



Hampshire Home Choice



Hampshire Home Choice Scheme Guide

Your guide to finding affordable homes in the East Hampshire, Havant and Winchester City Council areas.

The guide includes:

- a summary of how to use the scheme
- how bids will be prioritised
- details on how to place your bids
- the symbols used in adverts

About Hampshire Home Choice

Hampshire Home Choice is a new way of looking for social housing. Rather than the Council deciding which property to offer to you, the Hampshire Home Choice Scheme allows you to decide which properties are of interest to you.

All vacant properties in East Hampshire, Havant and Winchester, owned and managed by Housing Associations and Winchester City Council will be advertised on the internet at www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk. There will also be a newsletter published weekly which is available from the Councils Housing Service and from agencies throughout the Councils' areas. You can look at the newsletter or website to find properties that interest you. You can bid for properties if you are a customer who is either in housing need or are a tenant of a Housing Association or Winchester City Council and have an application accepted on the Housing Register.

You can bid for properties in a number of ways:

- Online using the website
- Using the automated 24 hour phone line
- Coming into the Council's Housing Service or Housing Association offices

To help you decide whether to bid for a property you can look at the priority of customers who have bid successfully for recently let homes. This information is available both in the Hampshire Home Choice newsletter and on the Hampshire Home Choice website. As you make a bid, the system will let you know where your bid is placed in the shortlist for that



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property. This will help you prioritise your three bids in each cycle. This information is available on the website and phone line.

How to Register for the Hampshire Home Choice Scheme

To apply to join the Housing Register you must be over 16 years of age. The application enables you to apply for Housing Association or Winchester City Council homes. You will need to complete an application form, which can be submitted on line at www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk, or can be obtained from your local Housing Service or downloaded from the Councils' websites.

Along with a completed application form you will be asked to provide the following documents:

- Proof of identity for all household members (e.g. passports, birth certificates)
- Proof of current address (e.g. recent gas or electricity bill)
- Evidence of your right to reside in the UK if you are not a British Citizen (e.g. passport and other relevant documents from the Home Office)

Before you are offered a property you may be asked to provide further documents to support your application. If you do not provide us with the documents required your application may be accepted onto the housing register but will not be awarded any priority. When you are accepted on to the housing register the Council will write to tell you:

- Your housing application number
- The band your application has been placed in and your priority date.
- The number of bedrooms you are entitled to.

You must tell us if there are any changes in your circumstances so that we can reassess your application and if necessary make changes to your band and priority date. You are also able to advise the Council of any changes via a message through your housing register account.

Step 1: Making a Bid for a property

Properties are advertised each week on the website at www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk and in the newsletter. New properties can be viewed on the website from Wednesday 0:01am and are advertised until 23:59pm on Sunday. You are also able to listen to the adverts on the Property Line on **0300 300 0028**.

The property adverts

The adverts will inform you of the landlord, location, size, rent and other features of the property to help you decide which properties are right for you. The advert also tells you if there are any special requirements that the customer must meet, such as age requirements and which band will be given priority. See later in the guide for the property symbols used in the adverts.

www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk

0845 260 2303



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Expressing your interest in a property

You can bid for up to three properties each week. You can express your interest in one of the following ways:

- On the website www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk**
Login by using the housing reference and the date of birth of the primary applicant.
- By telephone**
Call our 24 hour automated bidding line on 0845 260 2303.
- In person**
Visit the Council or housing association offices where staff will be happy to help

Step 2: Being made an offer of a home

All bids received from customers will be placed in order of priority to produce a list of eligible customers for each property advertised. If your application is at the top of the shortlist of bids, you will normally be invited to view the property by the landlord - unless there are reasons why they are unable to do this, for example, you have rent arrears or the Council or Housing association is taking legal action against you for breaching a tenancy condition. The landlord of the property will carry out any outstanding eligibility checks, e.g. rent checks, household circumstance checks.

If you are offered a property you will not be able to bid for other properties until you have decided to either accept or to refuse the offer. If you accept the property a viewing will be arranged by the landlord and you will be advised by the landlord when you can sign up for the property and move in. You will be given an appointment by the landlord to sign the tenancy agreement and collect the keys.

If there are no suitable customers, the property will be re-advertised.

If a property is refused it will be offered to the next suitable customer on the shortlist.

Please note that you will not be informed if your bid is unsuccessful, but you will be able to see when it has been successfully let and to what band on the newsletter.

Number of bids

You are allowed to make up to three bids in each advertising period. You can withdraw your bids and re-use them on another property up until the close of bidding.

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Size of property

If the property has restrictions on the number of occupants for the size of the property then these are described in the advert.

Minimum age

If the property has restrictions related to the age of the applicant then these are these are described in the advert.

Maximum age

If the property has restrictions related to the maximum age of the customer then these are described in the advert.

Other restrictions

Some properties in some rural locations require tenants to have a strong local connection as a result of planning conditions for the properties. This is referred to as a Section 106 requirement. Please ask the Housing Service for more information about these properties.

How are applications prioritised?

All housing applications are assessed according to housing need and are placed in one of five bands. Within each band application will be placed in date order with the application with the highest multiple need and the oldest registration date having the greatest priority.

Moving between bands: additional preference

In cases where you can demonstrate that you have multiple housing needs, including homelessness, health and welfare issues, which when considered together are so severe as to warrant higher priority, your application may be given additional preference and moved to a higher band. If your circumstances change and the Council agrees to move your application up a band you will be given a new priority date. The priority date is the date when your application is moved into the new band. If you move down a band the date used will normally be the date that you were previously in that band or a higher band.

Band 1 Exceptional housing needs

- Life threatening health condition
- Customers needing housing to be discharged from hospital
- Customers with an exceptional need to move

Band 2 High Priority

- Customers who's home is unsuitable because of a statutory order
- Customers living in overcrowded housing lacking in 2 or more bedrooms
- Social tenants who will release a property required by the Council.



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- Vulnerable customers given priority by a Supported Housing Panel
- Customers with health conditions related to unsuitable housing
- Customers accepted as homeless by the Council and placed in accommodation unsuitable for their long term needs

Band 3 Medium Priority

- Customers living in overcrowded circumstances and lacking one bedroom
- Customers accepted as homeless by the Council
- Customers living in inadequate accommodation
- Customers with medium health priority
- Customers needing to move to a particular locality
- Customers living in private rented accommodation with a high rent

Band 4 Low priority

- Other customers with a low housing need and a local connection
- Customers awarded a low health or welfare priority
- Customers who do have a housing need but have no local connection

Band 5 No priority

- Private and social housing tenants who are adequately housed
- Owner occupiers who have no housing need or with substantial financial resources
- Customers with outstanding debts to social landlords
- Customers who have no local connection and no housing need
- Customers who are guilty of anti social behaviour

More detailed information on the Allocations Framework can be obtained from the Councils' websites or by contacting your local housing service.

Bidding on the website

The web site address to use when placing a bid is: www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk. On the website you can find full details about the scheme. You can search for properties that meet your needs and see the full details of those properties. You can also place a bid, withdraw a bid, find out if you are eligible and your current queue position. You can only bid for properties where you match the advert details. For example, if the advert states 'Suitable for a couple and two children only' – regardless of your band priority – only couples with two children can bid for that property.

To make a bid you need:

- Your housing register reference number
- The date of birth of the primary customer for your housing application

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The property reference number(s) that you want to bid for

1. Type www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk into the address bar of your internet browser

Click the **My homepage** option then enter your housing register reference number and date of birth. At this stage your login will be confirmed and details of any current bids will be shown.

2. Click the **Property search** option. Select any search criteria that you require (for example you may wish to search for a particular size of property) and click search.

3. A list of properties matching your search criteria will be displayed. If you are eligible for a property then an **Apply Now** button will be displayed. Your current queue position should you bid for this property will also be shown but note that this can change as other people bid. If you are not eligible then the reason you are not eligible will be displayed.

4. For a property that you are eligible for click the **Apply Now** button. You will be shown the property details and asked to confirm your bid. When you confirm your bid you will be told that your bid has been successfully placed.

Do not be worried about the word 'bid' you will not be parting with any money. All this means is that you are actively interested and wish to be considered for the property or properties you are applying for.

Making a bid by telephone

The number to call when placing a bid is **0845 260 2303**

You will be charged the local rate for this call but note that this rate will vary depending on your telephone service provider. Through the telephone system you can place a bid, withdraw a bid, find out if you are eligible and what your current queue position is. You can only bid for properties where you match what the advert asks for. For example, if the property advert states 'Suitable for a couple and two children only' – regardless of your banding/priority – only couples with two children can bid for that property.

What you need to bid:

- Your housing register reference number
- The date of birth of the primary application for your housing application
- The property reference number(s) that you want to bid for.

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Bidding using the telephone system is done using the number keypad on your telephone. As well as using the numbers on the number keypad you will also need to use the hash (#) key.

Step 1 Start by calling the bidding line on 0845 260 2303

Step 2 You will hear

"Welcome to Hampshire Home Choice. Please select your language from the following list. Press 1 for English, press 2 for etc."

"You have selected English. Press 1 to confirm, 2 to reselect your language." "Please enter your housing register reference, followed by the hash (#) key." "You have entered the following housing register reference" (the reference you entered will be read back to you)

"Press 1 to confirm your housing register reference, or press 2 to re enter"

"Your housing register reference has been accepted"

"Please enter the day of the month you were born, followed by the hash key." "Please enter the number of the month you were born, followed by the # key."

"Please enter the year of your birth using all four numbers, followed by the # key. For example one nine six five to represent nineteen sixty five."

Step 3 Confirmation of details

"Thank you; your details match our records."

"Press 1 to make an application, press 2 to review your applications or press 3 to exit."

Step 4 Making a bid

"Please enter the property reference number of the property you wish to make an application on, followed by the hash key."

"You have entered the following property reference number" The property reference number that you entered will be read back to you. If you are not eligible you will be told why, if you are eligible you will be told your current queue position. Note that your queue position will change as other people bid. "Press 1 to confirm, 2 to change the property reference number"

"Your bid has been accepted"

Step 5 Reviewing and cancelling your bids

If you have already bid for properties you will be read a list of the properties with a reference number for each bid. For example property one : number 9491

"Add the reference number of the property that you wish to cancel the bid and follow by the hash key." The property reference number and current queue position will be read out to you. You will be told: "Subsequent bids may affect your queue position and some properties may be offered to the most suitable candidate."

"Press 1 if you are sure you want to cancel your bid otherwise press 2 to exit"

Exit "Thank you for using the system goodbye."

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Property Symbols used in the adverts



Bedrooms: the number of bedrooms in this property.



Adapted: the property is suitable for people with a mobility or adapted need.



Own garden: this property has its own garden.



Maximum age: this property is only available to people of the age shown and below.



Minimum age: at least one household member must be the age shown.



Sheltered: this is a sheltered property.



Off road parking: this property has off road parking.



Supported: this is a supported housing scheme.

Please read the Hampshire Home Choice Scheme guide carefully and if you need help please contact your Housing Service for further advice.

East Hampshire District Council

Penns Place, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 4EX
T: 01730 234345 / 234377 / 234378 / 234394 / 234397

Havant Borough Council

Civic Offices, Havant, Hampshire PO9 2AX T: 02392 446 507

Winchester City Council

City Offices, Colebrook Street, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 9LJ T: 01962 840 222

This document is available in translated languages. If you have any other particular needs, for example Braille, audio tape, large print or sign language please contact your local Housing Service using the details above.