



# User Guide



A copy of the Allocation Scheme or a summary can be downloaded from our website  
[www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk](http://www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk)

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## How the scheme works

If you are accepted onto the housing register we will:

- Give you a user id and pin number so that you can begin bidding.
- Tell you what band you have been placed into.
- Tell you the date that your band priority is effective from.
- Tell you what size of property you can bid on

You must keep us informed about any changes in your circumstances e.g. changes to your household size, medical condition or housing situation. This is very important as it could result in a change to your band or your eligibility for certain types of properties. If you don't tell us about any changes in your circumstances you may miss out on an offer of a home, have your application cancelled or be prosecuted for knowingly withholding information.

## Using Bromley Homeseekers

Available homes are advertised every week on the Bromley Homeseekers website from 6pm every Wednesday and you can register your interest (bid) on the available properties up until 4pm the following Monday. This is known as the Bidding Cycle.

You are able to bid on up to two properties during each bidding cycle. However, you should only bid on properties that you would consider moving into and, where possible, that you meet the advert preference for.

You can bid on properties online at [www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk](http://www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk)

'Bidding' means expressing an interest in the properties you wish to be considered for.

If you don't have access to the internet at home you can visit your local Library, Community Learning Shop or the Council Offices where you can use a computer free of charge in order to place a bid.

## Adverts

Property adverts will give information about each available property. The property adverts will include information such as :

- The landlords logo or a photograph of the property (this may be of a similar property and not the one available).
- The property advert number.
- The address of the property.
- The number of bedrooms in the property.
- The maximum number of people permitted to live in the property.
- Details of any adaptations.
- Details of what type of tenancy is being offered.
- The property type and floor level.
- The weekly rent and any service charges.
- Whether or not pets are accepted at the property.
- Details of whether it is close to public transport links.
- Details of whether or not it has a garden.
- Details of any age restrictions.
- Details of any advert preferences (see giving preference to different groups).

## Giving preference to different groups

Sometimes we may give preference in our adverts to certain groups of applicants, for example: You won't normally be considered for properties that have been adapted or specially designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, unless you have been assessed as having those needs.

We manage the Housing Register in conjunction with our partner Housing Associations. We use advert preferences to ensure that all categories of applicant have the opportunity to be successful in securing accommodation in line with our annual lettings plan. For example in the advert it may state priority will be given to those holding an assured tenancy with Affinity Sutton Housing Association. Any bidders who were not assured tenants of Affinity Sutton would have their bids bypassed in the first instance.

Occasionally, we may use local lettings policies to restrict the type of household moving into a particular neighbourhood. This is to try and build sustainable communities. Any special conditions or restrictions will be clearly stated in the property advert.

If no bidders meet the specified advert preference then we may either use the property for a direct offer or offer it to the bidder who otherwise placed highest on the bid list.

## Example of a typical advert

Place Bid



[See More](#)

Notes	<p>A one bedroom 1st floor flat, suitable for up two people. Initially offered on a starter tenancy</p> <p>No pets allowed. Close to shops and with good transport links.</p> <p>Preference will be given to applicants in Bands 1 and 2 who do not hold an assured tenancy with Affinity Sutton Housing Association.</p>
Property Advert Number	123456
Address / Postcode	Flat 1, High Street, Bromley, BR1 6XT
Area	Central Bromley
Landlord / Tenure	Hyde Housing HA / AST
Total Number of Bedrooms	1
Property Type	Flat
Floor Level of Flats	First floor
Lift(Communal)	N
Garden	N
Transport Near By	Bus
Rent	£96.35 <a href="#">Details</a>
Opening-Closing Date	05/01/2012-10/01/2012
Heating Type	Central Heating
Accessible Housing Category	

## Offers via Bromley Homeseekers

Once the bidding cycle has closed, we put the bids received in priority order to produce a shortlist of eligible applicants for each property.

Your position in the bid list is based firstly on the Band that you are in and secondly on the date that it was awarded. This means that bidders in Band 1 would be placed above bidders in Band 3. If more than one bidder in each band places a bid their position in the bid list is based upon the date that their banding was awarded. For example, where no advert preference is set this may look as follows:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Date Band Priority is Effective from</b>	<b>Position in Bid List</b>
1R	12/05/2013	1 <sup>st</sup>
1T	18/09/2013	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2H	22/03/2011	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2H	01/04/2011	4 <sup>th</sup>
2T	13/05/2012	5 <sup>th</sup>
2R	12/05/2013	6 <sup>th</sup>
3H	02/02/2015	7 <sup>th</sup>
3T	11/12/2013	8 <sup>th</sup>

Where an advert preference is set, for example if we give preference to bidders in Band 2 the same bid list would be treated as follows:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Date Band Priority is Effective from</b>	<b>Position in Bid List</b>
1R	12/05/2013	5 <sup>th</sup>
1T	18/09/2013	6 <sup>th</sup>
2H	22/03/2011	1 <sup>st</sup>
2H	01/04/2011	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2T	13/05/2012	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2R	12/05/2013	4 <sup>th</sup>
3H	02/02/2015	7 <sup>th</sup>
3T	11/12/2013	8 <sup>th</sup>

It normally takes between 1-5 working days once the bidding cycle has closed for each bid list to be looked at.

## Bid status

**Bid Under Consideration:** If your bid is showing as “Bid Under Consideration” this means that bidding has closed and we are in the process of finalising the bidding shortlist. It does not mean that your bid is actively being considered.

**Shortlisted:** If your bid is showing as “Shortlisted” this means that you will be contacted directly by the Housing Association that manages that property. This may be to request further information from you or to invite you to a viewing.

**Properties Offered to Others:** If your bid is showing as “Properties Offered to Others” this means that others above you on the bid list were shortlisted and that your bid was not successful.

**Declined:** If your bid is showing as “Declined” this means that you refused the property either before or after you had viewed it.

## Verification

Any offer is subject to your application being verified (checked and approved) to confirm your circumstances. If your application cannot be verified, the offer may be made to another applicant.

## Direct offers

We will sometimes make direct offers of accommodation. We normally only make **one** formal direct offer of accommodation. This means that you will not be able to turn down the property and receive a further offer of accommodation.

## Viewings

If your name is at the top of the shortlist, and you meet any preferences outlined in the advert, you will normally be invited to view the property. If you refuse this property the next person will be invited to view it.

Some Housing Associations will undertake multiple viewings. This means that a number of people will view a property at the same time but that it will still be offered in order of the shortlist.

## Turning down a property

**Bromley Homeseekers:** If you bid for accommodation via Bromley Homeseekers you can turn down one property but will then be expected to accept the second property that is offered to you.

**Direct Offer:** We will normally only make one formal direct offer of accommodation. This means that you will not be able to turn down the property and receive a further offer of accommodation

If you turn down accommodation your application will be reviewed and the following may apply:

- Your priority on the Housing Register may be reduced or withdrawn.
- Your application on the Housing Register may be cancelled.
- Your temporary accommodation may be cancelled.

## What information is available once a property is let?

In order to promote openness and transparency in the allocations system we will provide feedback in relation to properties that have been successfully let via Bromley Homeseekers. We will publish how many bids each advert received along with the band and waiting time of the successful bidder.

The feedback will not provide any personal details of the successful bidder, but will contain:

- The property address and advert reference number
- The number of bids received
- The band of the successful bidder
- The effective date (the date their banding was awarded) of the successful bidder

It is not possible to notify you individually when your bids have been unsuccessful.

## How can this information help you?

You may wish to use this information to influence how you make your bids in the future, for example:

- If an applicant has been offered a property and was in the same band, note how long they waited. This may give some indication of the length of time that you may be waiting for a property of this type, in a similar location.
- You could bid for properties of different types and in areas that attract fewer bidders. However, remember that you should only bid on properties that you would consider moving into, and where possible that you meet that advert preference for.

Remember how long you wait for a property will depend on a number of factors, including which band you are in, how long you have been on the housing register and the availability of properties within your chosen areas. You may want to look at other housing options in order to gain a quicker move. Further information regarding housing options can be found on the Bromley Homeseekers website [www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk](http://www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk)

## Exclusions and demotions

In certain circumstances applicants can be excluded from the Housing Register or have their priority reduced due to unacceptable behaviour or rent arrears. Anyone affected by this criteria will be written to and told the reason why.



## Help and assistance

If you have any questions about how the scheme applies to you or about using Bromley Homeseekers you can contact us using the Contact Us function on the Bromley Homeseekers website, alternatively you can email us at [bromleyhomeseekers@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:bromleyhomeseekers@bromley.gov.uk). You can also contact the Housing Needs Helpline on 0208 313 4098.

We know that not everyone has access to a computer and the internet. There are a number of places across the borough that people can go to in order to access the internet for free. Listed below are some of the places within the Bromley Borough that you can visit:

### Libraries

For those who have never used a computer before or who want a quick refresher the libraries offer assistance on how to access the internet. Some branches also offer more specific Bromley Homeseekers training. Contact your local Bromley Library for more information. <https://arena.yourlondonlibrary.net/web/bromley>

### Council Offices

For more information visit our website [www.bromley.gov.uk](http://www.bromley.gov.uk)

### Community Learning Shops

For those who have never used a computer before or who want a quick refresher the Cotmandene Community Resource Centre and Mottingham Community and Learning Shops offer basic IT training and free internet access please contact your local service for more information.

Cotmandene Community Resource Centre: 64 Cotmandene Crescent, St Paul's Cray, Orpington BR5 2RG  
Telephone: 0208 402 0123 Email: [ccrc@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:ccrc@bromley.gov.uk)

Mottingham Community and Learning Shop: 1-2 Cranley Parade, Beaconsfield Road, Mottingham SE9 4DZ  
Telephone: 020 8860 1150 Email: [mcls@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:mcls@bromley.gov.uk)

## Frequently asked questions

**What can I bid for?** When you register for housing you will receive a registration letter telling you what band you are in and the size and type of property you are entitled to bid for.

**What if a home has an age restriction?** Some properties have a minimum age requirement, for example in some cases only people aged 55 or over will be able to place a bid. This will be clearly stated in the property advert.

**What if a home is adapted?** We will advertise what adaptations a property has. You will be able to bid but we will give priority to those people whose needs we have assessed as matching the adaptations already in the property.

**What if I have pets?** Pets are not allowed in some of the properties that we advertise. Each Landlord has different policies regarding pets and this will be clearly stated in the property advert.

**What if I decide I am no longer interested in a home that I have bid for?** If you have made a bid but then change your mind, you can only remove the bid if the bidding cycle is still open. If you bid for a property you don't really want and subsequently refuse it, it will still be counted.

**Why does my position on the bid list change during the bidding cycle?** Bidding does not work on a first come first served basis. Your position within the bid queue is dependent upon who else places a bid. For example anyone who places a bid (on that property) who is in a higher band than you will cause your bid position to reduce. For any bidders who hold the same priority banding as you, those who have held their priority for longer than you will be above you in a bid list and those who haven't had their priority as long as you will be below you in the bid list. People change their bidding preferences based on their own requirements and on what is available for them to bid on each week. Once the bidding cycle has closed your final bid position will be recorded and cannot be changed.

**Why haven't I been invited to view a property?** If you have bid on a property but have not been invited to a viewing it may be because:

- You have not been shortlisted.
- You do not meet the advert preference i.e. the property has been prioritised for an Affinity Sutton Tenant and you are a homeless household and vice versa.

**What is a starter tenancy?** A housing association may offer you an initial 12 months starter tenancy prior to offering you an assured or fixed term tenancy. This allows them to assess whether or not you can sustain your tenancy, that you are a good tenant and that you can pay your rent fully and on time.

**What is an assured tenancy?** If a housing association offers you an assured tenancy it means that, as long as you maintain the terms set out in your tenancy agreement, you will be able to remain in your property indefinitely. Rents on these properties are often lower than normal market rents.

**What is a fixed term tenancy?** If a housing association offers you a fixed term tenancy it means that you will not be able to remain in that property indefinitely. Each housing association will offer different length tenancies and will review your circumstances at the end of each fixed term. If your circumstances alter and you no longer meet the criteria to remain in that property you may be asked to leave or be offered a more suitable property as an alternative. Rents on these properties are slightly higher than social rents and are normally offered at around 80% of market rents. Each Housing Association will have its own policy regarding fixed term tenancies.

**Why can't I bid for some properties?** You can only be considered for the type of properties that you have been assessed as being suitable for. For example, if you have been assessed as requiring 1 bedroom accommodation you will not be able to bid on a property with 2 bedrooms unless otherwise stated in the advert.

**What if I have rent arrears?** A housing association may refuse to have you as a tenant if you or a member of your household has outstanding rent arrears with them or any other landlord. It is essential that you maintain a clear rent account at all times. If you do fall into arrears you should enter into and stick to a payment plan.

**What if I have been evicted?** If you or a member of your household has been evicted by a housing association it is unlikely that they will offer you a further tenancy.

**How long will I wait?** Waiting times vary depending on availability and your circumstances; the type and size of accommodation you require and the Band that you are in. Waiting times for studio flats or older persons accommodation will be far less than waiting times for family sized houses. You will increase your chances of moving via Bromley Homeseekers if you bid reasonably every week. We will not allow people to remain on the Housing Register if they refuse to bid or if they unreasonably refuse accommodation. As well as bidding for accommodation via Bromley Homeseekers you may also wish to explore other housing options. Further information regarding housing options can be found on our website [www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk](http://www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk)