

CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

Floating Support Officer



Making A Positive Difference By
Empowering People And Communities

If you require this information booklet in an alternative format please contact Gail McLaughlin, Homeless Services Manager on gail.mclaughlin@arkhousing.co.uk or on 02890 752310.

A Message from the Homeless Services Manager

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining Ark Housing Association as a Floating Support Officer.

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.

Within our homeless services we provide temporary accommodation and floating support for families who are experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness or in housing stress, in partnership with the Housing Executive, Social Services, and other partner organisations.

Reporting directly to Team Leaders, you will contribute to the delivery of a comprehensive support service for homeless families and will provide high-quality customer services to those families in accordance with the strategic and business objectives of Ark Housing.

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.



GAIL MCLAUGHLIN
HOMELESS SERVICES MANAGER

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:

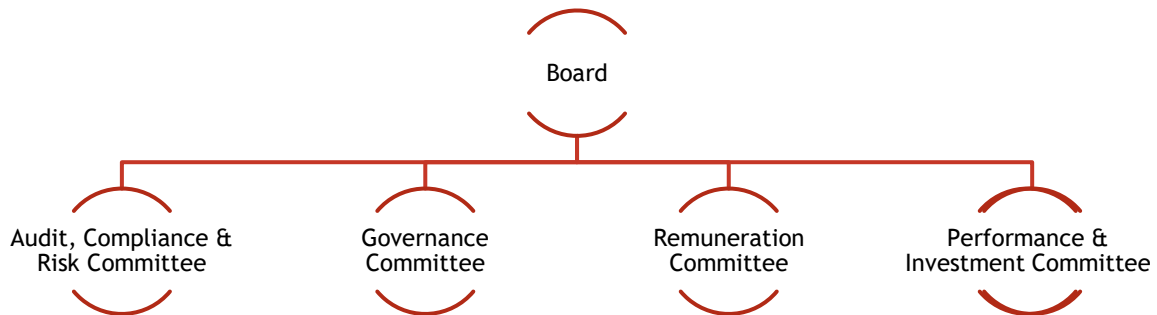
Progressive	<i>Forward thinking, supporting change and transformational</i>
Respect	<i>Treat everyone with dignity and esteem</i>
Integrity	<i>Maintain the highest professional and personal standards</i>
Diversity and Equality	<i>Value diversity and equality in everything we do</i>
Excellence	<i>Strive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

Our Governance & Senior Executive Structure

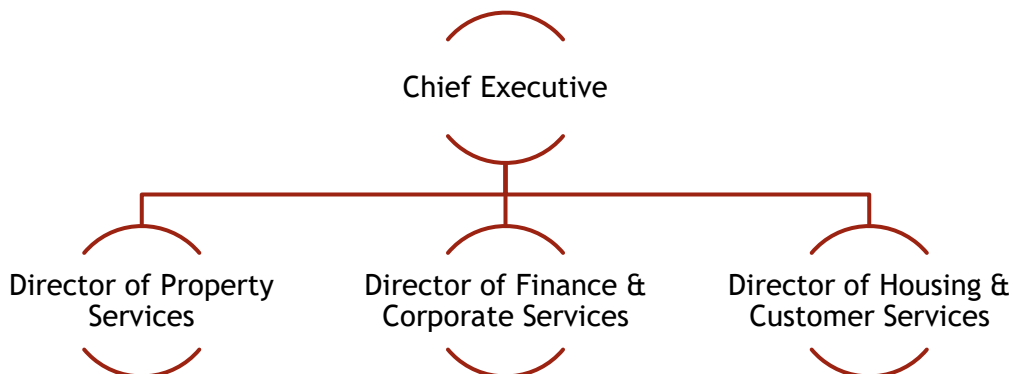
Ark Housing Association is governed by a voluntary Board and its Committees whose role is to lead, direct, and control the work of the Association. The Board ensures the delivery of the organisation's agreed strategic objectives and corporate plans within the framework of statutory and regulatory compliance.

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

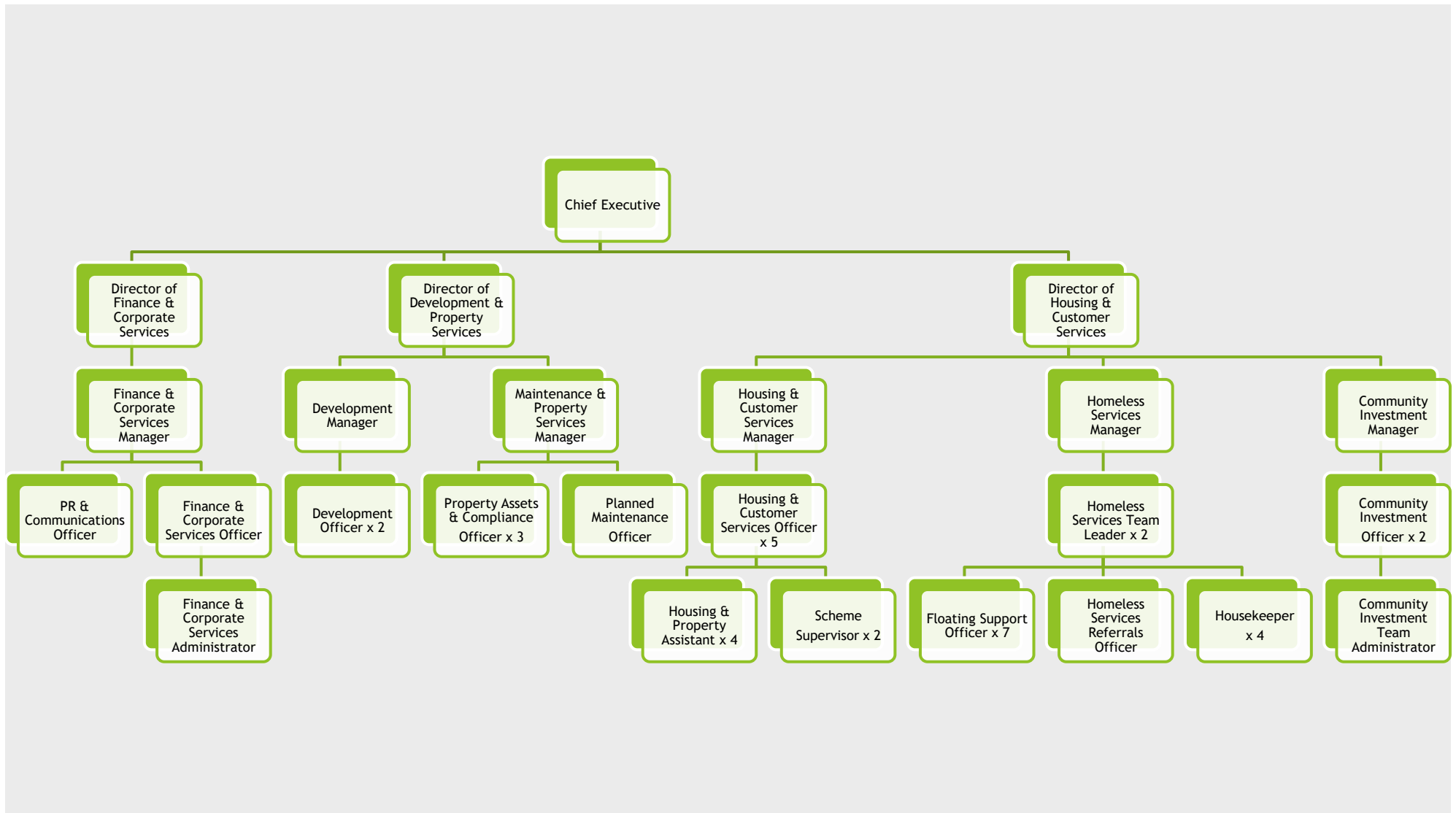
Board & Committee Structure



Senior Executive Team Structure



Operational Staff Structure



About The Role

As Floating Support Officer, you will contribute to the delivery of a comprehensive support service for families experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness or in housing stress, and will provide high-quality customer services to those families in accordance with the strategic and business objectives of Ark Housing.

Our homeless services have been developed in partnership with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and is funded by the Department for Communities (DfC) through the Supporting People Programme.

Core Areas of Responsibility

1. Delivery of a client-led multi-needs assessment and floating support service to homeless families within the Greater Belfast area.
2. Establish and develop a professional working relationship with homeless services clients in accordance with the Association's Professional Boundaries Policy and to undertake client risk assessments where required.
3. Establish and maintain good working relationships with a range of statutory and voluntary agencies and to sign-post clients to those agencies in accordance with identified need.
4. Assist clients in respect of securing long term suitable accommodation which meets their needs, and to assist clients in sustaining existing tenancies where required through the provision of professional advice and support.
5. Assist, advise, advocate on behalf of, and signpost clients where required in a range of support areas, including, but not limited to education, employment, health, social security / benefits, financial management, and life skills.
6. Ensure the Safeguarding of clients through the adherence and application of the Association's safeguarding policies.
7. Liaise with agencies, statutory authorities, emergency services, voluntary community groups as required.
8. Communicate regularly with clients on all matters pertaining to their support, including the undertaking of home visits, telephone consultations, and by other means as agreed with clients.

Qualifications, Skills & Experience

- A relevant qualification (QCF/NVQ Level 2 or equivalent e.g. 5 GCSEs)
AND
- 1 years' experience in providing support services to individuals or families
OR
- 3 years' experience in providing support services to individuals or families
- 1 years' experience in:
 - Developing person centred needs/risk assessments and support plans
 - Managing case loads

- Advocating on a person's behalf
- Working in partnership with external agencies

Benefits & Main Terms & Conditions of Employment

Contract:	Permanent (Subject to 6 Month Probationary Period)
Hours:	21 Per Week. Due to the nature of the role, you may on occasion be required to work outside normal office hours.
Remuneration:	£23,799.93 - £26,179.36 pro rata (Subject to Review April 2025)
Pension:	NILGOSC contributory pension scheme. Employer contribution is currently 19%. Remuneration to include employer pension contributions is equivalent to £28,321.92 - £31,153.44 pro rata.
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:	<p>A range of excellent work and family friendly policies, including hybrid working.</p> <p>Access to Gym facilities at Head Office.</p> <p>Access to Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme.</p> <p>EV Charging Facilities at Head Office with on-site Car Parking.</p> <p>Essential Car User Allowance of £1,239 (pro rata) paid in monthly instalments & Business Mileage Reimbursement of £0.45p per mile.</p>

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Floating Support Officer
LOCATION: Greater Belfast Area
BASED AT: Unit 1, Hawthorn Office Park, 43 Stockman's Way, Belfast
REPORTING TO: Team Leaders / Homeless Services Manager

JOB PURPOSE:

To ensure the delivery of a comprehensive floating support service for homeless families and to provide high-quality customer services to our homeless services clients in accordance with the strategic objectives of Ark Housing.

MAIN TASKS:

Floating Support Service

- To be responsible for delivering a client-led multi-need assessment and floating support service to homeless families within the Greater Belfast area.
- To establish and develop a professional working relationship with homeless services clients in accordance with the Association's Professional Boundaries Policy and to undertake client risk assessments where required.
- To establish and maintain good working relationships with a range of statutory and voluntary agencies and to signpost clients to those agencies in accordance with identified need.
- To assist clients in respect of securing long term suitable accommodation which meets their needs, and to assist clients in sustaining existing tenancies where required through the provision of professional advice and support.
- To assist, advise, advocate on behalf of, and signpost clients where required in a range of support areas, including, but not limited to education, employment, health, social security / benefits, financial management, and life skills.
- To ensure the Safeguarding of clients through the adherence and application of the Association's safeguarding policies.
- To liaise with agencies, statutory authorities, emergency services, voluntary community groups as required.
- To communicate regularly with clients on all matters pertaining to their support, including the undertaking of home visits, telephone consultations, and by other means as agreed with clients.

Administration

- To undertake all case management administrative processes in respect of needs assessment, support planning, risk assessment and others where required and in accordance with the Association's documented policies and procedures.
- To participate in case work management and ensure the implementation of effective case work monitoring systems.
- To maintain accurate records to meet the requirements of Supporting People Monitoring frameworks.
- To prepare reports for the Team Leaders and Homeless Services Manager as and when required.
- To plan and manage your own workload in a professional and effective manner.
- To ensure that all policies and procedural guidance is adhered to in the completion of all administrative tasks.
- To ensure that all Legislative requirements are complied with e.g. Data Protection, Confidentiality, Child Protection, Safeguarding, Equality, Human Rights, Health and Safety requirements.
- To contribute to and assist in the effective management and administration of the Floating Support Service.
- To attend team meetings, client consultations, case management reviews and others as directed.
- To actively participate in supervision and performance coaching meetings with line manager.
- To ensure the delivery of services in accordance with Ark Housings' standards of service.

Quality Assurance

- To contribute to the development of service improvement initiatives through the promotion of best practices, innovations, and ideas.
- To ensure that appropriate arrangements exist for service user involvement.
- To ensure the highest achievement of customer satisfaction standards.

Representation

- To represent Ark Housing at meetings, interviews, seminars, conferences, training events in a positive and effective way.
- To always ensure the professional representation of Ark Housing.

- To participate in any internal and external personal development training/learning being provided or recommended by the Team Leader or Homeless Services Manager.

Communication

- To ensure that you communicate effectively both internally and externally with colleagues, agencies, and others.
- To ensure that you provide effective reporting both verbally and written as required.
- To ensure that confidentiality is always maintained.
- To ensure the effective use of all available resources including IT provision and other communication systems.
- To contribute to the development of effective communications systems and management of them accordingly.
- The post holder may be required on occasion to be involved in internal working groups or teams in the development of new departmental initiatives, public relations activities or in the development of organisation or service-related literature.
- The postholder may at times be required to undertake a range of cross-different and generic activities related to their area of responsibility, and behalf of the association where required, in the event of staff absences, shortages and as directed by the Director of Housing.

ANY OTHER DUTIES:

The nature of this post is such that this Job Description cannot be prescriptive. It is a requirement that the post holder demonstrates a high level of flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances and work demands of the service.

The postholder will be expected to carry out any other duties as directed, which are considered reasonable and in accordance with the general duties and responsibilities of this post.

The postholder shall therefore be required to positively respond to such demands and ensure that the commitment, innovation, flexibility, and delivery of high-quality services remain paramount.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Because of the nature of this position, you will be required to work away from your normal base to other locations including working from home. A Hybrid home/office working policy is in place. You may on occasion be required to attend work outside normal office hours.

HOURS:

Working hours will be defined as per your agreed contract of employment. The floating support service will be delivered by a team of floating support officers typically between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday and occasionally in the evenings and weekends where required. Additionally, the post holder may be required on occasion to work to provide out of hours emergency cover on a rota system.

Floating Support Officer (Personnel Specification)

Qualifications / Experience	Essential	Desirable
A relevant qualification (QCF/NVQ Level 2 or equivalent e.g. 5 GCSEs) And 1 years' experience in providing support services to individuals or families Or 3 years' experience in providing support services to individuals or families	E	
A recognised qualification in one or more of the following areas: Housing or Homelessness Benefit Advice Health & Social Care		D
1 years' experience in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing person centred needs/risk assessments and support plans• Managing a caseload• Advocating on a person's behalf• Working in partnership with external agencies	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	
Sound knowledge and understanding of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing related support The benefit system 	E	
Skills & Abilities	Essential	Desirable
Excellent level of IT literacy with 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	
Other	Essential	Desirable
Full driving license and access to own car for travel.	E	
Be able to work flexible hours if required, including evenings and weekends.	E	

Selection Timetable

The closing date for completed applications is **4pm on Friday 7th February 2025**. Applications should be sent by email to: 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 10th February 2025 with successful applicants invited for interview week commencing 17th February 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 an interview but is unavailable on the proposed date and time due to reasons beyond their control, the panel may endeavor 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

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

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.