

Haringey Home Connections

Choice based lettings scheme

The way that
social rented
housing is
allocated in
Haringey



Revised Version
March 2011

www.haringey.gov.uk

 **homeconnections**
letting...you choose



Haringey Council

Choice based lettings

What is Haringey Home Connections?



Haringey Home Connections is our choice based lettings scheme. It is the way we allocate council and housing association homes for rent in Haringey.

The scheme has been designed to make the allocation of social housing more transparent and to make it easier for applicants to assess their prospects of being offered the tenancy of a council or housing association home.

Every week, we advertise council and housing association homes that are available for rent through the Home Connections scheme.

Homes will be advertised on the Haringey Home Connections website from Wednesday until Sunday, and in the Council's Customer Service Centres and libraries from Wednesday afternoon until Friday.

To access the Home Connections website, go to **www.homeconnections.org.uk** and click on the 'Haringey' button.

If you have difficulty in reading or understanding the information in this booklet please contact us and a customer service adviser will help you.

Through the Home Connections website, you can search for available homes, express an interest in homes that meet your needs, and view the results of previous lettings.

When you see something that is suitable, you can ask to be considered for it. This is called **bidding** and you can do it through the Home Connections website, by telephone or by sending a mobile phone text message.

Before you are able to bid, you must be registered on Haringey's Housing Register. This is because we can only allocate council and housing association homes to people who are eligible and on the Housing Register.

If you are not on the Housing Register, you can complete an application online. We will then assess your application in accordance with Haringey's Housing Allocations Policy.

After assessing your application, we will write to you and tell you which Housing Needs Band (A, B, C, D or E) reflects your situation.

Band A is the highest priority Band and Band E is the lowest priority Band.

Within your Band, you will be placed in date order, using your 'effective date'. Normally, this is the date we received your application.

We will also send you a User ID and PIN, which you will need when you use the Home Connections Service and bid for homes.



Choice based lettings

Joining Haringey's Housing Register

Anyone aged 16 or over can apply to join Haringey's Housing Register. However, in order to be accepted, they must satisfy the eligibility criteria.

Some people are not eligible, by law, to join the Housing Register. These are:

- Certain people who are subject to immigration control
- Certain people from abroad who are not subject to immigration control but who are not habitually resident in the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland
- People (including members of their household) who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour that makes them unsuitable to be a tenant.

If you are not already on Haringey's Housing Register, you must complete the online application by visiting the Council's website:

www.haringey.gov.uk/housing

It takes about 45 minutes to complete the online application. You can obtain free access to a computer in the Council's Customer Service Centres and libraries (See Page 19).



When completing your application, you must supply the Council with the name, address and date of birth (together with the full address history for the last 5 years) of each member of your household, including children. You must also supply the Council with the National Insurance Numbers of everyone in your household who is aged 16 or over.

As the Housing Allocations Policy gives priority to applicants with a local connection, tell us about any connection you have with Haringey.

You can only include in your application people who normally live with you (or might reasonably be expected to live with you) as a member of your household. It is essential that you inform the Council if anyone joins or leaves your household after the date of your application.

We aim to assess all applications within 4 weeks of receiving the form and any other information we need. If your application is accepted, we will write to you, confirming the following:

- Your housing registration number (User ID) and PIN, and the information you will need in order to use the Home Connections service
- The Housing Needs Band (A, B, C, D or E) into which you have been placed and your 'effective date'
- The number of bedrooms to which you are entitled.

You must tell us of any changes in your circumstances, so that we can review your application and, if necessary, change your Band and effective date.

If your housing application is accepted, we will send you a letter each year, asking if you still want to remain on the Housing Register. If you fail to respond to these letters, we will cancel your housing application.

Choice based lettings

Housing Needs Bands

Each year, only 1 applicant in 20 on Haringey's Housing Register is offered the tenancy of a council or housing association home. Most applicants on the Register will never be offered social housing.

When you bid, your level of priority will be determined by your Housing Needs Band (A, B, C, D or E) and the date you joined the Register.

Due to the very high demand for social rented housing in Haringey, almost all of it will be offered to applicants in Housing Needs Bands A and B.

Only a very small number of applicants in Band C will be offered a tenancy. Applicants in Housing Needs Bands D & E will have no realistic prospect of being offered social housing.

- **Band A** – Applicants with a local connection and **an urgent need** to move (including applicants in immediate danger, people who need to move urgently for medical reasons, and tenants of social housing who are willing to move out of their large family home or specially adapted home).
- **Band B** – Applicants with a local connection and **a very high need** to move (including applicants who need to move due to serious medical problems, social housing tenants who are severely overcrowded, and households for whom the Council has accepted a full homelessness duty).
- **Band C** – Applicants with a local connection and **a high need** to move and applicants who have an urgent need to move but have no local connection.

A copy of the Housing Allocations Policy, including full details of the 'banding system', is available on the Council's website:

www.haringey.gov.uk/allocations-policy

How Home Connections works

Council and housing association homes are advertised each week. They appear on the Home Connections website on Wednesday and are available for bidding until midnight on Sunday.

From Wednesday afternoon until Friday, the properties are advertised in the Council's Customer Service Centres and libraries.

Each week, you have until midnight on Sunday to bid for up to three properties. If you do not have a computer at home, you can use one, free of charge, at one of the Council's Customer Service Centres or libraries.

To help you decide which properties to bid for, the adverts contain the name of the landlord, the size and location of the property, the weekly rent, and other information about the local services and amenities. Many of the adverts contain a photograph of the property.

The advert also tells you if there are any restrictions on who can bid for the property. A restriction will normally apply, for example, where the home has been specially adapted to meet the needs of a wheelchair user.

You will only be able to bid for properties that you are eligible for.



Choice based lettings

How Home Connections works



The Council is committed to reducing the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation and the length of time they wait for a settled home.

Although it actively encourages all applicants to consider all types of property in as many parts of the borough as possible, the Council expects homeless households to bid for all suitable homes.

To ensure that homeless households move out of temporary accommodation as soon as possible (and do not simply wait until they can make a successful bid for those homes that are in the most popular parts of Haringey), we have introduced **auto-bidding**.

Auto-bidding means that, if you are still living in temporary accommodation when you could have been bidding successfully for a suitable home, we will interview you to review your situation and discuss all of your housing options, including affordable home ownership and renting a home in the private sector. We will also talk to you about auto-bidding.

Two months after that interview, the Home Connections computer will start bidding, on your behalf, for homes that are suitable and meet your housing needs.

How Home Connections works

When you bid for a home through Home Connections, you will need to know your User ID and PIN.

Your User ID

This is your Housing Registration Number. It has six digits.

Example: 023456.

Your PIN

This is your Personal Identification Number. It has six digits and is your date of birth.

Example: If your date of birth is 1 January 1964, your PIN will be 010164.

Forgotten your User ID? Please phone Customer Services (020 8489 1000) or visit one of our Customer Service Centres.

Need help in making your bid? Please visit one of our Customer Service Centres or libraries where the staff will help you bid.

Details of the Council's Customer Service Centres and libraries are on Page 19.



Choice based lettings

Bidding for homes through the website



Bidding through the website

Have your User ID, PIN and the property advert numbers ready.

- Step 1** Go to www.homeconnections.org.uk
- Step 2** Click the 'Haringey' button
- Step 3** Click 'Login', then type in your User ID and PIN
- Step 4** You will be asked if you want to do a 'Survey' or 'Continue to my details'.
Click 'Continue to my details'.
A new page will open, showing which Band you are in and the number of bedrooms you need. The bids you have made in the past will be displayed below.

Step 5 Click 'See all properties' on the left hand side of the screen. This will open a new page where you can view the properties available.

To search for properties that match your needs, choose the number of bedrooms, area and building type you are looking for. Then click the 'Search' button with the black and white arrow.

If you want to bid for a property that you have seen advertised, enter the advert number in the 'Search by advert' box and then click the 'Search by advert' button.

Step 6 Click 'Full property info' to view more details about the property. Then click the 'Back' button (top left) to come out of this webpage.

Step 7 To bid for a property, tick the 'Check' button on the left hand side, scroll down the page and then click the 'Bid Property' button.

Step 8 When you have finished, please click 'Log out' at the top left hand of the page. This is very important if you are using a computer in a public place.

Choice based lettings

Bidding for homes by phone and text messaging

Bidding by phone

Have your User ID, PIN and the property advert numbers ready.

To bid by phone you will need a touch-tone telephone with a hash button (the # sign on the keypad). A person's voice will guide you through each step.

You can choose to listen to the instructions in English or one of nine community languages: Sylheti, Cantonese, French, Somali, Turkish, Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi and Vietnamese.

- Step 1:** Call **0845 330 3184**
- Step 2:** Choose the language you want to use
- Step 3:** Enter your User ID
- Step 4:** Enter your PIN
- Step 5:** Press 1 to bid for a new property
- Step 6:** Enter the advert number for the property
- Step 7:** You will hear a description of the property you have selected. If it is the one you want, press 1 to confirm your bid. If it is the wrong one press 2 and you will be asked to enter the property number again.

If you try to bid for a property which does not match your needs, your bid will not be processed. The system will tell you this.



Bidding by text messaging on your mobile phone

Have your User ID, PIN and the property advert numbers ready.

Step 1: Open a new text message on your phone.

Step 2: Leaving no spaces, enter: 'bid', '#', your User ID, '#', your PIN, then, for each property you are bidding for, '#' followed by the advert reference number.

Example: If your User ID is 987654, your PIN is 010164 and you want to bid for two properties with the references 123456 and 555444, your message will be:

Bid#987654#010164#123456#555444

Step 3: Check the numbers are correct and press 'send' on your keypad and key in **07781 482 894**.

If you have followed Steps 1, 2 and 3 correctly, you should get a text from us within an hour telling you whether your bid is valid.



Choice based lettings

Shortlisting, viewings and lettings

For each of the homes advertised through Home Connections, we will produce a shortlist of those bidders who have the highest priority (based on their Housing Needs Band and effective date) and are eligible for housing.

You will not be shortlisted if you have rent arrears, do not meet the eligibility criteria specified in the Home Connections advert or are prevented (by the Housing Allocations Policy) from receiving an offer of housing.

The shortlists will be produced on Monday and viewings of the council homes will normally take place on the Tuesday or Wednesday.

Housing associations will arrange their own viewings and will, themselves, contact the applicants nominated by the Council. They will usually give more notice of the viewing.

You must ensure we have your up-to-date telephone number, so that we can contact you quickly when you are shortlisted for properties and need to attend viewings.

It is possible that you will be asked to view a council or housing association home that is in the process of being repaired. Where this happens, we would recommend that you do not bring children with you to the viewing. The Officer who attends will confirm what repairs will be carried out and answer your questions.



After the viewings, we will offer the property to the applicant in the highest Housing Needs Band and with the earliest effective date. This offer will be subject to a successful verification of their eligibility and circumstances.

During the verification interview (which must be attended by all members of your household who are aged 18 or over), we will check your circumstances and all relevant documents. If you are unable to provide the documents within the required timescales or if it is decided that you should be placed in a lower Housing Needs Band, you will not be formally offered the property.

If we are unable to offer the property to the applicant with the highest priority (or if they decide to refuse the property), we will simply move on to the next applicant.

Offers made to auto-bidders

If you are the applicant with the highest priority and you are living in temporary accommodation, you will be offered the tenancy, as your **formal offer of accommodation**, if your bid for the property was made through the auto-bidding arrangements.

If more than one of your bids is successful, you will be asked to choose the property you would prefer to be offered.

Where the property you are being offered is suitable and you decide to refuse that offer, the Council will discharge its homelessness duty and withdraw the provision of temporary accommodation. It will also review your position on the Housing Register.

Signing the tenancy agreement

If you are the successful bidder, we will ask you to sign a new tenancy agreement. When you have signed the agreement, you are committed to taking the property. The tenancy will begin on an agreed date, when the property is ready for occupation. You will be given reasonable notice to move.

Choice based lettings

Advice, help and support

With such a high demand for social rented housing in Haringey, it is essential that you consider all types of property in as many parts of the borough as possible.

In Haringey, most of the council and housing association homes are flats or maisonettes on estates, and 80% of social rented housing is situated in the East of the borough.

Almost two thirds of Haringey's social rented housing is concentrated in just eight of the borough's 19 Wards: Northumberland Park, White Hart Lane, Noel Park, West Green, Tottenham Hale, Tottenham Green, Seven Sisters and Bounds Green.

When considering your housing options, you should take into account how much social rented housing there is in the areas in which you want to live and the frequency with which those homes become available for re-letting.

If you are seeking a 4-bedroom home in Highgate or Muswell Hill, for example, you need to know that there are a total of 22 properties of this size in those areas and that, in 2009/10, only one 4-bedroom home became available.

By comparison your prospects of bidding successfully for a 4-bedroom home in Northumberland Park or Seven Sisters would be considerably better, because there are a total of 168 properties of this size in those areas and, during 2009/10, eight 4-bedroom homes became available for letting.



Details of the number and type of council and housing association homes in Haringey – together with their location and the number of homes that became available for letting between 2007 and 2010 – are on the Council's website:

www.haringey.gov.uk/housing

Information about the homes that have previously been let through the choice based lettings scheme are published on the Home Connections website and in the weekly adverts displayed in the Customer Services Centres and libraries.

For each property, we tell you how many applicants bid for the property and confirm the Band and effective date of the successful bidder.

This information will provide you with a good idea of how popular a particular property or area is and whether or not you have any realistic prospect of bidding successfully for such a property in the future. It will also help you decide whether or not you should be considering other, less popular areas or properties in order to improve your prospects.

Reviewing your bidding history

We can also review your bidding history with you, looking at the outcome of your bids for particular homes and explaining what the outcome would have been if you had bid for others that were not in such high demand.

Exploring all of your housing options

Although we do hope you will find our choice based lettings scheme helpful, you should consider all of your housing options, including affordable home ownership, private rented accommodation and, if you are already a social housing tenant, mutual exchange.

Choice based lettings

How to contact us



Housing Assessments

Housing Assessment Team
1st Floor, Apex House
Haringey Council
820 Seven Sisters Road
Tottenham N15 5PQ
Telephone: 020 8489 1000

Lettings

Lettings Team
1st Floor, Apex House
Haringey Council
820 Seven Sisters Road
London N15 5PQ
Telephone: 020 8489 1000

Housing Advice and Options

Housing Advice and Options Team
1st Floor, Apex House
Haringey Council
820 Seven Sisters Road
London N15 5PQ
Telephone: 020 8489 1000

Website: **www.haringey.gov.uk**

Typtalk: **1800 8489 1000**

Home Connections website:
www.homeconnections.org.uk

Visit one of our Customer Service Centres
(see opposite page)
Open Monday to Friday 8.45am to 5pm

Places you can get access to a computer

Libraries

You can get free access to a computer at any one of our nine libraries.

Muswell Hill Library
Queens Avenue
Muswell Hill
London N10 3PE

Coombes Croft Library
Tottenham High Road
London N17 8AG

Hornsey Library
Haringey Park
London N8 9JA

Wood Green Central
Library
High Road
Wood Green
London N22 6XD

Highgate Library
Shepherds Hill
Highgate
London N6 5QT

Stroud Green Library
Quernmore Road
London N4 4QR

Alexandra Park Library
Alexandra Park Road
Wood Green
London N22 7UJ

St Ann's Library
Cissbury Road
Tottenham
London N15 5PU

Marcus Garvey Library
Tottenham Green
Centre
1 Phillip Lane
London N15 4JA

Customer Service Centres

You can get free help and advice at our Customer Service Centres.

Open Monday to Friday, 8.45am to 5pm

North Tottenham
639 High Road
Tottenham
N17 8BD

South Tottenham
Apex House
820 Seven
Sisters Road
South Tottenham
N15 5PQ

Wood Green
48 Station Road
Wood Green
N22 7TY

Hornsey
Hornsey Town
Hall Annexe
The Broadway
Crouch End
London N8 9JJ

Shqip

Kjo fletushkë është udhëzues lidhur me skemat në dispozicion për t'ju ndihmuar të blini shtëpi. Nëse e doni këtë në gjuhën tuaj, ju lutem shënjoni ✓ kutinë, plotësoni emrin dhe adresën tuaj dhe dërgojeni formularin tek adresa e mëposhtme me Postim Falas.

Polish

Niniejsza publikacja zawiera informacje na temat inicjatyw wspomagających zakup domu lub mieszkania. Aby otrzymać tekst publikacji w języku polskim należy zaznaczyć odpowiednią rubrykę, wpisać nazwisko i adres oraz odesłać formularz bezpłatnie na podany poniżej adres.

Français

Ce feuillet est un guide des programmes disponibles pour vous aider à acheter un logement. Pour en recevoir un exemplaire dans votre langue, veuillez cocher la case, compléter votre nom et adresse et renvoyer le formulaire à l'adresse en port payé ci-dessous.

Soomaali

Warqaddani waa hage ku saabsan barnaamijyada la hayo ee kaa caawinaya inaad guri iibsato. Haddii aad rabto iyadoo luqaddaada ku qoran, fadlan calaamadi sanduuga, ku qor magacaaga iyo cinwaankaaga oo foomka ku soo dir cinwaanka boostiisu lacag la'aanta yahay ee hoose.

Kurdî Kurmancî

Ev belavok rêberek e ji bo projeyên alîkarîya we ya kirîna xaniyê xwe. Heke hun vê bi zimanê xwe dixwazin, ji kerema xwe qutîkê îşaret bikin, nav û navnîşana xwe binivîsin û formê ji navnîşana posta bêpere ya jêrîn re bişînin.

Türkçe

Bu broşür konutu satın almanız için size yardımcı olabilecek programlarla ilgili bir kılavuz kitapçıktır. Eğer broşürün Türkçe kopyasını edinmek istiyorsanız, lütfen uygun kutucuğu işaretleyin, adınızı ve adresinizi yazarak formu aşağıda belirtilen ücretsiz posta adresine gönderin.

Please tell us if you would like a copy of this booklet in another language that is not listed above or in any of the following formats, and send the form to the Freepost address below.

- In large print On audio tape In Braille
- In another language, please state:



Name: Tel:

Address:

Email:

Please return to: Freepost RLXS-XZGT-UGRJ, Haringey Council, Translation and Interpretation Services, 8th Floor, River Park House, 225 High Road, London N22 8HQ

Haringey Council offers this translating and interpreting service to Haringey residents. We can translate this document into one language per resident ONLY.