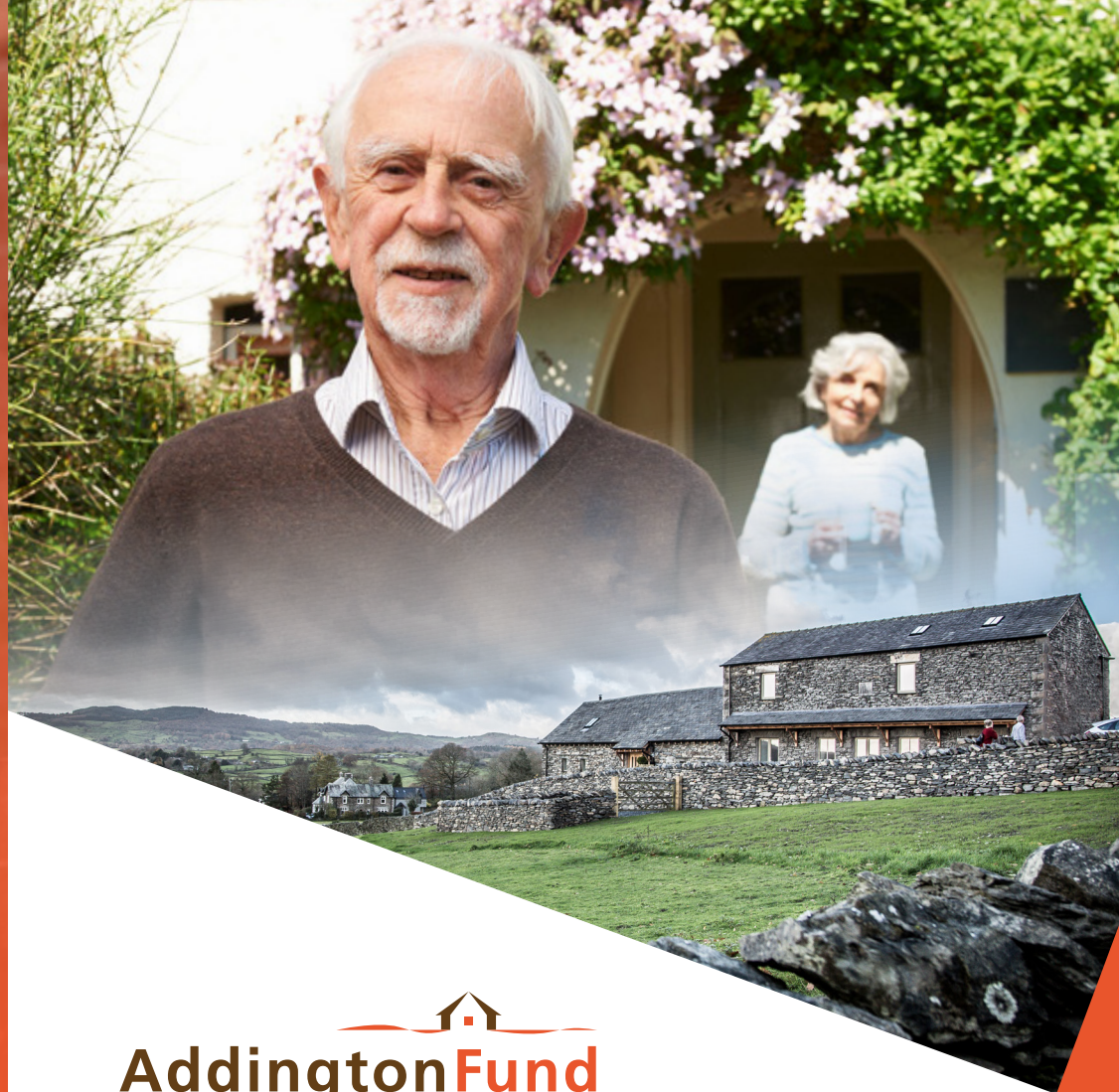




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## A Guide to Retirement Housing from the Addington Fund

## A guide to the process and stages involved when applying to our retirement housing


**These guidelines are intended to help you understand our application process, so that you are aware of the stages that have to be completed before our trustees can grant final approval to your application.**

### SUMMARY

Our Retirement Housing is there for farmers who have to leave their farm, through no fault of their own, and, in doing so, will lose their home. In many cases there is no suitable housing available locally. Although our Retirement Housing is available to all farmers (owner occupiers and tenants), priority may be given to retiring tenant farmers. Our trustees will consider each applicant's circumstances on their own merit.

Addington will purchase a property for successful applicants and that property is then rented under an Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement. We welcome Shared Equity Arrangements, so if you are fortunate enough to come away from the farm with some capital, this can be invested into the property and is protected by a legal agreement called a Declaration of Trust. Rent is not charged on your shared input and when the property is sold, you or your estate will receive your share of the net proceeds based on your percentage invested.\*.

\*Please note that the property may decrease in value as well as increase, in which case you may not get back what you have put in and we recommend that you take legal advice over this.) A copy of our Declaration of Trust Agreement is available to view upon request.



*Thank you for your interest in our Retirement Housing. We understand that this is a very worrying time for you and leaving a farm where you have lived for many years is a big step to make.*

# How our Retirement Housing works

We have an application process which must be completed in full. If your application is approved, you will be set a budget to work to, and you will be initially responsible for finding your future home based on that budget. The budget can vary from applicant to applicant and is based on your unique situation, and the following are some of the considerations when setting our budget:

- How many people will be living in your new home
- The cost of properties to buy in the area you would like to live
- The affordability of the rent
- Geographical location.

There are several stages to an application:

## STAGE 1 INITIAL APPLICATION

We will ask that you complete our Initial Application form in order to establish whether your situation meet the charity's eligibility criteria. We need you to fill this in fully and return it to us as soon as you can.

## STAGE 2 VISIT TO YOUR HOME/FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

The next stage is for us to come and meet you in your current home. If you are actively farming and/or interested in a shared equity purchase, we will require a financial assessment to be completed. It asks for quite a lot of information, and we have discovered it is best for everyone if we help you complete this. It also gives us the chance to meet you, ask and answer any questions you may have and for us to get an idea of what you are looking for and equally, to explain what we may be able to offer. Sometimes we are not the best option for all situations.

## STAGE 3 TRUSTEE DECISION

Our trustees meet four times a year to consider housing applications. Your completed application will be included at their next meeting, although we have provision in emergency cases to consider applications outside trustees' meetings. Following our meeting with you, we submit a written report to our trustees, who will assess your application for a final decision.

## STAGE 4 APPROVED APPLICATIONS

We will write to you to let you know the outcome of your application, and if approved the process of finding your new home can commence.

We will hold the funds for your purchase for 12 months from the date the application is approved, and we do this to give you time to plan ahead and not rush into potentially making a wrong decision. If you do not find somewhere in this time, we will have to reassess your need and review your situation at that time.



## STAGE 5 LOOKING FOR YOUR NEW HOME

At this stage you can begin house hunting! There are lots of Internet sites such as Rightmove and Zoopla, as well as the local papers and Estate Agents and you will have the freedom to investigate potential new homes. We would encourage you to view as many properties as you think would be suitable, and when you have narrowed it down to one or two which feel special, we then become more hands on and will come to the property, meet you there and look at it with you.

**WE DO NOT BUY PROPERTIES WITH AGRICULTURAL TIES, PARK HOMES OR PROPERTIES THAT REQUIRE RENOVATION; NEITHER DO WE BUY FROM AUCTIONS**

Current law states that any rented property must have an Energy Performance Certificate with a minimum rating of E, and recent legislation prevents landlords renting properties below this value. We understand that this is going to increase to a D and then a C in the future, and possibly so on, so we would ask that you to try and focus on properties with EPC's of D upwards. (e.g. D to A). We will consider properties with an EPC of E if it is possible to easily upgrade them.

## RENT REVIEWS

We review our rents every two years so prior to the 1st of April following the 2nd anniversary of the start of your tenancy, we will review your rent. This doesn't always mean that your rent will increase, but if it does, we will give you two month's notice of any proposed increase. It is important that our rental income stream remains up to date as this enables us to not only maintain the condition of your home but also ensure we are here for future housing beneficiaries. If any rent increase presents a worry to you, we will always listen and assist if we can.

## THESE ARE ONLY GUIDELINES

Our trustees consider every application on its own individual merit and circumstances, and if you have any questions, PLEASE call to speak to Sue English on: **01926 620135** (option 2) or if you'd prefer email: [sueenglish@addingtonfund.org.uk](mailto:sueenglish@addingtonfund.org.uk)

# People we have helped

## Micky

### *Addington Fund Tenant*

I first had a taste of farming life helping a friend's husband who worked on a farm near Luton Airport. I was around 13/14 at the time, my friend was five or six years older and I used to help at harvest time filling up bags of corn that was being harvested, it was the late 1950's so the equipment was fairly antique! No modern combines with corn hoppers then.

I met my husband, when he was clearing the snow from the streets one winter. His parents were tenant farmers and he worked with his dad, but we always wanted a tenancy for ourselves. They weren't easy to find at that time but in 1976, Lower Wilbury Farm came up and we were delighted when we were awarded the tenancy. What a wonderful life for the children to grow up in.

There wasn't really any money in it despite it being a wonderful way to live and my husband and I managed the farm between us and worked comfortably alongside each other.

In late 2007 my husband became unwell and of course refused to see a GP until July 2008. He was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer and had a course of chemotherapy, which we were told wouldn't change the outcome but may give him more time. He sadly passed away in May 2009 but before he died he organised contractors to do the ploughing, drilling and harvesting future crops in order for me to continue at the farm alone,



which was my wish. I couldn't think about leaving a home I'd lived in for nearly 40 years.

However, it was a struggle to initially gain the tenancy, as I was told my name wasn't on the tenancy agreement and I was told I needed to leave with immediate effect. I managed to negotiate and was granted the tenancy, but it was at a much higher rent. My daughter came back from abroad and moved in with me, securing a job in London to help finance the farm.

*"After a lot of worried thoughts about what I could do next, I got in touch with the Addington Fund. They were absolutely brilliant with their support; it was like a huge weight had been lifted from my shoulders."*

Eventually, we both realised that we couldn't manage the farm for very long, and by the time I was 70, I realised I was getting older, and without help I would struggle, so I made the decision to give up the farm. I discovered that if I went into a council property it would be a flat, so no pets or a garden. After a lot of worried thoughts about what I could do next, I got in touch with the Addington Fund. They were absolutely brilliant with their support; it was like a huge weight had been lifted from my shoulders.

## David and Louise

### *Addington Fund Tenants*

We were introduced to the Addington Fund by a very kind lady from the RABI who had been helping us fill in forms and getting allowances in place as Dave has COPD and later was diagnosed with lung cancer.

We have been tenant farmers with Staffordshire County Council since 1986. We were due for retirement and had nowhere to go. Addington have been fantastic from the outset allowing us to find somewhere to live of our own choice. Sue and Mike have been so supportive, they have made us feel comfortable and not judged us. We have both worked all our lives but still did not have a



lot to show for it as farming is so unpredictable. We are now happily settled and could not ask for more. Sue and Mike are always on the end of the phone or email and get in touch to find out how we are. We still cannot believe that Addington literally came to our rescue. The hardest part we found was at the beginning having to ask for help, but anyone in the same situation we were in: please ask.

## John and Sarah

### *Addington Fund Tenants*

Sarah and I were born and brought up in South Yorkshire. I had helped and then worked on local farms from the age of 14. After we got married, we moved away from Yorkshire and I worked on farms in various parts of the country, most notably as livestock manager on one of the first embryo transplant units in the country, and shepherding a 3,000 flock of mules on the Cranborne Chase in Dorset.

We moved to Pound on the western edge of Dartmoor in 1979, where we stayed for forty years. I was a farm manager of a 248 acre grassland farm with 1500 ewes and had the opportunity to take a Farm Business Tenancy on forty acres of the farm, running a flock of Beaulahs. Because the farm wasn't generating sufficient income, Sarah ran the farm and I went driving for an international haulage company and was away for three weeks at a time, trying to save the really heavy work for the weeks I was home.

In 2001 I had an issue with a suspected deep vein thrombosis. I came home and Sarah went to work as an administrator for a local eco research company. After Sarah retired, we kept on farming until we both reached 75 and had to admit it was time to stop.

Our landlord had it in his mind to sell the farm but would not do so until we had found somewhere to live. Once we started to look seriously for somewhere to live, we realised it was going to be difficult to find a property we could afford. It was at this time we contacted Sue English at the Addington Fund to see if they could help.

We had first become aware of the Fund during the first Foot and Mouth outbreak, when we had help in the form of a small loan for feed purchases. Then again, we had a friend who was losing his farm tenancy due to an issue of succession. I put him in touch with the Addington Fund who subsequently resolved his housing situation too.

Sue came to the farm to meet with us and ascertain whether the trustees could or would be prepared to consider helping with a shared equity property. Thankfully, they agreed and we started the search for a property with much help and support from Mike Williams.

We finally found a property we could afford and really liked. The whole process from start to finish was handled with understanding and support. We cannot thank the Addington Fund enough for the help they have given us. They took a huge weight off our shoulders at what was a very stressful and worrying time.

# Your questions

**Q How do I qualify for your Retirement Housing Scheme?**

**A** You must be leaving an agricultural holding which has been your main source of income and by leaving it, you will also lose your home. Reasons for leaving include retirement, ill health or non-viability of the business. If you would like to discuss your circumstances, please contact the office. However, eligibility does not guarantee success - there is an application process.

**Q How much are your rents?**

**A** Our rents are calculated at 20% below the market rent for similar properties in the location of your chosen property

**Q When I retire from the farm, I will have some savings to put towards a house purchase. Can you offer shared equity purchases?**

**A** Yes - currently over 60% of our houses are in a 'shared equity' arrangement, where the occupier has a financial stake in the house. The percentage is calculated and rent reduced accordingly, but the landlord's responsibilities eg external maintenance and insurance, are also split according to the percentage. If and when the house is sold, the proceeds are divided on the same basis.

**Q I am a farm worker and am about to lose my tied accommodation. Am I eligible?**

**A** We cannot help through our Retirement Housing Scheme but may be able to help you through our Affordable Housing Scheme, if we have any vacancies. Please ask.

**Q I have to leave the farm, but don't really know what I want to do long term. Would you consider buying a house for a few years while I consider my options?**

**A** No - buying and selling houses is an expensive and time-consuming business. The intentions are that our tenants wish to settle into a new home for the long-term future.

**Q I see you try to keep families within their locality. We would like to move further away to be near our family. Is this possible?**

**A** Yes - we do our best to find houses for families in the area of their choice.

**Q My landlord has served me notice to quit and I need advice and help to fight this. Can you help?**

**A** Addington is not qualified to give advice to help you in your quest to retain your tenancy. We suggest that you contact the Tenant Farmers Association or the National Farmers Union and seek specialist legal advice.

*You are eligible to apply to our Retirement Housing Scheme if, by leaving an agricultural holding which has been your main source of income, you will also lose the home you are living in.*

**Q What sort of tenancy agreements do you offer?**

**A** We use standard Assured Shorthold Tenancies. These give an initial six-month commitment, and after the initial 6 months, if both parties are happy, it automatically rolls into a Periodic Tenancy where you would have to give 1 month's notice if you wanted to leave, and we would have to give you two months notice to leave. Usually both partners at the time of applying are joint tenants.

**Q When I leave the farm, I would like to do some contracting and keep a few animals. Would you buy a house with a yard and a few acres?**

**A** No. We only buy ordinary residential homes. If you wish to run a business that involves more space you would have to find additional premises, which you would have to fund yourself.

**Q Can you provide finance so that I can purchase the land where I currently keep my stock and/or the farmhouse I live in?**

**A** No, sorry but we cannot provide finance for land, or farmhouse purchases.

**Q Do you allow pets in Addington properties?**

**A** We realise the important part your cat or dog may have played in your working farm life and we have no objection to them living with you. There may be a restriction on the number of pets you have, but, within reason, we welcome canine and feline friends.



## Once you have found a property that meets your needs

When you have found somewhere you think is the one, you need to contact us with the details and we will also come and look at it. Assuming it meets our criteria we now take over negotiations with the estate agent and handle the legal side of things. This process is called conveyancing and the time taken can vary from 2 months to much longer depending on the results of searches, queries etc that our solicitor makes.

We will put in an offer for the house which we think is fair and realistic, but you must be prepared that there may be other interested purchasers who may be willing to pay more than the budget that you have been set. But, hopefully, our offer will be accepted and the process of buying the property will commence.

### **DEPOSIT**

A deposit of 5 week's is required on all non-shared equity tenancies. Your deposit is safe and is held by a Government Approved Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

### **TENANCY AGREEMENT**

Our tenancies are Assured Shorthold Tenancies. After the first six months the tenancy rolls into a Periodic Tenancy and, as long as both parties are happy, it is not our intention on asking you to leave.

### **GIVING NOTICE**

If you should want to leave you would have to give one month's notice and we have to give two months' notice should we not be happy with the arrangement. We recommend that you seek advice on the terms of this type of tenancy.

### **RENT**

Our rents are charged at least 20% below the market rent for similar properties in the same area. Shared Equity purchasers only pay rent on Addington's share of ownership.

### **FUTURE FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT**

In order to continue to meet its charitable objectives, the Addington Fund has a duty to manage its charitable funds in a responsible and accountable way. To this end, it may be necessary to reassess your financial circumstances in year five of your tenancy and five yearly thereafter in order to establish that your level of rent is levied in accordance with your financial circumstances.

### **HOUSING BENEFIT**

Some of our existing tenants qualify for housing benefit. The rent on a residential house may seem high compared to what you have been paying for your farm, but you may qualify for help towards the rent, so please don't be too alarmed until we have looked into your situation. If you are likely to be on a low income once you have left the farm and have minimal savings you may qualify for Housing Benefit.

Age Concern have an on line calculator which can help you assess if you are likely to qualify for any housing and Council Tax benefit <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/money-matters/claiming-benefits/housing-benefit/eligibility/>

### **PETS**

We are happy to welcome well behaved pets and this will be discussed with you at the home visit stage.

### **AT THE END OF THE TENANCY**

When the property is no longer needed, we place it back on the open market and when it is sold the proceeds come back to us to be used for another purchase. If you have shared equity, you or your estate will receive your share of the sale proceeds, minus the sale costs.