



Hampshire Home Choice



Access Statement

This is a statement for those considered to be vulnerable and therefore possibly disadvantaged in accessing the Hampshire Home Choice Scheme operating in East Hampshire, Havant and Winchester.

Aim of the statement is to ensure that Hampshire Home Choice is accessible to all customers in East Hampshire, Havant and Winchester. We aim to help people make their own choices and decisions in choosing where they want to live and if they are unable to make these decisions by providing support for vulnerable customers

There are a number of people who may consider themselves at a disadvantage on accessing Hampshire Home Choice including the following:-

- 16-17 year olds
- Care leavers
- People with visual impairments
- Older people
- people who are housebound
- People mental health problems
- Victims of domestic abuse
- people with a learning disability
- people with substance misuse problems
- people whose first language is not English

This list is not intended to be exhaustive and there are other issues that people may be facing which make them feel unable to access the Hampshire Home Choice Scheme. The main purpose of this statement is to emphasise the fact that assistance and support is available if required and that people advising customers need to ensure that customers know how to access such support.

There are five key areas in which we think we can assist vulnerable customers:-

- accessing information
- registering a housing application
- accessing the Hampshire Home Choice website
- making bids for properties
- make an decision about an offer of a tenancy
- asking for reviews of decisions

ACCESSING INFORMATION

Some customers may have problems or concerns in accessing information due to literacy, learning disability, visually impaired, mobility issues, lack of knowledge, perceptions, speak another language and other any issues. People working with customers can do the following :-



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* Publicise Hampshire Home Choice across the East Hampshire, Havant and Winchester council areas. All existing and new customers have been provided with a range of information about Hampshire Home Choice and will have received newsletters and letters explaining the scheme, read newspaper articles, attended consultation meetings and have accessed the councils and the Hampshire Home Choice website.

All customers are provided with an easy to understand scheme guide.

* Information on Hampshire Home Choice service will be provided at the Council's main offices and local offices. All partner housing associations will also have this information.

* All other partner organisations such as the Citizens' Advice Bureaux and Adult Services will be able to advise customers and provide information.

- All information will be made available in alternative formats, ie large print/ audio on request.
- Information on the www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk will be available in Browsealoud format and can be translated into other languages by Babel Fish
- Each of the councils has public access PCs in the Housing Services Receptions where customers will have free access to the Hampshire Home Choice website. Housing staff will be available to support staff.
- Each of the Councils has access to Language Line.

REGISTERING AN APPLICATION

* There will be a number of ways of completing an application to register for housing – the tradition paper housing application, using an on line application through the Hampshire home Choice website or by an agreed advocate or third party.

* Assistance from the Housing Services staff will be offered in completing the Housing application

- There are questions on the application form to establish if a customer has any support requirements.



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ACCESSING THE HAMPSHIRE HOME CHOICE WEBSITE

Some vulnerable customers may have difficulties in accessing information about properties being advertised and making bids for properties, These customers will be supported in the following ways : -

- * For customers who may decide that they not be able to bid themselves the Hampshire Home Choice scheme can be authorised by the customer place an automatic bid for properties
- * customers can elect an advocate when is authorised to bid on behalf of the customer – this could be a family member , a friend, a support worker or a member of the Housing Services staff.

A free phone line listing the properties in the current bidding cycle.

- * There will be a range of methods for bidding:

Website
Automated telephone
Automated bidding
Visiting the Housing Service

MAKING A DECISION

Some customers may have difficulty deciding whether to bid for a property or whether to accept an offer, due to a lack of life skills, confidence or due to having other issues.

- * Staff at the Council and Housing Associations will be able to offer general advice to people regarding decision-making to enable someone to make an informed choice. In addition, customers will be given details of their local citizens' advice bureaux for independent advice.
- * Feedback on the allocation of properties will be made publicly available eg how long a customer has been waiting for housing but not personal details will be issued. The bidding history of each customer will be made available on the website to assist a customer to make informed decisions

Reviews

Some customers may have difficulty in making a formal review of a decision due to their lack of confidence or life skills.

All staff at the Councils and Housing Associations will be available to assist customers with their reviews. Documentation will be made available in alternative formats if required. Customers will also be able to use the Councils' or Housing Associations' complaints procedure.