

Homemove

Housing allocation service in Sussex



Scheme user guide

www.homemove.org.uk

Welcome to Homemove

Homemove is the lettings scheme for Adur, Arun, Brighton & Hove, Chichester, Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Mid Sussex, Rother, Wealden and Worthing.

Homemove gives you choice about where you want to live.

You can use Homemove to find a new home if you are an existing council or housing association tenant wanting a transfer within your area, or if you are a homeseeker applying in the area where you are registered for the first time.

You are a homeseeker if you are renting privately, living with family or friends, living outside the area you are applying to, living in temporary accommodation, or applying for housing for the first time.

To use Homemove, you need to register on the transfer or housing register in your area, and you should contact your local council to do this.

How the Homemove scheme works is explained on pages 5-6 of this guide.

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Local authority contacts

Adur District Council – Tel: 01273 263316 and 01273 263317

✉ Civic Centre, Ham Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 6PR

email: choicebasedlettings@adur.gov.uk

Arun District Council – Tel: 01903 737 500

✉ Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF

Minicom: 01903 732 765

email: housing.allocations@arun.gov.uk

Brighton & Hove City Council

All homeseekers, new enquiries and housing association transfers, call

Housing Options – Tel: 01273 294400 (option 1 and hold for a duty officer)

✉ Bartholomew House, Bartholomew Square, Brighton, BN1 1JP

✉ Hove Town Hall Norton Road. Hove. Postcode: BN3 4AH

email: homemove@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Council tenants contact our Customer Services Team – Tel: 01273 293030

✉ Lavender Street Housing Office, Kemp Town, Brighton, BN2 1JU.

✉ Portslade Town Hall, Portslade, BN41 1YF.

✉ Whitehawk Community Hub, 179a Whitehawk Road, Brighton, BN2 5FL.

✉ Moulsecoomb Housing Centre, Unit 1 Fairway Trading Estate, Eastergate Road, Brighton, BN2 4QL

email: housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Chichester District Council – Tel: 01243 534 734

✉ East Pallant House, 1 East Pallant, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1TY

email: contact@chichester.gov.uk

Eastbourne Borough Council – Tel: 01323 415 397

✉ 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4TW

email: Homemove@eastbourne.gov.uk

Hastings Borough Council – Tel: 01424 451 100

✉ Aquila House, Breeds Place, Hastings, TN34 3UY

Lewes District Council – Tel: 01273 471 600

Homeseekers: ✉ Housing Needs, 4 Fisher Street, Lewes, BN7 2DG

Transfer applicants: ✉ Housing Services, 20 Fort Road, Newhaven, BN9 9QF

email: homemove@lewes.gov.uk

Mid Sussex District Council

Affinity Sutton administer the Common Housing Register on behalf of the council.

Please contact Affinity Sutton directly.

Rother District Council – Tel: 01424 787 020

✉ Housing Services, Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN39 3JX

email: homemove@rother.gov.uk

Wealden District Council – Tel: 01323 443 380

✉ PO Box 49, Hailsham, BN27 2AZ

email: choicebasedlettings@wealden.gov.uk

Worthing Borough Council – Tel: 01903 221 063

✉ Portland House, Richmond Road, Worthing, BN11 1HH

email: housing-services@worthing.gov.uk

How the Homemove scheme works

Once your application has been registered, you will receive an email (if you've submitted an email address, otherwise, you'll receive a letter through the post) confirming your band, band reason, and priority date. It will also give you your Homemove number, which you can use to make bids.

There are five steps for you to follow in choosing your new home:

Step 1 Membership

To become a member of Homemove, you must register as a homeseeker or transfer applicant at one of the participating councils or housing associations (listed on pages 3-4).

Once you are a member, you will be given a Homemove number so you can make bids on properties advertised through Homemove in the area where you are registered.

You may not be eligible to be on the housing register. Your local council can give you more advice on this

Step 2 Registration

When your council or housing association has accepted you onto their register, Homemove will email you to give you your Homemove number. The email will also tell you which **band** you are in (band A, B, C or D), your **priority date** (the date you were placed in your band) and the **number of bedrooms** you are eligible for.

If you did not give an email address when you registered you will receive the same information in a written letter.

See page 7 for details on how the priority band and date system works

You must **keep your local council or housing association informed about any changes in your circumstances** – this means email and postal addresses, and phone number, medical conditions, household size, or anything else that affects your housing situation. This is very important as it could result in changing your band or your eligibility for certain properties. If you don't inform them of changes then this could put you in a position where an offer of accommodation is made and then withdrawn.

Step 3 Bidding

All the available properties are advertised each fortnight on www.Homemove.org.uk. You will also be able to go to your local council office to view the properties either on a computer or as a printed list.

We want to make sure everyone will be able to view the vacant properties, even if they can't look on the website. So please **contact your local office if you feel you or someone you support will have difficulties**.

The adverts give you information about each property to help you decide which is suitable for you. Remember you are only eligible to bid for properties in the area you are registered in, unless they appear in the list of properties you are eligible to bid for on the website or in your printed property list. Properties will be advertised every other Friday and your bids must reach us by 2pm the following Wednesday.

This is the **bidding cycle**. You can bid on a maximum of **three** properties in each bidding cycle. You can bid using any one of these four ways:

On the internet go to www.homemove.org.uk and log on with your Homemove number and date of birth

By telephone call 0906 294 2036 and follow the instructions (see page 9 for instructions on making your bids by telephone)

By text send a text message to 07781 472726 (see page 8 for instructions on making your bids by text)

Bidding opens every other Friday. Your bids must reach us by 2pm the following Wednesday.

Step 4 Offer

When bidding closes, Homemove puts the bids for each property in order – by band, local connection and priority date – to make a shortlist of eligible applicants for each property.

If you come top of a **shortlist** you will usually be contacted when the property is ready to view.

Your council or housing association will allocate from the list after doing further eligibility checks. If your name is at the top of the shortlist, you will normally be invited to view the property. If you refuse the property, the next person on the shortlist will be invited to view the property.

You do not automatically get penalised for refusing a property you have bid for. However, your priority may be reviewed if you refuse a property and you are in a high priority band. Some types of applicants – such as homeless applicants – have a limited time to bid and may have bids placed on their behalf to make the most of their chances of being housed quickly. You will be told in advance if this applies to you.

Some landlords invite more than one applicant to view a property at the same time, which helps to speed up the lettings process. The property is still always offered to the applicant with the highest priority who attends the viewing.

If you are made an offer you will not be shortlisted for another property until you have made a decision to refuse the other offer.

Step 5 Feedback

When you log in to the website (www.homemove.gov.uk) and click on '**see what happened to your past bids**' you can see what happened with your bids. (Similar information appears if you receive a printed property list.)

If you are unsuccessful with a bid, you can use the feedback to help you understand why (but you'll need to remember the three-digit advert reference number). It tells you how many people bid for the property, as well as the band and priority date of the successful bidder. The priority date shows you how long the successful bidder has been waiting.

You may wish to use the feedback information to help you decide how to bid in future. For example, you could bid for properties of different types, in areas that attract fewer bidders, or in areas where people in lower bands have been housed. You will see that in some cases band C and D applicants are almost never offered some property types in certain areas. If you are in one of these bands you may wish to consider other housing options.

Priority Bands

When you register for housing as a transfer applicant or Homeseeker, your application will be assessed by your housing association or council. You will be placed in one of the priority bands described below.

If you disagree with your priority band, you can ask the council or housing association, which holds your registration details, to review the banding decision. To do this, please put your reasons for a band review in writing to your council or housing association.

It will help if you read your council's Allocation Policy and can state which band reason applies to you and why. You can find the Allocation Policy on your council's website – or ask them to send you a copy using the contact details on pages 3-4 of this guide.

When bids are considered for advertised properties, priority will be given to eligible bids from people in the highest priority band. If people from the same priority band bid for the same property, we will consider first those with a local connection and the earliest priority date. Some applicants in band A and B have a limited time for bidding. We will tell you in advance if this applies to you.

If your priority band is increased at any stage, your priority date will be the date you went into the higher priority band. If you move back to a lower band, your priority date will usually revert to your original registration date in that lower band.

The four priority bands are explained below. You will be told the exact reason you've been placed in a band when you are given your Homemove number. For more detailed information, please contact your local council for a copy of their Allocation Policy.

Band A Emergency, urgent priority to move

Band B High housing need

Band C Identified housing need

Band D People with no identified housing need but still want to register are placed in this band

How to bid

Making your bids on the internet

Go to www.homemove.org.uk and log in with your bidding number and date of birth. This is the quickest and easiest way to bid.

Making your bids by text message

Most mobile phone companies will charge you around 10p to send an SMS text message.

Action	Example
1 To begin making your bids	Open a new text message
2 Enter in your Homemove number via the keys	ABC12345
3 Then followed immediately by the hash mark	ABC12345#
4 You should now enter the advert reference number of your first bid followed immediately by the hash mark	ABC12345#654#

If you have finished bidding then send. If not, keep following the instructions below.

5 You should now enter the advert reference number of your second bid followed immediately by the hash mark	ABC12345#654#791#
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If you have finished bidding then send. If not, keep following the instructions below.

6 You should now enter the advert reference number of your third bid followed immediately by the hash mark	ABC12345#654#791#555#
7 When you have entered all your bids, send your text message bid	"Send"
8 The number to send your bid to is	07781 472 726

- Most mobile phone companies charge SMS text messages at around 10p per text
- To add numbers to the message keep pressing the keys until you get to the digit and select
- On most mobile phones, to find the hash mark, first press the star key then select the hash mark
- You can enter your bids in both upper and lower case.
- Check your Homemove number and bids are correct before sending.

Making your bids by telephone

Calls to our 0906 number cost 25p per minute plus your phone company's network charge. Calls usually take one minute.

Action	Example
1. To begin making your bids dial	906 2036
2. You will hear	"Welcome to the Homemove property line. Press 01 for Adur Press 02 for Brighton & Hove Press 03 for Chichester Press 04 for Arun Press 05 for Hastings Press 06 for Wealden Press 07 for Rother Press 08 for Lewes Press 09 for Worthing Press 10 for Mid Sussex Press 11 for Eastbourne"
3. You will hear	"Thank you. Please enter the number section of your reference number."
4. You should now enter the numerical part of your Homemove number only. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear	"Thank you. Please enter the day number of your birth date."
5. You should now enter the day number of your date of birth. Please remember to put the leading zero (0) in if it is a single number. For example, if your date of birth is 16/04/1970 type in 16, if your date of birth is 08/01/1958 type in 08. Once you have entered the correct number, you will hear	"Thank you. Please enter the property reference number for your first bid."
6. Enter the three digits of the property reference number. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear	"Thank you. If you would like to add an additional bid, press one, or press two to complete your bids."
7. If you have pressed one you will hear	"Thank you. Please enter the property reference number for your second bid, or press the star key to complete your bidding."
8. Enter the three digits of the second property reference number. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear	"Thank you. If you would like to add an additional bid, press one, or press two to complete your bids."

<p>9. If you have pressed one you will hear</p>	<p>“Thank you. Please enter the property reference number for your third bid, or press the star key to complete your bidding.”</p>
<p>10. Enter the three digits of the third property reference number. Once you have entered the correct number or if you pressed the star key previously, you will hear</p>	<p>“Thank you for bidding.”</p>
<p>If you made errors with your Homemove number you may hear some of the instructions below:</p>	
<p>11. If you have made an error with your Homemove number, you will hear:</p>	<p>“I’m sorry, the reference number you have entered is not recognised. Please try again.”</p>
<p>12. Enter your Homemove number again, making sure that you are only entering the number part of your reference number. If you get your Homemove number wrong a second time, you will hear:</p>	<p>“I’m sorry, the reference number you have entered is not found. Please check with your council or housing association and call again.”</p>

Things to consider before bidding

When choosing a property to bid for, you need to consider a number of things. You can ask your council or your landlord if any of these circumstances apply to you.

Can I bid for properties in an area I'm not registered in?

Yes, sometimes. If a council opens up a property to bids from people registered in other areas, they will advertise it as a 'cross boundary property'.

When available these will appear at the bottom of the list of properties you can see when you log into the website or on your printed property list, if you receive one. You can bid on these properties in the normal way if they match your assessed need.

Is the property available to homeseekers, transfers, or both?

Most properties will be available for both homeseekers and transfer applicants, and the adverts will display the 'H/T' icon. But if you do see an advert with a 'H' or a 'T' icon, this means only homeseekers ('H') or transfer applicants ('T') can bid.

Your bid will not count, for example, if you are a homeseeker and you bid on a property advertised only for transfer applicants.

Is there an age restriction on some properties?

Yes. Some properties have a minimum age requirement, for example in some schemes for older people. If an age restriction icon appears on the advert (see page 11) you can only bid on these properties if you are in that age range.

Some properties have a mobility group

This is intended to provide a guide to people who have different levels of mobility need. Priority will usually be given to those who have a need for this type of property.

The mobility groups are explained on page 13.

Pets

Some landlords will not allow you to keep a cat or a dog unless the property has its own garden. If you have a pet, please check with the landlord.

Before you bid for a property

Check out the location of the property on a map to make sure it's really a place you would consider moving to, and make sure you meet the criteria stated in the advert.

Circumstances where you may not be invited to view a property

- you are in rent arrears
- you have been involved in anti-social behaviour
- in exceptional circumstances, eg where the offer would conflict with the objectives to ensure offers are sensitively made and that properties are let quickly.

You can ask at your housing office if any of these circumstances apply to you. You can also ask your council to review the decision to exclude you from the scheme at any time.

What sort of tenancy will I be granted?

If you are homeseeker being offered a council property at **social rent**, your council may offer you a secure tenancy straight away, or they may offer you an introductory tenancy to start with.

An introductory tenancy is a 12 month trial period during which your council or housing association will make sure that new tenants act responsibly and follow the conditions of the tenancy agreement. If there are no problems during the trial period, the introductory tenancy automatically becomes a secure tenancy.

Introductory tenants who transfer within the introductory period will remain introductory tenants for the remainder of the 12 months. Contact your council to find out what sort of tenancy they would offer you.

Everyone being offered a housing association property, whether homeseeker or transfer applicant, will normally be offered an assured tenancy with the association.

Affordable Rented properties

The government has introduced a new and more flexible form of social housing, known as '**Affordable Rent**', which will be offered by **housing associations** on some of the properties advertised through Homemove.

These properties will be advertised with rents set at no more than 80% of the local market rent. Tenants who bid and are successful on these types of properties will be offered a flexible tenancy which will last for a minimum of five years.

Please make sure you look carefully at the advert before you bid to see what type of tenancy is being offered. In the banner in each advert it will say '**Affordable Rent**' or '**Social Rent**'.

If you have any questions about a property you can contact the landlord of the property - contact details are on pages 3-4 of this guide and on www.homemove.org.uk.

Key to advert symbols

Our adverts are ordered by the type of property, and contain symbols for an at-a-glance guide to the details and who can bid for it. These symbols are explained below.

Some housing association properties are advertised with priority given to applicants from their own list. Where this applies it will say so in the text of the advert.

<p>H Available for homeseekers only</p> <p>T Available for transferring tenants only</p> <p>H/T Available for homeseekers and transferring tenants</p>	<p>You will need to have your support needs assessed if you would like to be considered for Sheltered housing in Brighton and Hove.</p> <p> Low Support Needs</p> <p> Medium Support Needs</p> <p> High Support Needs</p>
<p>   </p> <p>Number of bedrooms in the property</p>	
<p>   </p> <p>Minimum and maximum number of people who can live in the property</p>	
<p>G 1 2 3 4</p> <p>Floor level of property, if flat or maisonette</p>	
<p>AGE 50+ AGE 60+</p> <p>Property designed for people of this age or above</p>	
<p> Mobility Group One - Typically suitable for a person who uses a wheelchair full time, indoors and outdoors. The property will provide full wheelchair access throughout. Applicants assessed as needing this type of property will be prioritised.</p> <p> Mobility Group Two Typically suitable for a person with restricted walking ability and for those that may need to use a wheelchair some of the time. The property will have internal and external level or ramped access, but some parts of the property may not be fully wheelchair accessible. Applicants assessed as needing this type of property will be prioritised.</p> <p> Mobility Group Three - Typically suitable for a person able to manage a few steps, but unable to manage steep gradients. The property may have adaptations to assist people with limited mobility. Applicants assessed as needing this type of property will be prioritised.</p>	

Accompanying photographs in the adverts only show typical properties in the advertised block or street. Please do not contact any occupants in these buildings.

General information

Bid deadline

All bids for properties must be made by 2pm on the closing date shown on the front of each edition of the Homemove magazine. Bids received after this time will not be considered eligible.

Need help bidding?

You can contact your local council, or your housing association, who will be able to help and advise you on how to make your bids and talk you through the bidding process (see contact details on pages 2-3). A version of this scheme user guide is available on request in other formats, and a short version is available translated into the main community languages. Your landlord or local council can also arrange an appointment with an interpreter if you need one.

www.homemove.org.uk

You can make your bids on the website at the above address – this is the quickest and easiest way to view adverts and place your bids, and most people do it this way. Please ensure you enter your Homemove number and bids correctly.

Unable to access the website?

We want to make sure everyone can view vacant properties. If you feel you or someone you support will have difficulty accessing or using the website please contact your local office. You may be able to have a list of vacant properties sent to you in the post for free.

Bidding telephone number

0906 294 2036

To make bids by telephone use, the above number and follow the instructions given over the line or on page 9 of this guide.

Calls to our 0906 number cost 25p per minute plus your phone company's network charge.

Bidding by text message

07781 472726

To make your bids by text (SMS), follow the instructions given on page 8 of this guide. The bidding deadline will always be 2pm on a Wednesday.