

# A guide to key worker housing in Wokingham



BERRY BROOK  
HOMES

# KEY WORKER HOUSING IN CENTRAL WOKINGHAM

**In early 2019 Berry Brook Homes, a local housing company owned by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) will purchase 22 one and two bedroom apartments in central Wokingham. These homes, built as part of the town centre regeneration programme, will be made available exclusively for key workers who live or work in the Borough.**

The apartments in either Greys Court or Silk Court will be conveniently located above the new Peach Place retail development, meaning quick and easy access to transport links, a wide range of shops, cafes and bars on your doorstep as well as local leisure amenities when the Elms Field redevelopment is completed in 2020.

Each of the 22 apartments will be finished to a high specification and include neutral floor coverings and decor throughout, high quality kitchen and bathroom fittings and all white goods.

The apartments at Peach Place will offer residents all the trappings of town centre living whilst having the peace of mind of a trusted landlord owned by Wokingham Borough Council.



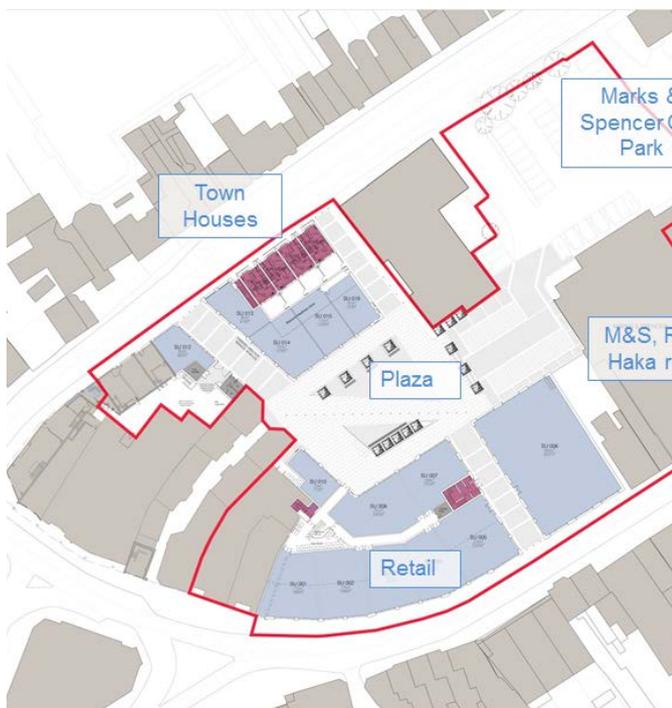
# TOWN CENTRE LIVING

## Peach Place Plaza

Peach Place Plaza forms part of a programme of significant regeneration to Wokingham Town Centre.

This metropolitan, pedestrianised square will offer residents the very best of drinking, dining and retail outlets.

The below map demonstrates where the key worker accommodation will be situated.



## Wider regeneration

As a resident of the new homes at Peach Place you will benefit from the entire regeneration programme. On your door step you will have a host of recreational activities such as:

- Boutique cinema
- Town centre supermarket
- Bowling
- Revitalised swimming and leisure facilities
- Large town centre playground

## Transport links

Living in the town centre you will be well connected to local transport links with local bus services running from Bracknell to Reading and beyond.

The main line trainstation is within a 10 minute walk offering direct line connections to Reading, Bracknell, London Waterloo and Gatwick airport.

## Parking

All key worker accommodation at Peach Place Plaza will be allocated one parking space.



# KEY WORKER HOUSING

## What is key worker housing?

Key worker housing is a type of affordable rental accommodation that provides a more financially accessible option for key workers living or working in the Borough.

Each year a number of these properties can be made available through housing associations and other local housing companies to provide a rental option for key workers. Rent at these properties will typically be at 80% or below of local market rates.

## Who qualifies as a key worker?

A key worker is split into two priority categories and is typically a public sector employee who is considered to provide an essential service or other “essential” workers whose employment supports the local economy.

Key workers can include any of the following:

### Priority one

- Clinical National Health Service staff (except doctors and dentists)
- Teachers and nursery nurses
- Police officers, Community Support Officers and some civilian police staff
- Prison officers and some other Prison staff
- Probation Service staff
- Social workers, educational psychologists, and therapists
- Local Authority Planners
- Firefighters
- Connexions Personal Advisers
- Some Ministry of Defence personnel
- Environmental Health Officer
- Highway Agency Traffic Officers

In addition, the definition is sometimes extended to include those support staff without whom the above roles may struggle to function.



## Priority two

Lower income workers who are vital to the support of the local economy such as other public or private sector employees of other bodies operating in the public sector subject to the relevant body being able to demonstrate that the industry's national wage structure is such that its employees are unable to afford to rent or to buy homes on the open market within the Borough - for example, care workers or nursery staff.

## Apply for key worker housing

To apply for key worker housing in Wokingham you need to register your details with the Housing Needs team, this can be done by visiting [wokingham.gov.uk](http://wokingham.gov.uk), emailing: [housing.needs@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:housing.needs@wokingham.gov.uk) or calling: 0118 974 6000.

## What is the income threshold for applying for key worker housing?

The income threshold is dependent on your qualification priority. Those applicants placed under priority one have no income threshold for application. Incomes of those individuals applying under priority two will be capped at £30,000 gross income at the time of nomination. This threshold will be inflation linked. The income threshold relates per person rather than per household.

Once you are identified as being eligible to be offered a tenancy, you will be invited to meet us to complete an affordability check. This will involve an income and expenditure assessment to ensure that together with the rent costs, the tenancy is affordable. A condition of the tenancy will be the rent is paid in advance by direct debit or standing order.

## What will my rent be?

Key worker rents will be set at Local Housing Allowance rates, these figures change from time to time but as of November 2018 you can expect the rents to be in the region of the below:

	<b>Weekly rent</b>	<b>Monthly rent</b>
<b>One bed apartment</b>	£153.02	£664.87
<b>Two bed apartment</b>	£193.98	£842.84

## Will I need to pay any additional charges?

You will be responsible for the payment of all utility charges such as gas, electric, water and Council Tax; you will also need to pay for contents insurance to provide protection on your belongings.

A service charge relevant to your home will be included in your rental charge, this will pay for the upkeep of all communal parts of your home as well as building insurance and grounds maintenance and other charges associated with the maintenance of the physical building that your apartment sits in.

## **What tenancy will I have?**

The tenancies at this development will be Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST). These will be for a fixed period of five years inclusive of a one year starter tenancy. Upon completion of the one year starter tenancy, you will be given a fixed term tenancy for a further four years. At the end of this tenancy term you will meet with a Housing Officer to discuss your circumstances and, if they are broadly the same, you will be offered a further tenancy term of five years. In the event that your circumstances have changed, for example you are no longer a key worker, your income exceeds the income threshold or you are interested in buying a home, then Berry Brook Homes together with Wokingham Borough Council can work with you to find alternative accommodation.

## **Can I buy an apartment?**

No. These properties are available for rent only and as a Berry Brook Homes tenant you are not eligible for the Right to Buy scheme.

## **What happens if my employment changes?**

If during the tenancy, you leave your key worker employment, providing that you continue in employment within the Borough and earn below the income threshold, then the tenancy will continue as is. Should the subsequent employment be outside of the Borough or you will be earning above the income threshold, then it will be at the discretion of the Berry Brook Homes as to whether the tenancy continues.

## **I'm a key worker but my partner isn't can we still have a joint tenancy?**

Yes, as long as a named tenant is a key worker and the joint tenant earns below the income threshold of £30,000. Each tenant will need to either live or work in the Borough.

## **How do I add a partner to my tenancy?**

Please contact the Housing Needs Team on 0118 974 6000 or email: [housing.needs@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:housing.needs@wokingham.gov.uk) and request a change of circumstances form.

## Can I live with a friend?

Yes, as long as both tenants meet the criteria for key worker housing and where applicable earn below the income threshold. Friends can apply for a joint tenancy for the two bedroom apartments.

## Will my property be furnished?

The property will be unfurnished but the following items supplied:

- Neutral floor coverings throughout
- Zanussi 4 burner gas hob & cooker hood
- Zanussi integrated single electric oven
- Zanussi integrated 70/30 fridge freezer
- Zanussi integrated 13 place dishwasher
- Washer/dryer in utility cupboard

## What notice will I have to give if I want to leave my key worker tenancy?

After the first six months of your tenancy term you can give at least four week notice in writing to end your tenancy. After you have lived in your home for two years you will need to provide three months notice in writing.

If you are a joint tenant, one tenant can end the tenancy by giving us notice. If in this event you would like to stay in the property you need to tell us immediately so we can consider your circumstances and whether you can remain in your home.

## Can I have a pet?

Whilst the apartments at Peach Place have not been designed to be pet friendly, with the exception of service animals. Berry Brook Homes will consider applications for pets, in-line with our pet policy, on a case by case basis.

# ABOUT BERRY BROOK HOMES

## Your landlord

Berry Brook Homes will be the landlord of your property. We are a new housing company owned by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). Berry Brook Homes provides social and affordable homes to rent and shared ownership properties to part-rent / part-buy for families and individuals across the Borough.

Berry Brook Homes is governed by an independent Board of directors who are accountable for setting the strategic and financial direction of the company. The Managing Director and supporting staff of the Councils' three housing companies manage the organisation's day-to-day running and affairs.

## More about Berry Brook Homes



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*Disclaimer: Please note the contents of this document are subject to change. The most recent version of this document can be found on the Berry Brook Homes website or upon request using the contact details provided.*



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