

Southampton City Council's Allocations Policy (short version)

What is the Housing Needs Register?

To be considered for social housing, applicants must join the Housing Needs Register (the Register). The council decides who is prioritised for social housing in the city. The council aims to house those with the highest needs first.

What is the Allocations Policy?

The Allocation Policy explains:

- 1) who can apply to the Housing Needs Register and be considered for social housing;
- 2) how the council decides which applicants to prioritise for social housing.

Who is eligible to register?

To join the Housing Needs Register applicants must:

- 1) qualify;
- 2) be eligible;
- 3) meet the requirements for either "reasonable" or "additional" preference;
- 4) be suitable to be a tenant.

To qualify, the applicant must:

- Have a 'housing need' (reasonable or additional preference).
- Be downsizing from larger social housing.
- Be moving out of adapted social housing.
- Want to move to older persons housing.

To be eligible, the applicant must:

- Be 18 years or older.
- Not own any residential property (in the UK or abroad).
- Have a local connection (must have lived in Southampton for 3 out of the last 5 years).
- Meet immigration criteria (have recourse to public funds, not be an asylum seeker, be habitually resident in the UK).

To meet the requirements for either "reasonable" or "additional" preference, the applicant must:

- Be homeless.
- Be owed a housing duty.
- Occupy insanitary or overcrowded housing.
- Have a medical or welfare need for needing housing.
- Have a need to move area to stop hardship from happening to them or others.
- Be a member of the Armed Forces community who has urgent housing needs.

To be a suitable tenant, the applicant must:

- have no history of Anti-social behaviour;
- no rent arrears and;
- be able to manage a tenancy.

How to apply?

The council has a website called "Homebid." Applicants can view all the available properties and bid on vacancies which they are eligible for and interested in.

To apply go to: www.homebid.org.uk

If you want some support in the application process, you can:

- Email - housing.allocations@southampton.gov.uk.
- Call - 023 8083 3006.
- Visit- Gateway at the Civic Centre offices.

You must keep the council up to date with your housing situation. For example, if you have moved home or your family size has changed. To do this, log into your account and update your application.

Most applicants are expected to apply online at [Join the Housing Register \(southampton.gov.uk\)](http://southampton.gov.uk). For those who are unable to apply online, officers may be able to assist by contacting the council as detailed above.

When do you have to re-register?

The council will require every applicant to re-register every year. This is to help the council understand the true level of housing needs in the city. This is to make sure applications are up to date and to prevent fraudulent applications.

What if you have specific housing needs?

Housing with Care schemes

- If you would benefit from additional onsite care and associated facilities catering to certain needs, you may be eligible for Housing with Care.
- If you meet the criteria, you must request a Housing with Care referral from your care co-ordinator or social worker. This is to make sure that your individual needs are met. If you do not have a care coordinator or a social worker, you can contact the Allocations service at 023 8083 3006 and an officer will support you in the application process.
- You will not need to bid via the Homebid website. You will be directly matched to a home in a specialist housing scheme which caters for your needs.

Adapted Property Direct Let (APDL)

- If you require an extensively adapted property to meet your disability or housing needs, you may be eligible for an Adapted Property Direct Let (APDL).
- You will not need to bid via Homebid. You will be matched to a property directly.
- An Occupational Therapist will assess your needs and what adaptations are required.
- The council will match you to an adapted property. Most applicants will have a choice with regards to location, as long as there is a supply of vacant social housing in that area.

Special Letting Scheme

- A special letting scheme is usually created when a new development of social housing is built. The landlord of the new scheme may want to have special rules which determine which applicants the council may let the new homes to. Sometimes there may also be

planning requirements to consider. Special lettings schemes are created to ensure that the new development operates as a well-managed, good place to live.

- It means that in addition to the normal qualifying criteria, successful applicants will have to meet additional eligibility criteria. These will be detailed in the property advert on Homebid. You can only apply if you meet the additional criteria.

How will the council allocate social housing?

Type and size of property

The council wants to make the best use of the social housing available. The council will assess an applicant's needs to decide what type and size of property they can bid for on the Homebid website. If the property is advertised with a priority for certain applicants- for example, those who need a ground floor property due to disability- these applicants will be made the offers first.

This chart gives details as to the size of the property required:

Family Size	Size of Accommodation
Single person	Studio or one-bedroom
Two adults living as a couple	One-bedroom
Adult couple or single person, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One child. • Two children aged under 10. • Two children aged under 16 of the same sex. (includes step and half-siblings, cousins, nieces/nephews, etc)	Two-bedroom
Adult couple or single person, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two children of opposite sexes, at least one over age 10. • Adult couple or single person, with three children under 16. • Adult couple or single person with four children, including two of each sex. (includes step and half siblings, cousins, nieces/nephews, etc)	Three bedrooms
Adult couple or single person, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three children, one aged over 16 and two aged over 10 of different sex. • Four children, one aged over 16, one aged 10-15 and two aged under 10. • Five children aged 0-15. (includes step and half-siblings, cousins, nieces/nephews, etc)	Four bedrooms

The Banding Scheme

The council will use the following banding scheme to prioritise applicants on the Housing Register. The scheme starts with Band A (highest priority level) down to Band D (lowest priority level).

Band	Band name
A	1. *Urgent housing needs: A life-threatening illness or sudden disability
	2. *Urgent housing needs: Social housing tenants at risk of violence or threats of violence, including intimidated witnesses, and those escaping serious antisocial behaviour or domestic abuse. The tenant's landlord must decide whether they are required to move for these reasons. Private tenants, owner-occupiers and those with no housing will be referred to the council's Homelessness service.
	3. Under occupation: Social housing tenants who are giving up 3+ bedroom social housing.
	4. Efficient use of Housing Stock: Giving up a wheelchair-accessible or extensively adapted home which is no longer needed.
	5. Decant: Council tenants whose home is part of a regeneration scheme.
	6. Decant: Council tenants whose home is being permanently disposed of (e.g. due to disrepair).
B	1. Main Homeless Duty: The applicant is owed the main housing duty under s.193(2) of the Housing Act 1996 and is ready to move on from temporary accommodation.
	2. Under occupation: Giving up 2-bedroom social housing which is no longer needed.
	3. Efficient use of Housing Stock: Giving up ground-floor social housing which is no longer needed.
	4. Care Leavers Move –On: A young person who has been looked after, fostered or accommodated by the council and is now ready for independent living.
	5. Applicants with two or more categories in Band C2-C4.
C	1. Homeless Prevention or Relief Duty: Applicants owed the prevention or relief duties under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
	2. Applicants occupying insanitary, overcrowded, or unsatisfactory housing conditions.
	3. Medical /welfare need: Applicants with an assessed welfare reason to move home, including grounds related to a disability.
	4. Hardship: Applicants who need to move to a particular locality in Southampton to avoid hardship to themselves or others.
	5. Right to Move: Any social housing tenant in England who needs to move to Southampton under the Right to Move regulations.
D	1. Intentionally Homeless: Applicants who are homeless within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act but who are considered to be intentionally homeless.
	2. Housing related debt: Applicants who have housing related debt owed to the council or a social landlord and are not repaying this or do not have a repayment plan agreed.
	3. Care Leavers Not Ready to Move: A young person who has been looked after, fostered or accommodated by the council but is not yet ready for independent living.
	4. Refusal penalty: Applicants who have refused 3 offers of accommodation will be placed in Band D for six months.

*Applicants in bands A1 and A2 will only be permitted to place bids for 3 months. If they have still not been housed, they will be suspended from bidding and one direct offer of accommodation will be made. If at any time they refuse an offer of accommodation which the council determines as suitable, they will be placed into the band they previously occupied. If they did not previously have a band, they will be removed from the register.

How properties are advertised and prioritised

Properties will be advertised at www.homebid.org.uk . The property adverts will explain whether any specific requirements apply to applicants for them to be made an offer of a home.

Sometimes, the council will prioritise- or restrict bidding to- certain groups of applicants. For example, if the council decides there is a need to increase lets to homeless households, it may consider bids from those in categories B1 and C1 before all other bids. Or, if a ground floor property is advertised, the council will consider those with a ground floor need before all other applicants. The property advert will explain this.

The council will produce a lettings plan which details the proportion of applicants from each band it expects to house each year. This plan will help guide the council as to how to advertise properties.

What happens if an offer is refused?

If an applicant refuses 3 offers, they will be placed into Band D for 6 months. If a 4th offer of accommodation is refused at any point the application will be cancelled.

How to request a review of a decision?

Applicants have the right to request a review of their case, and to request any information considered when deciding on their case. The letter which notifies applicants of their band or a decision to not accept them onto the register will provide details of how to request a review. The review will be carried out by an officer who has not been involved in the case and is more senior than the original decision-maker.

How to request a move to Southampton to take up work?

Some applicants may apply under 'Right to Move' regulations. To be considered for this, applicants must:

- Be an existing social housing tenant in England.
- Have the 'hardship reasonable preference (as noted above).
- Need to move because they work in the area or.
- Need to move to take up a work offer in the area.

To request to move to an area to take up work applicants must contact us at housing.allocations@southamptgon.gov.uk or phone 023 8083 3006. Applications under the Right to Move cannot be made online.

How to buy your council home?

Under the Right to Buy scheme, council tenants have a right to buy their home at a discount. Please see Southampton City Council's Right to Buy website for more information on the Right to Buy scheme: www.southampton.gov.uk/housing/your-home/right-to-buy/

Deliberately worsening your housing situation and fraud

The council will require proof of information in the application, such as benefits, council tax records, tenancy agreements and any other information to validate the application. The council will also verify information by office interviews, home visits, statements from previous social landlords and verification documents. The council has a Tenancy Fraud Team which investigates fraudulent activity.

Data protection

Personal information will be held and destroyed in accordance with Data Protection legislation and the council's retention schedule. Data will only be used for the purpose of assessing housing applications, or for exercising other duties compatible with the council's status as a strategic authority.

Contact details

If you have any questions or need any support, please contact us:

- Email - housing.allocations@southampton.gov.uk.
- Call - 023 8083 3006.
- Visit- Gateway at the Civic Centre offices.