



Dorset  
**Home Choice**  
your *home* your *choice*  
dorsethomechoice.org

# Dorset Home Choice CBL Scheme User Guide



**We can give you help to read or understand this information**



**Please contact the relevant Local Authority for enquiries**



**Further information can be found at  
[www.dorsethomechoice.org](http://www.dorsethomechoice.org)**

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General Information

## **Four steps to a new home**

### **Step 1: Membership**

You are a member of Dorset Home Choice if you have been accepted onto the Housing Register of one of the partner local authorities. Once accepted you will be given a unique Home Choice number.

### **Step 2: Choosing & Bidding**

You can see the available properties on the Dorset Home Choice website, or in the weekly Dorset Home Choice property list. You can bid for any property that you are eligible for. You may use up to six bids in every advert cycle.

### **Step 3: Offers**

If once bidding closes your bid is top of the list, and you are eligible and your application has been verified, the landlord may offer you the property. Some landlords may invite up to three bidders to view a property.

### **Step 4: Feedback**

The results of previous property advertising cycles will be shown in the weekly property list. This will show how many people bid for each property, the band of the successful applicant and their effective date.



## Welcome to Dorset Home Choice

The scheme is made up of 8 local authority partners operating 3 different allocation policies. Applicants registered with several different local authority partners could have different bands and bed size eligibility for each partner. The 3 policies in operation are as follows:

- Bournemouth Borough Council - see page 25
- Dorset Home Choice (covering the Borough of Poole, North Dorset District Council, Purbeck District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council) – see page 22
- Christchurch Borough Council & East Dorset District Council – see page 29

Expressing an interest for one of the homes advertised is called ‘bidding’. See pages 15 to 20 of this guide to find out the different ways to bid. Everybody accepted onto the Housing Register can take part and bid for homes **that they are eligible for** on Dorset Home Choice.

The properties advertised belong to either partner local authorities or to Registered Providers of social housing who are our partners. Properties will be advertised on a weekly basis. You will be able to see basic details about each property available. There is more information about the advertisements on page 12.

We will provide feedback on previous properties that have been advertised so you will be able to see the band the successful bidder for each property was in. You should be able to find all the information you need in this guide, but if you have any questions

about Dorset Home Choice please contact your managing local authority partner at the address/number below:

### Local Authority Contact Information

 <p>Bournemouth BOROUGH COUNCIL Building a Better Bournemouth</p>	<p>Housing Options Team - Strategic Housing Services Bournemouth Borough Council Town Hall, St Stephen's Road, Bournemouth BH2 6LL</p> <p>Tel: 01202 451467 Email – <a href="mailto:housing1@bournemouth.gov.uk">housing1@bournemouth.gov.uk</a></p>
 <p>boroughofpoole.com</p>	<p>Borough of Poole Civic Centre Poole BH15 2RU</p> <p>Tel: 01202 633805 Email – <a href="mailto:homechoice@poole.gov.uk">homechoice@poole.gov.uk</a></p>
 <p>Christchurch Borough Council</p>	<p>Christchurch Borough Council Christchurch &amp; East Dorset Housing Service, Civic Offices Bridge Street, Christchurch Dorset BH23 1AZ</p> <p>Tel:01202 795213 Email – <a href="mailto:housing@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk">housing@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk</a></p>
 <p>East Dorset District Council</p>	<p>East Dorset District Council Christchurch &amp; East Dorset Housing Service, Civic Offices Bridge Street, Christchurch Dorset BH23 1AZ</p> <p>Tel:01202 795213 Email – <a href="mailto:housing@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk">housing@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk</a></p>
 <p>North Dorset DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>North Dorset District Council Nordon, Salisbury Road Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7LL</p> <p>Tel: 01258 454111 Email – <a href="mailto:homechoice@north-dorset.gov.uk">homechoice@north-dorset.gov.uk</a></p>



Purbeck District Council  
Westport House  
Worgret Road  
Wareham  
Dorset, BH20 4PP

Tel: 01929 557370 Email - - [homechoice@purbeck-dc.gov.uk](mailto:homechoice@purbeck-dc.gov.uk)



West Dorset District Council  
South Walks House,  
South Walks Road  
Dorchester  
DT1 1UZ

Tel: 01305 251010 Email – [housingadvice@westdorset-dc.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvice@westdorset-dc.gov.uk)



**Weymouth & Portland**  
Borough Council

Weymouth and Portland Borough Council –  
South Walks House, South Walks Road  
Dorchester  
DT1 1UZ

Tel: 01305 838000 Email – [housingadvice@weymouth.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvice@weymouth.gov.uk)

# How Dorset Home Choice Works

There are four steps for you to follow in order to choose your new home:

## Step 1 Membership & Registration

You are automatically a member of Dorset Home Choice if you have been accepted onto one of the partner local authority Housing Registers. If you are not on the Housing Register you can apply on-line at [www.dorsethomechoice.org](http://www.dorsethomechoice.org) or contact your local authority. If you need more information about whether you are eligible please contact your local housing authority. Once you have been accepted onto Dorset Home Choice we will write to you. We will tell you what band you are in, the size of property you are eligible for and your unique Dorset Home Choice reference number. You will also be sent a Scheme User Guide.

**If there are any changes to your household or your circumstances you must contact your managing local authority partner.** It is very important that we know of any changes as it may change your band or the type of property you are eligible for.

## Step 2 Bidding

You can bid for up to six properties that you are eligible for in each weekly cycle. Properties are advertised in a property list which is available from your local authority and on the partnership website [www.dorsethomechoice.org](http://www.dorsethomechoice.org). There is more information about how to get the property list on page 14. The weekly cycle runs from Wednesday at 4pm to 11.59pm on the following Monday. **Your bids must reach us before midnight on Monday to be considered.**

## **Step 2 Bidding (continued)**

The property adverts give you information about each property available for letting. A photograph will be included if available. You can bid in the following ways:

1. On the internet – go to [www.dorsethomechoice.org](http://www.dorsethomechoice.org) and (once you have created an online account) log on with your email address and your password. Follow the instructions on the screen.
2. By telephone – call 01202 454 700 and follow the instructions. See pages 18 to 19 about bidding by telephone.
3. By text message – see page 20 about bidding by text.

## **Step 3 Offer**

At the end of the weekly bid cycle, all bids for each property are put into a priority order based on the banding, effective date in band and any other short listing priorities that have been applied to the advert. A shortlist of applicants is then produced. The applicant at the top of the list (assuming they were eligible and the information in their application is correct) will be contacted by the relevant landlord or local authority. If they refuse the property, or their application information is found to be incorrect or if the landlord decides the offer is not suitable, the property is then offered to the next person on the list and so on. If you are offered a property and then unreasonably refuse it, it may count as a refusal of a reasonable offer and may affect your banding or ability to bid. If you are offered a property you will not be offered another property until you have made a decision on the first offer.

### **Step 4 Feedback**

It is not possible to notify you individually when your bids have been unsuccessful but you can get this information from the website (see 'bidding history' after you have logged in).

All properties that have been advertised will be listed on the Feedback page of the property list once they have been let. This tells you how many people bid for each property as well as the band of the successful bidder and their effective date in band.

### **IMPORTANT**

If you are successful in your bid we will need to contact you very quickly. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that your contact details are completely up to date. If you do not respond within 1 day of us contacting you you may lose the opportunity to be offered the property.

It is your responsibility to keep your contact details up to date with us.



## **What Properties can I bid for?**

You can choose whether you bid for a flat, house bungalow or maisonette (except for those applicants accepted onto certain local authority housing registers in order to bid for specific property types). The size of the property that you are eligible for is explained below and is dependent on the local authority housing register that you have been accepted onto. If you are unsure about the size of property you are eligible for, please contact the relevant local authority.

Bedroom sharing is covered by the rules set out below.

### **For applicants to Bournemouth Borough Council, the Borough of Poole, Christchurch Borough Council, East Dorset District Council and Purbeck District Council:**

- Household members living together as a couple will be assessed as requiring 1 bedroom, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Additional adults (defined as being 16 or over) living permanently in a household will require their own bedroom.
- Children that are of different sexes that are both under 10 will be expected to share.
- Children of the same sex that are both under 16 will be expected to share.
- A disabled tenant or partner who needs a non-resident overnight carer may be allowed an extra room.
- Foster carers will be allowed one additional room as long as they have fostered a child or become an approved foster carer within the last 52 weeks.

**For applicants to North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland**

## **Borough Council:**

Applicants will be given two bedroom entitlements – a maximum entitlement and a minimum entitlement based on different rules.

**Maximum bedroom entitlement** will be based on the following:

- Household members living together as a couple will be assessed as requiring 1 bedroom, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Additional adults (defined as being 18 or over) living permanently in a household will require an extra bedroom.
- Children that are of different sexes that are both under 7 will be expected to share.
- Children that are of different sexes and are more than 7 years apart will have separate rooms.
- Children of the same sex that are both under 18 will be expected to share.
- A disabled tenant or partner who needs non-resident overnight carer will be allowed an extra room.
- Foster carers will be allowed one additional room as long as they have fostered a child or become an approved foster carer within the last 52 weeks.

**Minimum bedroom** entitlement will be based on the following:

- Household members living together as a couple will be assessed as requiring 1 bedroom, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Additional adults (defined as being 16 or over) living permanently in a household will require their own bedroom.

- Children that are of different sexes that are both under 10 will be expected to share.
- Children of the same sex that are both under 16 will be expected to share.
- A disabled tenant or partner who needs a non-resident overnight carer may be allowed an extra room.
- Foster carers will be allowed one additional room as long as they have fostered a child or become an approved foster carer within the last 52 weeks

















**Please note:** Individual partner housing provider letting policies or local planning policies may affect the size of households that may apply for particular properties. Any such restrictions will be included in the property advert.

**Priority for Ground floor accommodation will normally be given to someone who requires level access on the grounds of age, disability or medical need.**

**In order to be eligible for bedroom spaces for children, the adult(s) must demonstrate that the child(ren) live(s) with them on a full time, permanent basis.**

# The Adverts

Our adverts are ordered and colour coded depending on the Local Authority partner that the property is located in and the type of property. The adverts contain symbols for an 'at-a-glance guide' to the details and who can bid for it. The colours and symbols being used are explained below.

	<b>Bournemouth Area</b> Only persons registered for housing with Bournemouth Borough Council may bid for these properties.	
	<b>Poole Area</b> Only persons registered for housing with the Borough of Poole may bid for these properties.	
	<b>Christchurch Area</b> Only persons registered for housing with Christchurch Borough Council may bid for these properties.	
	<b>East Dorset Area</b> Only persons registered for housing with East Dorset District Council may bid for these properties.	
	<b>North Dorset Area</b> Only persons registered for housing with North Dorset District Council may bid for these properties.	
	<b>Purbeck Area</b> Only persons registered for housing with Purbeck District Council may bid for these properties.	
	<b>West Dorset Area</b> Only persons registered for housing with West Dorset District Council may bid for these properties.	
	<b>Weymouth &amp; Portland Area</b> Only persons registered for housing with Weymouth & Portland Borough Council may bid for these properties.	

**1 bed sheltered flat - Affordable rent** ref no: 006

Bure Haven Drive, Maudford, Christchurch, England

























Landlord: East Borough Housing Trust  
 Rent: £100.00 per week (48 weeks)  
 Service Charge: £10.00 per week (48 weeks)  
 Support Charge: £15.00 per week (48 weeks)  
 Tenancy Type: Assured Shorthold Tenancy

Priority will be given to members with a proven local connection to the parish of Abbotsbury. 6 months tenancy offered, has parlour room, garden, central heating, bath, 2nd WC downstairs. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Proin sollicitudin erat nec diam volutpat, ut dictum enim pulvinar. Donec vel elit eget augue elementum pellentesque. Proin convallis feugiat est id bibendum. Etiam eu imperdiet felis, ut faucibus.

**Christchurch Borough Council**

**H/T** **AGE** 25+ **1-2** **FLOOR** 2 **FT** 5 **6M** **6M** **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10** **11** **12** **13** **14** **15** **16** **17** **18** **19** **20** **21** **22** **23** **24** **25** **26** **27** **28** **29** **30** **31** **32** **33** **34** **35** **36** **37** **38** **39** **40** **41** **42** **43** **44** **45** **46** **47** **48** **49** **50** **51** **52** **53** **54** **55** **56** **57** **58** **59** **60** **61** **62** **63** **64** **65** **66** **67** **68** **69** **70** **71** **72** **73** **74** **75** **76** **77** **78** **79** **80** **81** **82** **83** **84** **85** **86** **87** **88** **89** **90** **91** **92** **93** **94** **95** **96** **97** **98** **99** **100**

### Key to advert symbols

	Available for homeseekers only		Available for transferring tenants only
	Available for homeseekers and transferring tenants		Number of bedrooms in the property
			
	Garden		Shared Garden
	Lift		No lift
			
	Property designed for people of this age or above		
	Fixed term tenancy (no of years shown below) – please check with landlord for details		
	No Pets Allowed		Pets may be allowed with the permission of the landlord
	Property for families		
	Mobility Group 1 – Suitable for wheelchair users for full time indoor and outdoor mobility.		
	Mobility Group 2 – Suitable for people who cannot manage steps or stairs or steep gradients and require a wheelchair for outdoor mobility.		
	Mobility Group 3 – Suitable for people who are only able to manage 1 or 2 steps or stairs.		

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is important that you read the property advertisement carefully, as some properties may have additional restrictions e.g. age, mobility or need for adaptations, pets not permitted etc.

# Where to access the Dorset Home Choice property list

**Each Dorset Home Choice property list is valid for one bidding cycle, running from Wednesday at 4pm to 11.59pm on the following Monday.** The date will be clearly shown on the front of the property list. Make sure you are looking at the correct property list for the current bidding cycle when bidding.

You can see the weekly list of available properties online at [www.dorsethomechoice.org](http://www.dorsethomechoice.org) and you can place your bids online. Internet access is available at local libraries.

You can also see the property list at any of the local authority partner offices (see contact details on page 4). Please contact your local authority for details of other locations where you can find the property list.

If you do not have internet access and you would like to find out more information please contact your local authority.

If you would like to receive a copy of the Dorset Home Choice property list leaflet every week posted directly to you, you can pay a subscription fee of £15 for 13 weeks. Please make cheques or postal orders payable to 'Locata (Housing Services) Ltd' and send, together with your identification number and mailing address to: **Dorset Home Choice, PO Box 406, Ruislip, HA4 4EX.**

# Bidding for Properties

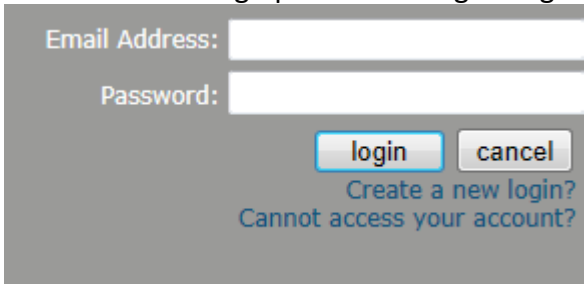
## Making your bids on the internet

The quickest and easiest way to make your bid is through our website [www.dorsethomechoice.org](http://www.dorsethomechoice.org). You will need your unique reference number and date of birth to create an account and then log in. You can see all available properties on the website and place bids for ones that you are eligible for and receive personalised feedback. You will need to register on the website and create an account before you can place a bid.

To create an account click on 'Log in' on the right hand side of the menu bar on the website

**Log in**

This will then bring up the following dialogue box



The image shows a grey login dialog box with the following elements:

- Email Address:** A text input field.
- Password:** A text input field.
- login** button: A blue button with white text.
- cancel** button: A grey button with black text.
- Create a new login?**: A blue link.
- Cannot access your account?**: A blue link.

If you have previously created an account on the site you will now need to enter your email address and password, if you haven't created an account click on the words 'Create a new login'. This will bring up the following screen.

**Are you already a member of Dorset HomeChoice?**

No  Yes

## Making your bids on the internet continued

Click on yes if you have made an application to join the Dorset Home Choice Housing Register and have received a banding letter. This will then display this screen. Enter your own Dorset Home Choice number (this will be on your banding letter). Click on next.

Enter your Dorset Home Choice Number

NDDC

next >>

You will then be asked to complete your date of birth. Once you have entered your date of birth click on next.

Enter your date of birth

Jan

next >>

If you are using a valid Dorset Home Choice Number and the correct date of birth you will then be asked to provide your email address and a password for your account. Make sure you keep this password safe.

You will also be asked then to complete a number of questions that will help you if you forget your password. You can choose from 3 questions. This is shown on the following page. Once you have provided the answer to the two secret questions click on next.



## Making your bids on the internet continued

Get help with problems signing in

[Create an account](#)

Please enter your email address and create a password for the Dorset Home Choice site. If you do not have an email address, you can create one at [Gmail](#), [Yahoo](#) or [Hotmail](#). You also have the ability to set up security questions which can be used if you forget your email address or password.

Enter your email address

Enter a password

In case you forget your email address or password

Secret Question 1

Secret Answer 1

Secret Question 2

You will then have created your account successfully and will see this message.

Your login credentials have been created successfully and sent to your registered email address.

Once you have created an account you will need to use your email address and password to login to the website.

## Making your bids by Telephone

1. To begin making your bids dial 01202 454 700

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2. You will hear:

Welcome to the Dorset Home Choice Property Line, if you are interested in bidding for properties in:  
Bournemouth Borough Council Press 1  
Borough of Poole Press 2  
North Dorset District Council Press 3  
Purbeck District Council Press 4  
West Dorset District Council Press 5  
Weymouth & Portland Borough Council Press 6  
Christchurch Borough Council Press 7  
East Dorset District Council Press 8

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3. After pressing a number from 1 to 8 you will then hear:

Please note that you have a maximum of 6 bids that you may use in any advertising cycle – you do not have to use all 6 bids if you do not wish to. Please enter the number section of your Reference number.

4. You should now enter the numerical part of your log in number (LIN) number only. E.g. If your Reference number is BBC 54321 you only need to type in '54321'. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear:

"Thank you. Please enter the day number of your birth date" e.g. For 16/04/60 enter 16 or for 08/01/58 enter 08 (you must put a 0 before a single number)

---

5. You should now enter the day number of your date of birth. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear:

"Thank you. Please enter the Property Reference number for your first bid."

---

6. Once you have entered the 3 digit Property Reference number correctly you will hear:

"Thank you. If you would like to add an additional bid press 1 or press the star key to complete your bidding."

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7. If you have pressed one you will hear:

“Please enter the Property Reference number for your second bid, or press the star key to complete your bidding.”

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8. Once you have entered the second Property number correctly you will hear:

“Thank you. If you would like to add an additional bid Reference press 1 or press the star key to complete your bids.”

---

9. When you have finished bidding (by pressing the star key) you will hear:

“Thank you for calling the Dorset Home Choice Property Line.”

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**If you have made mistakes when entering information you will hear some instructions as follows:**

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10. If you have made an error with your reference number you will hear:

I am sorry; the Reference number you have entered is not recognised. Please try again.”

---

11. If you have made a further error with your Reference number you will hear:

“I am sorry, the Reference number you have entered is still not found. Please check with your local authority and call again.”

---

12. If you have made an error with your day number of your birth date, you will hear:

“I am sorry; the day of birth you have entered does not match the day of birth specified for your reference number, please re-enter using your telephone now.”

---

13. If you have made a further error with your day number of your birth date, you will hear:

“I am sorry; the day of birth you have entered does not match the day of birth specified for your reference number, please re-enter using your telephone now.”

---

14. If you have entered a Property reference number you are not eligible to bid for you will hear:

“I am sorry, you are not eligible to bid on that property please try again.”

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## Making your bids by Text Message

1. To begin making your bids: Open a new text message  
The number to use is 07781  
472 726

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2. Enter your Dorset Home Choice reference number (including the letters) followed by a hash symbol (#). e.g. NDDC23456#

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3. You should now enter the advert reference number of your first bid followed immediately by the hash symbol. e.g. NDDC23456#567#

---

**If you have finished bidding then send the message. If you wish to place more bids keep following the instructions below.**

4. You should now enter the advert reference number of your second bid followed immediately by the hash symbol. e.g. NDDC23456#567#123#

---

**If you have finished bidding then send the message. If you wish to place more bids keep following the instructions below.**

5. You should now enter the advert reference number of your third bid followed immediately by the hash symbol. e.g. NDDC23456#567#123#456#

---

6. When you have entered all of your bids send your text message bid. SEND

---

The number to use is **07781 472 726**

The cost of calls to the telephone bidding line will depend on whether you are calling from a landline or mobile and the individual tariff that you have with your telephone provider. The cost of text bids will depend on your mobile telephone tariff. You can enter your bids in both upper and lower case. You do not have to use a specific mobile telephone to make these bids.

# Feedback

## Understanding the feedback reports

In each edition of the Dorset Home Choice property list there will be a Feedback page. The feedback contains lettings that have taken place since the previous property list.

### Date of Advert

This is the publication date of the property list that the advert appeared in.

### Advert Reference

Combined with the property list issue date, this gives a unique identity to any advert appearing in the property list.

### Property Type

This is simply a description of the property advertised.

### Location

This gives an indication of where the property is situated within the partnership.

### Bids

This is the total number of bids that were made against the adverts by applicants.

### Letting Information

This is the status of the successful applicant who bid for the property.

#### Feedback Report

Date of Advert	Advert Reference	Property Type	Location	No. of Bids	Letting Information		
					Band	Priority Date in Band	Homeseeker or Transfer
<b>Bournemouth Area</b>							
18 June 2014	152	1 bed Flat	Maidment Close, High Howe, Bournemouth, Dorset	176	EC	10 June 2014	Transfer
28 May 2014	023	1 bed Flat	Mayfair Gardens, Bear Cross, Bournemouth, Dorset	202	EC	09 May 2014	Transfer
21 May 2014	960	2 bed House	Englands Way, High Howe, Bournemouth, Dorset	255	EC	24 February 2014	Transfer
21 May 2014	961	2 bed Flat	Wimborne Road, Kinson, Bournemouth, Dorset	155	GOLD	13 September 2012	Homeseeker
16 April 2014	753	1 bed Flat	Wellington Road, Charminster, Bournemouth, Dorset	48	SILVER	12 August 2010	Homeseeker
<b>Poole Area</b>							
16 July 2014	305	1 bed Bungalow	Vale Close, Branksome, Poole, Dorset	126	EC	03 July 2014	Homeseeker
16 July 2014	333	1 bed Flat	Harbour Court, 67 West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset	142	GOLD	28 May 2014	Transfer
09 July 2014	288	2 bed Flat	Broadway Heights, 417 Ashley Road, Parkstone, Poole	107	SILVER	10 January 2014	Homeseeker
02 July 2014	217	1 bed Flat	Boyd Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset	72	SILVER	26 September 2013	Homeseeker
25 June 2014	179	1 bed Flat	Knowlton Road, Poole, Dorset	127	GOLD	25 February 2014	Transfer

# The Dorset Home Choice Banding Scheme

The Borough of Poole, North Dorset District Council, Purbeck District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council all use the Dorset Home Choice common allocations policy. The aim of this policy is to try and house those in greatest housing need. We use a banding system based on an applicant's circumstances to give priority. Each applicant will be assessed and put in a band based on the table on page 23.

Key Points to note:

- All applicants must have a local connection to the area they wish to apply in or fall into one of the exceptions to this requirement;
- Applicants that are considered to have the financial means to meet their own housing needs will not be allowed to join the register;
- Applicants to the Borough of Poole & North Dorset District Council that have more than 8 weeks rent arrears will not be allowed to join the register;
- Applicants that are adequately housed will not be allowed to join the register unless they fall into one of the exceptions;
- Applicants accepted onto the North Dorset District Council Register that have not placed a bid for a property in a 12 month period when suitable properties were available will be removed from the register;

<b>Emergency Band</b>	<b>Gold Band</b>	<b>Silver Band</b>	<b>Bronze Band</b>
Exceptional Housing Need	Overcrowded by two or more beds	Homeless/Threatened with homeless	Deliberate worsening of circumstances
Urgent Move - Financial/Operational Reasons	Supported housing/Care leavers ready for move on (not WPBC)	Supported housing/Care Leavers ready for move on (WPBC only)	Applicants with other housing related debts
Emergency disrepair	Severe/persistent harassment	Medium medical/welfare Needs	Low medical/welfare/disrepair needs
Urgent Health/Wellbeing	Under occupation	Medium disrepair needs	Accepting an offer that doesn't meet housing needs
Urgent Move - Other	High medical/welfare needs	Overcrowded by one bedroom	Sustainable rural housing
Emergency Homeless	High disrepair Needs	Split families	Sheltered Housing Applicants
Urgent need to move to escape violence or threat of violence	Combined medium medical/welfare & medium disrepair	Need to move for support (does not apply to Purbeck District Council)	Shared/Low cost home ownership
	Cumulative Need (4 silver band reasons)	Need to move for work (this does not apply to applicants to North Dorset District Council, Borough of Poole, and Purbeck District Council)	Band downgraded for offer refusal
	Decant applicants	Service personnel	Unacceptable behaviour

<b>Emergency Band</b>	<b>Gold Band</b>	<b>Silver Band</b>	<b>Bronze Band</b>
	Tenancy Succession	Community Contribution (North Dorset District Council Applicants only)	
	Efficient management of housing stock	Affordability (North Dorset District Council Applicants only)	
	Fostering/Adoption (subject to quota arrangements)	Band downgraded for offer refusal	
	Band downgraded for offer refusal		



# The Bournemouth Borough Council Banding Scheme

## Eligibility – who can apply for the register?

### Immigration Status

The following applicants will not be able to join the housing register:

- Applicants from abroad
- Applicants from abroad who are subject to immigration control (there are however some exceptions)
- Applicants who are not habitually resident

### Unacceptable Behaviour

The following applicants will not be able to join the housing register:

- Applicants with a history of rent arrears
- Applicants with a history of anti-social behaviour
- Applicants with a poor standard of tenancy

### Housing Need

Applicants **must** have a housing need (i.e. they meet one or more of the statutory reasonable preference groups) to join the housing register

### Financial Means

Applicants with the financial means to find their own accommodation will not be accepted, i.e.:

- Homeowners whose home is not suitable for their needs but they have sufficient equity to secure alternative accommodation
- Applicants with a household income more than 6 times the LHA level
- Applications considered on a case by case basis (note AA and DLA disregarded)

## **Local Connection**

- Applicants must be resident in Bournemouth for at least 3 years or
- Applicant must be employed (for at least 16 hours a week) or have a *firm offer of employment* in Bournemouth and a permanent contract or
- Applicants must have a close family associate (parents, grandparents, siblings and adult children) living in Bournemouth continuously for at least 5 years.

## **Members of the British Armed and Reserve Forces**

Members of the Armed and Reserve Forces who have a housing need do not have to meet the local connection criteria. These applications will be placed on Gold Band. This includes

- Serving members of the regular forces or former personnel who have left the service within 5 years prior to making an application
- Bereaved spouses and civil partners who need to leave Service Accommodation following the death of their spouse or civil partner.
- Serving members of the armed forces who need to move because of serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.
- Serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.

HM Forces applicants who have notice to leave their current accommodation will not be considered to have a reasonable preference on the ground of homelessness until 28 days before the expiry of the notice.

**Applicants with no local connection but with a housing need will be accepted on to the register but only into Bronze band**

# Bournemouth Bands – What do they mean?

## There are three main bands:

### Gold Band

Applicants in this band will have a very high to urgent housing need. This band is also used enable the Council to provide effective management of the social housing stock. The following categories qualify for Gold Band:

- Where high medical priority is awarded
- Severe overcrowding (lacking two bedrooms or more)
- Severe and/or persistent harassment, violence (including racial harassment)
- Disrepair – where the Council has identified Category I hazards in the property that cannot be resolved or reduced to Category II hazards within 6 months
- Cumulative Need – 4 housing needs from the Silver Band
- Under-occupying of social housing
- Members of the Armed and Reserve Forces
- Care Leavers ready to move on into independent accommodation
- Social housing tenants whose current property is subject to re-development
- Tenancy succession – where a social housing tenant dies and the person left in the property is unable to succeed to the tenancy. In these instances the Council want to help them move to alternative accommodation.

### Silver Band

Applicants in this band will have a moderate housing need. If 4 or more of these housing need categories apply, the application will be moved to Gold Band.

- Applicants who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness
- Applicants awarded a ‘medium’ medical priority

- Disrepair – where the Council has identified Category I hazards in the property that can be resolved or reduced to Category II hazards within 6 months
- Lacking one bedroom
- Sharing facilities with other people not on the applicant’s housing application. This housing need will take precedence over any lack of bedroom requirements
- Lacking facilities – this includes, kitchen, bathroom, inside toilet, lacking water supplies, electricity, gas or adequate heating
- Poor internal or external arrangements
- Split families – Applicants who, not by choice, are living in separate households due to lack of suitable accommodation
- Relationship breakdown – applicants who wish to live separately but still reside with their ex partner/spouse following a relationship breakdown
- Work/support – applicants who are able to demonstrate the need to move nearer their place of work within Bournemouth because they have secured permanent employment. Also applicants who are able to demonstrate the need to move nearer local facilities or relatives to give or receive support.

### **Bronze Band**

Bronze Band applicants will include the following:

- Have a housing need but no local connection
- Have substantial rent arrears
- Engaging in anti social behaviour
- Households who have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances by moving into unsuitable accommodation.

### **Reviews**

Applicants can request a review of their banding/acceptance on to the register. Requests must be in writing and within 21 days of the date of the notification letter.

# **The Joint Christchurch and East Dorset Council Banding Scheme**

Christchurch Borough Council and East Dorset District Council have agreed a common approach for the allocation of social housing across the two local authority areas. The aim of this policy is to help meet the housing needs of households within Christchurch and East Dorset in the most effective way.

Both Council's will assess applications based on local priorities which are shown in the table on page 30. In addition, applications are based on local and/or village connections.

## **Local Connection**

Applicants will have a local connection with the Council it is applying to by meeting one of the following criteria:

### **a. Residency Qualification**

Resident in the Council area for at least 2 years continuous at the time of application.

### **b. Employment**

An applicant may be a qualifying person if he/she or his/her partner is in employment in the borough/district.

## **Village Connection**

- Being permanently resident therein for at least four years immediately prior to such occupation
- Having currently resident close relatives (i.e. parents, children, brother or sister) who have lived therein for at least four years
- Having permanent employment and having been employed therein for at least 12 months prior to such occupation
- Other special circumstances which create a link to the given parish (not including resident in a hospital, armed forces accommodation, holiday let, or prison) such special circumstances having first been verified and approved by the borough/district Council.

### Christchurch and East Dorset Council Banding Priorities

<b>BAND 1</b>	<b>BAND 2</b>	<b>BAND 3</b>	<b>BAND 4</b>	<b>BAND 5</b>
Emergency cases – health/wellbeing	Existing social housing tenants under-occupying their current homes	Statutory Homeless Duty	Low medical or welfare grounds	Intermediate home ownership
Emergency cases-welfare	Tenancy succession – under occupation	Placed into temporary accommodation	Prison applicants	Designated keyworkers
Discretionary	Overcrowding – Cat 1 and statutorily overcrowded assessments	Insecure accommodation	Shared facilities	Village connection applicants
	Serious housing conditions	Overcrowding – lack of one or more bedrooms		Hard to let applicants – normally sheltered bedsit accommodation.
	High medical or welfare grounds	Service Personnel		
	Supported housing ready to move on	Lack of essential housing facilities		
	Management transfers including decants	Medium medical or welfare grounds		
	Efficient management of temporary accommodation	Household separation		
	Cumulative needs ( 4 or more band 3 reasons)			

### **Unacceptable behaviour**

Applicants will not be able to join the housing register if they or a member of their household are responsible for unacceptable behaviour. This includes rent arrears and debts owed to a local authority or housing provider in the borough or district.

### **Financial Ability**

Applicants with sufficient financial resources to resolve their own housing needs will not qualify to join the housing register. For example

- Owner occupiers whose home is not suitable for their needs but who have sufficient equity to secure alternative accommodation.
- Applicants with a household income more than 5 times the Local housing Allowance level.

Applicants who wish to be considered for intermediate affordable home ownership with income above £60,000, who are an owner occupier and/or with an existing mortgage will not be eligible on the housing register.

### **Refusal Policy**

Applicants who successfully bid (see page 15 onwards) but subsequently refuse a suitable offer on **three** occasions will have their application cancelled. Consideration will only be given to cases where there is a significant and material change to an applicant's housing circumstances.

# Being Ready to Move

When you place a bid on a property you need to be prepared to accept the offer on that property and be ready to move quickly. Landlords may well give you up to 4 weeks to move into a property but on some occasions will want you to sign a tenancy agreement for your new home **in a matter of days**. **Once you have signed the tenancy agreement you will be responsible for the rent on that property.**

When bidding for properties you need to bear in mind the following issues:

- When the landlord contacts you to confirm the offer of a property they will need to see some form of identification that proves that you are the applicant that applied to the housing register. Ideally this should be one of the following: passport, driving licence or some other form of photo ID. If you don't have a passport or driving licence you can obtain a photo ID from schemes such as Citizen Card. Having a photo ID will help your prospective landlord to confirm your identity;
- Your prospective landlord will need to confirm your financial circumstances to ensure that you can afford the property you wish to move into. It will therefore be important for you have copies of information about your monthly household income available;
- Ensure your current rent account is up to date.
- Your prospective landlord or the local authority nominating you will need to confirm your circumstances as you stated them to us on your application (and as updated via renewals or submitted changes to your circumstances);
- You will need to fix any damage to the property you are currently in before you leave or you will probably be charged for this damage;
- Your prospective landlord may well require between 1 and 4 weeks rent in advance when you sign the tenancy agreement.
- Your prospective landlord may request references from your current landlord and/or your employer.
- How will you move? Do you need to hire a removal van? Do you have money set aside to pay for this? Most removal firms will give you a fixed price quote but will need to be booked at least two weeks in advance. Make sure they are insured to carry your belongings.



- Think about how you will pack your belongings, be ready to start collecting boxes for this purpose. Some removal firms can lend you packing boxes for a small fee. Start packing early.
- Don't forget you will need to notify utility companies when you move and also Doctor, Dentist, etc. and make arrangements to redirect your post.

If you are on Housing Benefit you may be entitled to overlapping benefit to enable you to pay the rent on your existing property as well as the rent on your new property. For further advice contact your local Housing Benefit department.

## General Information

### **Bid deadline**

All bids for properties must reach us before midnight (Monday) on the closing date shown on the front of the Dorset Home Choice property list.

### **Need help bidding?**

You can ask a friend, family member or support worker to bid on your behalf. Please contact your managing local authority if you need help bidding or advice about the process. Bids can be made on the internet at [www.dorsethomechoice.org](http://www.dorsethomechoice.org), by telephone on 01202 454 700, by text on 07781 472 726.

There are several places you can see a copy of the Dorset Home Choice property list as explained on page 14.

### **Bidding telephone number 01202 454 700**

To make your bids by telephone use the above number and follow the instructions given over the line or as shown in this Scheme User Guide.

### **Bidding by text message 07781 472 726**

To make your bids by text (SMS), follow the instructions shown in the Scheme User Guide. The bidding deadline will always be before midnight on a Monday.

**Who is my managing local authority partner?** If you applied to more than one of the local authority partners in the scheme your managing partner will be the one that you expressed as your preference when you applied.

### **What is a Homeseeker?**

A Homeseeker is any accepted Housing Register applicant that is not an existing social housing tenant.

### **What is a Transferring Tenant?**

A transferring tenant is an accepted Housing Register applicant who is currently a tenant of a social housing landlord.



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