options.

Things to think about include

- Do you want to rent or buy your next home?
- How many bedrooms does it need to have?
- Where do you want to live?
- Where will you be working?
- What local amenities do you need such as schools, shops

Please remember this booklet is only intended as a guide to get you thinking about the options and help you decide which solution to your housing need is available and suitable for you. But by following the links and seeking advice finding that solution will hopefully be a little more straightforward and remember Racing Homes and Racing Welfare are here to help.

## Renting a Home

There are two main options if you want to rent a new home.

- Renting from a local authority, housing association or other provider of social housing
- Renting in the private sector.



## Renting Social Housing

Housing provided by the local council, housing associations or other charitable providers is often referred to as social housing. Rents will generally be lower than those in the private sector. However over the last few years the number of people applying for social housing has increased and this means that there are often long waiting lists for properties and demand for family properties is particularly high.

In order to be considered for social housing you will need to make an application to the local authority and any housing associations in the area you wish to live, although increasingly you can fill in one application to cover a number of providers. All social housing providers will have their own criteria for assessing applicants for accommodation and these will differ from authority to authority. But certain circumstances will mean that an application will be given reasonable preference – in others words a higher priority. In some cases an application may be refused for reasons such as unacceptable behaviour leading to the loss of a previous home or if you are a foreign national and do not have an entitlement to social housing.

Once your application has been processed you will be informed in writing and given or allocated a banding according to your housing need and told how any available housing is allocated. If your application is refused you will be told the reason and how you can appeal the decision.

Many areas now operate Choice Based Letting, this means that they publish a list of available properties and individuals on their list can “bid” for the properties they are interested in and qualify for. The person with greatest priority who bids will be offered the property. Details of how their system works in your area will be explained when you register. But be aware under choice based lettings no one will offer you a property, if you do not bid you will not get a property, although you can ask for help with bidding in certain circumstances.

To find out which local authority covers the area you want to live in click [here](#) (more than one local authority may cover the area you want to live in) and for Housing Associations [here](#). In addition Racing Homes has properties around the country click [here](#) for a list of where our homes are.



## **Renting in the Private Sector**

Many people will not meet the criteria needed to obtain social housing and so renting in the private sector will be the only option. You need to think carefully about the size and type of accommodation you want and how you will pay the rent. Good places to start looking for a new home to rent from a private sector landlord include

- Letting Agents – Specialist Property Management
- Estate Agents – Many have property management departments.
- Local Newspapers – usually carry advertisements in the classified section
- Local Councils – some local authority housing departments and Housing Advice Centres keep lists of landlords in their area.
- Shop Windows / Friends.

Private sector rents are usually higher than the rent you would expect to pay for social housing and rents vary from area to area. A landlord will normally expect you to pay at least a month's rent in advance and a deposit. The deposit will be held in a special account and at the end of the tenancy, provided the accommodation is returned as specified in the rental agreement, the deposit returned to you. If you do not have a deposit you may be able to get help from the local authority.

## **Buying a New Home**

If you have some money saved you may want to buy a home rather than rent. Over the last few years house prices have risen significantly and the recent financial crisis has made it harder to secure a mortgage. As a minimum you will need to have at least 10% of the price of a house as a deposit. Lenders will then want to be satisfied that you have the income to pay back any money you borrow. As a first step you should talk to an independent financial advisor or mortgage broker who will be able to explain how much money you could borrow and the options for paying it back.



## Buying a share of a property

Over recent years there have been a number of schemes which give you the possibility to purchase a share of a new home, usually 25 – 75% and pay rent on the remaining share to the landlord, usually a Housing Association. This means that you will need a smaller deposit, need to borrow less and have the option to buy further shares in the property until you own it outright. (In some rural areas you may only be able to purchase a maximum of 80% of the property).

Before deciding to buy a new home you should think carefully about the responsibility this brings. Unlike a rented home you will be responsible for all the repairs and maintenance and all bills. If you part buy a home you will need to consider how much your mortgage and rent will add up to and any other charges or contribution to repairs.

## Help with Housing Costs

If you are on a low income or on welfare benefits you may be entitled to help with your rent.

If you need help with your rent and live in social housing you may be able to get help by claiming Housing Benefit. Click [here](#) and enter details of where you live. This will take you to your local authority website where you can find out more information and see if you are eligible for help.

If you intend to rent in the private sector you would get local housing allowance rather than housing benefit, click [here](#) so see the rules for claiming this allowance.

If your current home is at risk because you are having financial problems paying the rent or mortgage you may be able to sort things out by seeking advice from Racing Welfare.



## Other Charges

Apart from the rent or mortgage you need to consider any other charges that might be associated with your new home.

If the landlord (or agent) provides a service like cleaning and maintenance of communal areas (usually the case with flats), this extra charge may be levied on top of your rent. If there is support on site this will also attract an extra charge. Check what services are provided and what the cost is before taking on a tenancy or buying a new home.

If you are taking on self-contained accommodation, you will normally be expected to pay the Council Tax, Water Charges, Fuel Bills, TV Licence Fee etc. Some landlords may include such charges in with the rent. Find out which applies in your case. You will need to insure your belongings.

## What to do if you find yourself homeless.

If you find yourself homeless or under threat of being made homeless you should always seek advice straight away. Many organisations like Racing Welfare, Citizens Advice Bureau, Shelter, can help you but if you find yourself without a home then the law places a duty on the local authority to advise you. Considering what help is available they will consider whether you fall into a priority group, the circumstances under which you left your previous accommodation, how vulnerable you may be and whether you have a local connection to the area. This will determine whether and what help the local authority will offer. In some cases they will only be able to offer temporary accommodation in the first instance while they consider your application further. If you are not eligible for social housing most local authorities will offer you some support in securing other suitable accommodation.

Remember this booklet is intended to act as a starting point to help you consider the options available to you and is not intended as formal advice. If you need further advice our advisors at Racing Welfare 01638 560763 [www.racingwelfare.co.uk](http://www.racingwelfare.co.uk) will be pleased to assist you.

