

Dorset Home Choice Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know I have been accepted onto the Housing Register?

You will receive a banding letter and scheme guide confirming that you have been accepted onto the Housing Register. The letter will tell you the band you have been placed in, your effective date in band and the size of property you are eligible for. The guide will tell you how to start searching and bidding for properties.

How long will I have to wait to be rehoused?

We are unable to say. There is a severe shortage of homes in the Dorset area. Most applicants on the Housing Register will have to wait a long time for re-housing and many of those in the lower bands will have little chance of re-housing. Depending on your circumstances you may wish to consider other options such as renting in the private sector.

Do I need to let you know if my circumstances change?

Yes. Once you are accepted onto our Housing Register you must advise us of any change in your circumstance as soon as possible. For example you must let us know:

- of any change of address
- if anybody moves in or out of your current property
- if a member of your household is pregnant
- of any medical conditions that are made worse because of your current home

This will enable us to amend your application and reassess your banding. We will let you know whether your banding changes or not.

What should I do if I think my application is in the wrong band?

Contact the Housing Needs Team on 01202 633805. Visit the local authority office or email – homechoice@poole.gov.uk.

How do I obtain details of the properties available?

You can see the weekly list of available properties online at www.dorsethomechoice.org

The property list is also available at the local authority and Poole Housing Partnership offices

How do I bid?

On the internet – go to www.dorsethomechoice.org You will need to create a login if this is the first time you have visited the site to bid. Once you have created your login you will then use your email address and password to log into the website and place your bids.

By telephone – call 01202 454 700 and follow the instructions.

By texting 07781 472 726

How many bids do I have?

You can place up to 6 bids in any one advert cycle. You do not have to use all of your bids in every cycle. Please only bid on properties that you are seriously interested in.

I can't bid

If you didn't complete the new Homechoice application form you won't be registered on Dorset Home Choice and won't be able to bid.

You will be unable to bid until your new application form is registered. This can take up to 20 working days.

You can complete a new form on line at www.dorsethomechoice.org The form will 'time out' after approximately 30 minutes of inactivity - so please make sure you save the form regularly as you complete it.

If we receive your new application form within 3 months of 18/4/12 (i.e. by 18/7/12) it will be given the same application date as your old application, provided there is no change of circumstance.

If your circumstances have changed your application will be given a new date unless there are extenuating circumstances to explain the late return.

I don't have a computer but would like to participate using the internet

We recognise that although many people may have access to the phone, this may not be the case for the internet. You can place bids at the Council offices where staff will be able to provide assistance. You can also place bids at libraries.

Does the way in which I bid make any difference?

No, the method you choose to place a bid does not influence your success. This depends on your band and effective date in band.

Will I be offered a property if I am the first to place a bid?

Not necessarily. The timing of your bid has no bearing on whether you are offered the property. This depends on your band, your effective date in band and suitability to the property in question.

I used to use the recorded advert line to obtain details of the properties available, what can I do now?

If you have access to the internet you can bid on line at www.dorsethomechoice.org

We can provide a property sheet providing details of the properties available. This will need to be ordered from Locata direct and will be posted to you by them at a cost of £15 for 13 weeks. Cheques or postal orders need to be made payable to "Locata (Housing Services) Ltd" and sent with your identification number and mailing address to: **Dorset Home Choice, PO Box 406, Ruislip, HA4 4EX.**

If you are vulnerable and unable to see the adverts in the locations where they are available we can place bids on suitable properties on your behalf.

We will talk to you about this first to ensure we are clear about the areas you will consider.

Can I change my mind about a bid?

If you bid online you can withdraw bids and bid for other properties if you change your mind or can see you have a better chance of being offered another property. You have a maximum of 6 bids in any advertising cycle.

What will happen if I am successful in bidding for a property?

The relevant landlord for the property will contact you by phone. If they are unable to contact you within 24 hours we will move on to the next qualifying person on the shortlist. As a result it is essential you provide us with up to date contact details. You can update these on the website when you login or alternative contact your local authority.

What happens if I place a successful bid for more than one property?

You will be contacted and asked to make a decision about which property you want to accept. The property you refuse will be offered to the next qualifying person on the shortlist.

Can I view the property I am offered, before deciding to accept it?

Yes. We would encourage you to view the property before making your decision.

Can I bid if I have rent arrears?

You can bid for properties you are eligible for but we will not normally make an offer of accommodation to an applicant in rent arrears. If you want to move, it is important you keep your rent payments up to date.

What can I do if I disagree with a decision you have made about my application?

You have a right to request a review if you are unhappy about a decision we have made. Your request must be in writing and can be written by someone else on your behalf.

If you have applied to more than one local authority you will need to write to the one whose decision you disagree with.