

Summary information

What is the lettings scheme?

The lettings scheme is the system we use to decide who gets social housing in Bristol.

Who can apply to the lettings scheme?

People can apply to the scheme if they qualify. There are certain reasons why some people will not be able to join. These are people who:-

- Are under 16 years old when they apply
- Do not live in the Bristol City Council boundary, or have done so for less than two years
- Have savings exceeding £40,000
- Have an annual income exceeding £40,000
- Own their own home
- Prisoners serving a sentence
- Have behaved in a serious and unacceptable manner in the past three years either in a current or previous tenancy (e.g. a serious breach of their tenancy conditions or antisocial behaviour)
- Knowingly provide false or misleading information

Some people are able to join the scheme, but not allowed to apply for properties. Reasons for this include housing debt and antisocial behaviour.

We may choose to let these people apply for properties in exceptional circumstances and where there is an urgent need to move.

By law, we cannot allocate housing to some people from other countries. This is usually due to their immigration status or whether or not they are working or undertaking some other activity in the United Kingdom. They will not be able to join the scheme.

What happens after an application is made?

People are placed into one of four groups (known as bands) according to their housing need, with band one being for those who have an urgent housing need and band four for those who do not have a need under the current scheme. The reasons for having a need for housing are included in the scheme.

How do you decide who is a priority for social housing?

By law we have to give priority to certain groups of people. These are:-

- Homeless people and those at risk of homelessness that we have a duty to assist
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded conditions, or otherwise unsatisfactory housing conditions
- People who need to move for medical or welfare reasons
- People who need to move to avoid hardship

Although we have to give priority to these groups, they do not all have the same priority within the scheme (i.e. they are not all within band one).

By law additional preference must also be given to those in the armed forces and/or their families who are already within one of the above groups.

We also give priority to some other groups of people such as those fleeing domestic violence and harassment. Please read the [scheme](#) for more information.

How do you decide who gets which properties?

All properties that are available are advertised through the scheme and people can apply for (or 'bid' on) properties that meet their needs. The property will usually be let to the person in the highest band that has been waiting the longest in that band.

Is all social housing in Bristol let through the 'bidding' process?

Most social housing is, but sometimes we let homes outside of this process. This is usually for the following reasons:-

Landlord own lets: A percentage of available properties can be let by the council or a housing association outside of the scheme. This can include where the landlord moves existing tenants between properties or situations where the council offers a tenancy to a tenant straight away. Sometimes properties will not be advertised to all four of the bands in HomeChoice.

Adapted properties: Certain adapted properties will be advertised to those who need a particular adaptation (e.g. due to a disability). This may result in a property being allocated to someone in a lower band.

Direct offers: In certain circumstances, a direct offer of a property is made, often because of homelessness. See the [scheme](#) for full details and note that direct offers can be made in exceptional circumstances to meet an urgent housing need