

Homebid

user guide

It's your choice

www.southampton.gov.uk/homebid

Information and guidance on using Homebid



Contents

Welcome to Homebid
page 3

How Homebid works
page 4

The points system
page 6

How to bid
pages 8 & 9

Which properties
can I bid for?
pages 10 & 11

Advert symbols explained
page 12

Understanding the
results page
page 13

Contact information
page 14

Bidding notes for your use
page 15

Homebid general
information
back page

All information was correct at the
time this brochure went to print.



Homebid

Do you need Homebid explaining?

You can get help:



Log on to

www.southampton.gov.uk/housing



Drop in to your
Local Housing Offices



Call the

Allocations Advice Line 023 8083 2777



or visit

Gateway Southampton

Southampton City Council is committed to helping everybody access the Homebid scheme.

If you have any specific requirements, please contact us to discuss alternative ways of accessing Homebid.

Some of the measures available are:

- Large print
- Braille
- Audio translations
- Translations in other languages
- One to one staff help
- Video guide on the website

For more information go to the Homebid website or contact a member of staff.

Welcome to the Homebid user guide

Helping you find a new home in Southampton

Welcome to Homebid Southampton

Homebid is the choice based lettings scheme that we use to advertise available council and housing association properties in Southampton. You can use Homebid to look for properties and make bids on them, provided you are registered on Southampton's housing list.

Homebid is available to everyone on the council's housing list.

This includes:

- Existing tenants who would like to **transfer** to a new home
- **Housing register** applicants
(new applicants who are waiting on the housing list)
- **Homeseekers**
(people who have been accepted by the council as homeless)

Every two weeks we produce a list of adverts for all the available council and housing association homes. The list is published on the website, in Homebid Magazine and on the automated phone service. This is called the bidding cycle. You can look at the adverts and decide if you want to bid for (express an interest in) any of the properties.

To get a new home you will have to bid for a property advertised in Homebid.

You can see the results of the previously advertised properties once they have been let. This includes how many points the successful bidder had and how many bids were made on each property.

You should be able to find all the information you need in this guide, but if you would like to find out more about Homebid, or how to bid for a new home, you can contact Southampton City Council.

Contact details are available in this user guide, the Homebid Magazine and also at www.southampton.gov.uk/homebid.

If there is anything about Homebid that you don't understand, please contact us so we can help!

Four steps to a new home

Step 1

Membership and registration

You need to apply to be on Southampton City Council's housing list. When you have been accepted you will be sent a welcome pack, including how many points you have and a unique Homebid number.

Step 2

Choosing and bidding

You can see available properties on the website, or in a copy of the magazine or by phoning the automated telephone service. If you find any properties that you want to move to, up to 3 bids in total can be submitted during each bidding cycle.

Step 3

Offer

If your bid is at the top of the list and you are eligible, we will contact you and offer you the property.

Step 4

Results

We will publish details of how many people bid for properties advertised in previous issues and their number of points.

How Homebid works

With the Homebid scheme it will not be the council or housing association who will find and allocate you a home; instead you look for your own home using Homebid.

Step 1 Membership and registration

You are automatically a member of Homebid if you are accepted by Southampton City Council for rehousing.

Only eligible applicants are accepted.

The council can give you more information about whether you are eligible to be on the housing list.

Once you have been accepted onto the housing list, we will:

- write to you giving you a Homebid number
- tell you your eligibility date (the date from which you qualified for the housing list)

- tell you how many points you have
- tell you the size and type of the properties you are eligible for.
- send you a copy of this Homebid user guide

If there are any changes to your household, or housing situation, you must tell the Allocations Advice Line at the council. This is very important as it may change your points, or your eligibility for certain homes.

Step 2 Choosing and bidding

Available properties are advertised in a free fortnightly magazine called 'Homebid magazine' and on the Homebid website at www.southampton.gov.uk/homebid.

The Homebid magazine can be viewed on-line or downloaded from the website. Alternatively you can pick up a free copy of Homebid magazine from several places, including the Civic Centre, local leisure centres and public libraries. Alternatively you can listen to a list of current available properties on 0845 839 8984. You can bid for up to three properties in any bidding cycle, but we ask that you only bid on properties that you are really interested in moving to.

Preference bidding

You should make bids in order of preference, so the first bid is the one you like most, the 2nd bid will be your 2nd choice etc. This is the case for any bidding method chosen. If you make a mistake or change your mind about the order of preference, you can change this while bidding is open. To do this yourself, you will need to go to the website on www.southampton.gov.uk/homebid.

You can bid in three ways:

1. On the web

Go to www.southampton.gov.uk/homebid and log on with your unique Homebid number and PIN which is your date of birth. eg 8/11/67 = 081167

2. By text

Send message to 07786 203243.

3. By telephone

Call 0845 839 8984 and follow the instructions. See page 9 about making your bids by telephone. Calls are charged at a local rate from a landline. However it will depend on your provider's charges if phoning from a mobile.

Homebid magazine is published every other Friday.

You have 5 days in which to bid. Your bids must reach us by 2pm the following Wednesday. Bids are not prioritised on a first come first served basis.

If you are unable to place bids yourself, you can ask someone to bid on your behalf. You will need to give them your unique Homebid number and your date of birth. It is your responsibility to keep your Homebid number confidential and only give it to people who you wish to place bids on your behalf. Anyone who places a bid in this way must make sure they tell you which properties they have bid on.

There are four steps for you to follow in choosing your new home.

Step 3 Offer

Homebid puts all of the bids for each property in priority order. The person with the highest points will be offered and invited to view the property. If two or more people have the same number of points, the person with the earliest eligibility date will be offered first. If you are successful in more than one bid we will offer you in the order of preference you chose.

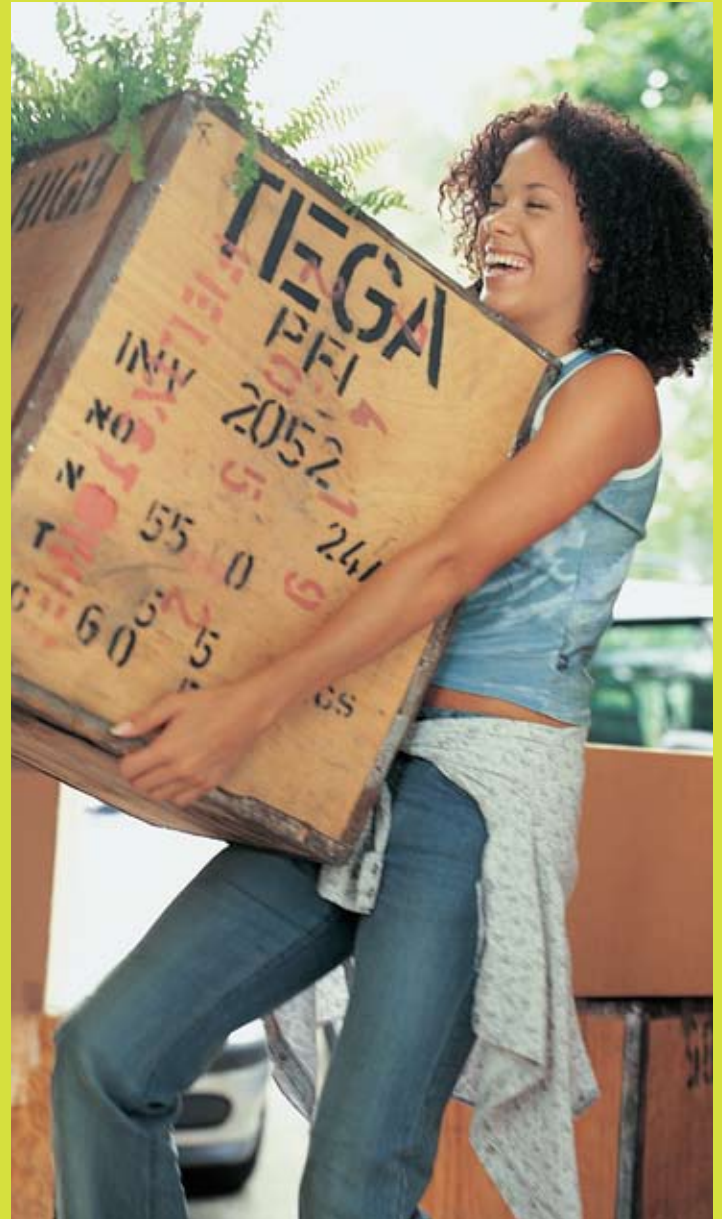
- Please note you may be successful on a bid that was not your first choice and this may mean we offer you your third choice.

We will contact successful bidders by phone, email or letter. You may miss out on a property if we can't get hold of you in time, so it is vital we have your up to date contact details.

Please note however; some properties that are advertised may not be ready to view.

If you are offered a property you will not be considered for other homes until you have made a decision on the first offer. Once you have been made your first offer, other properties you have bid on will not be held for you.

If you do decide you don't want the property, you still need to let us know. Before refusing a property it is really important that you check with the Allocations section how your application will be affected.



Step 4 Results

Once properties have been let, they are all listed on the 'results' page in future editions of Homebid magazine, on the website and through the automated phone service.

The results tell you how many people bid for each property, as well as the number of points the successful bidder had and the property details.

It is not possible to tell you individually each fortnight if your bids have been unsuccessful.

However you will be able to get this information from the Homebid website and the automated telephone service.

If you have questions about how Homebid applies to you or about bidding for properties, there are people to help you at Gateway Southampton, your Local Housing Office, and on the Allocations Advice Line (see contact information on page 14).

The points system

When you register for rehousing, your application will be assessed by Southampton City Council. You will then be sent a letter detailing your eligibility date, the number of points you have been awarded, the size and type of property you are eligible for and your Homebid number.

The points system that we use is described below.

When bids are considered for properties, priority will generally be given to people with the most points. If two people have the same number of points, the person with the earliest eligibility date will be put first.

It is important to note that priority for some properties will be given to those with a medical need.

What happens when you apply?

- When you fill out a housing application form, the information you provide will be used to work out how many points to award you, using the points system.
- You will be informed in writing of your number of points once your application has been accepted and processed fully.
- If any of your details change, you must contact us as soon as possible because this may affect how many points you get awarded.

What are you eligible for?

We try to make the best possible use of the housing stock and therefore we have rules in place about who is eligible for each type of property.

You will only be offered a property if you have enough points and you are eligible. For example, you are only eligible for a two+ bed house if you have two resident children both under 17 years of age, at least one of whom is under 11.

For full details about eligibility and other information about how the housing process works you can view the council's full lettings policy.

You can find this either on the internet or by visiting Southampton Gateway at the Civic Centre.

Who is not eligible for re-housing?

- 1 People who do not have satisfactory immigration status.
- 2 People or families who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour and that behaviour is still relevant.
- 3 Dependant children.



You can see how many points you have whenever you log on to your Homebid account at www.southampton.gov.uk/homebid.

How many points are you eligible for?

This table shows you how many points you may be eligible for depending on you and your family's circumstances.

Points are awarded under three categories

- Main points
- Additional points
- Exceptional points

An applicant is not entitled to any points in the 'additional' or 'exceptional' categories unless they first meet at least one of the criteria set under the 'main' points category. In order to qualify for points in the 'exceptional' points category applicants must first meet the local connection and insufficient funds criteria. The criteria are as follows:

Requirement	Number of points
Main points:	
Assessed medical/welfare/social need to move	30
Living in at least one of the defined unsatisfactory housing conditions	30
Homeless	up to 30
Additional points:	
Applicants with a proven link to Southampton	30
Applicants with insufficient financial resources to meet their own housing needs	30
Existing Southampton City Council tenants	25
Second household member with medical/welfare need to move	5
Living in two or more of the defined unsatisfactory housing conditions	5
Exceptional points:	
Under occupying SCC tenants and recognised Housing Associations in Southampton	200
"Management transfers" (four month period)	150
'Short-term' points (four month period) (eg urgent medical/welfare grounds, homeless in temporary accommodation)	100
People with assessed social need to move to a particular area where otherwise hardship would result.	30
Waiting time - points per month	1

Bidding

Making your bids on the internet

You can bid for up to three properties in each bidding cycle

The quickest and easiest way to bid is through our website:
www.southampton.gov.uk/homebid.

Instructions are given on screen and you will need to know your unique ID (Homebid reference number) and PIN (date of birth) in order to log on. You can view the website from any computer that has access to the internet. If you do not have a computer at home you can use the library, or self service area at Gateway. When you have decided which properties you prefer, you can bid on up to three using the 'bid' button. You should place these in order of preference. (Putting the one you like most first).



Also, when using the Homebid website, if you have made a bid and then decide you are no longer interested in that property you can remove the bid via the internet (so long as the bidding cycle is still open). You will also be able to change the order of preference using this method. This is the only way you are able to do this.



Making your bids by text message

Action	Example
1. To begin making your bid	Open a new text message
2. Enter the letters BID then a # symbol	BID#
3. Follow with your user ID number (Homebid reference number) and a #	BID#1234#
4. Follow with your PIN (date of birth) and then a #	BID#1234#081167#
5. You should now enter the advert reference number of your first bid followed by a # (Please add the adverts in order of preference	BID#1234#081167#3333#
If you have finished bidding send, if not keep following the instructions below:	
6. You should now enter the advert reference number of your second bid followed by a #	BID#1234#081167#3333#4444#
If you have finished bidding send, if not keep following the instructions below:	
7. You should now enter the advert reference number of your third bid followed by a #	BID#1234#081167#3333#4444#5555#
8. When you have entered all your bids send your text message	Send
9. The number to send your bid to is:	07786 203243
10. Expect a valid / invalid bid message within 5 to 10 minutes.	

- This will involve a charge at your normal phone rate
- You can enter your bids in both UPPER and lower case
- Check that your Homebid number and bids are correct before sending.
- **If you make a mistake and want to change your bids you will need to go to the Homebid website**



Telephone bidding



You can place a bid, check whether you have been successful in a bid, review the progress of your bids as well as hear the list of available properties which are open for bidding by phoning 0845 839 8984 (this is the automated telephone service).

Before using the service make sure you have your User ID (Homebid reference number) and PIN (date of birth) with you. If you know what you want to bid on or check progress on a bid, you will also need the advert numbers of the properties.

Step 1	To begin; dial	0845 839 8984
Step 2	Select the language you would like to listen to this service in. Please note that property descriptions are only available in English.	For example; press 1 for English
Step 3	Enter your User ID	Homebid reference number
Step 4	Your User ID will be played back to you	Press '1' to confirm or '2' to re-enter
Step 5	Enter your PIN (Date of birth)	For example, if date of birth is 8/11/67 you enter 081167
Step 6	Your PIN will be played back to you	Press '1' to confirm or press '2' to re-enter
Step 7	The available menu options will then be described to you	



- **Calls will be charged at the local rate from a landline. However it will depend on your provider's charges if phoning from a mobile.**
- **Bids should be placed in order of preference (see step 2 page 4)**
- **If you make a bid by mistake and want to change your bid you can only do this on the Homebid website.**
- **You can bid for up to three properties in any bidding cycle, but we ask that you only bid on properties that you are really interested in.**

Which properties can I bid for?

When your housing application was accepted, Southampton City Council will have sent you a letter detailing what type/size of property you are eligible for. You must only bid for properties that you are eligible for.

Arrears

- If you have housing related debts with the council or another landlord, you will usually not be eligible for a property offer.
- Contact the Allocations Advice Line for more information.

What type of property can I bid for?

- All applicants can be considered for general needs flats and maisonettes.
- Specific criteria must be met in order to qualify for houses, older person's accommodation and ground floor accommodation.
- Only the following can be considered for houses:
 - Applicants with a minimum of 2 resident children, both under 17 years of age, with at least one child under 11 years of age.
 - Applicants transferring from larger council houses.
- For ground floor accommodation, priority is given to people with an assessed need for such accommodation.

What size of property can I bid on?

- The size of property that you are eligible for is determined by your assessed need for bedroom space.
- This is indicated to you in the letter you receive when accepted on the housing list.
- On occasions to help families who are severely overcrowded you may be able to bid for properties with one bedroom less than you are eligible for. For example: a family with 2 children and a baby living in a 1 bedroom flat, may benefit moving to a 2 bedroom property, although they are eligible for a 3 bedrooms.

You can get advice on this from the Allocations Advice Line 023 8083 2777,

Is the property available to Homeseeker, housing register or transfer applicants?

- Homeseekers can only bid for properties that are advertised with an

H

- Housing register applicants can only bid for properties that are advertised with a

R

- Existing tenants (Transfers) can only bid for properties that are advertised with a

T

- Some adverts will show more than one icon – perhaps even all three – you can bid if the icon relevant to you appears.

H|R

- Your bid will not count if, for example, the property is for Homeseekers only and you are a transferring tenant.



Is there an age restriction on the property?

- Some properties have a minimum age requirement. For example, older persons' accommodation is for people aged 50 or over. However this depends on individual schemes. Each advert will have full details on age and eligibility.

50+

Some properties will have facilities for people with mobility difficulties

- Where there is a high level of adaptation these properties will be offered directly to applicants with an assessed need for such adaptations. Properties with a lower level of adaptation will be advertised with a note that priority will be given to applicants with an assessed need for that adaptation.

Pets

- The council has very few properties suitable for a dog.
- When a property suitable for a dog becomes available there will be an icon on the advertisement indicating this fact.



- If there is **no** icon for a dog in an advert then the property is **not** suitable for a dog.
- Some housing associations do not permit pets of any sort. There will be details of this on the advertisements.
- Exceptions may be made for registered hearing and guide dogs.

Viewing a property

- If you are at the top of the bidding shortlist, you will be asked if you want to view the property.
- You will be notified quicker about any property that you are successful with if we have your most up to date information (including your telephone number). Therefore, if any of your details change, contact us immediately either at Gateway Southampton, your Local Housing Office or on the Allocations Advice Line.



If you are having difficulty bidding and want some help please contact us!

The adverts

Key to advert symbols

3 bed house

Number of bedrooms and property type

H

Available for homeseekers only

R

Available for housing register applicants only

T

Available for transferring tenants only

H|R

Available for homeseekers and housing register applicants

H|T

Available for homeseekers and transferring tenants

R|T

Available for housing register applicants & transferring tenants

H|R|T

Available for homeseekers, housing register applicants and transferring tenants

50+

60+

Property designed for people this age and above



Minimum & maximum number of people who can live in this property



Number of bedrooms in property



Tower block

G

1

2

3

Floor level of property



Lift in block



Suitable for a dog

12 Homebid user guide

2 bed flat

RefNo. 888



Location Matthew's Way, Millbrook
Landlord Southampton City Council
Rent £73.08pw
Features Central heating
Applicants with an assessed need for ground floor accommodation will be considered first. If there is no such applicant then those with no assessed need will be considered in points order. Close to local shops and schools.

3 bed house

RefNo. 889



Location Ruddock Close, Portswood
Landlord Southampton City Council
Rent £64.46pw
Features Gas central heating
Larger family house with 3 bedrooms and a parlour which could be used for a bedroom. Therefore, those eligible for 4 bedroom houses may apply subject to statutory overcrowding limitations and there not being a gas appliance in the parlour.

Studio flat

RefNo. 890



Location Mealings Drive, Bitterne
Landlord Southampton City Council
Rent £49.68pw
Features Central heating
Applicants with a child will not be eligible for this property.

1 bed flat

RefNo. 891



Location Dorrington House, Woolston
Landlord Southampton City Council
Rent £56.60pw
Features Central heating
Applicants with an assessed need for ground floor accommodation will be considered first. If there is no such applicant then those with no assessed need will be considered in points order.

1 bed house

RefNo. 892



Location Yates Avenue, Central
Landlord Southampton City Council
Rent £49.61pw
Features Central heating, garden
Applicants transferring from larger council houses will be considered first. If there is no such applicant then those requiring 1 bed accommodation will be considered in points order.

Results

Understanding the results page

In each edition of the Homebid magazine there will be a Results page. The results show details of lettings that have taken place since the previous edition. The results are colour-coded in the same way as the adverts appearing in the Homebid magazine.

Details shown in the results page are:

Homebid magazine issue date

This is the publication date of the Homebid magazine that the adverts were in.

Advert reference

The Homebid magazine issue date and this reference number give a unique identity to any property.

Property size and type

This is a description of the property advertised.

Location

This describes where the property is situated.

Bids

This shows the total number of bids that were received for each property.

Homebid magazine issue date

This shows the number of points that the successful bidder had

Homebid results

Magazine issue date	Advert reference	Size	Property type	Location	Bids	Points
Southampton West						
17-Jul-09	451	1 bed	Flat	Cuckmere Lane, Millbrook	260	169
17-Jul-09	450	2 bed	Flat	Chiltern Green, Millbrook	35	150
31-Jul-09	528	2 bed	Flat	Foundry Lane, Freemantle	71	228
31-Jul-09	583	5 bed	Parlour House	Windermere Avenue, Maybush	37	168
31-Jul-09	584	1 bed	Sheltered Flat	Wolseley Road, Freemantle	9	158
14-Aug-09	613	2 bed	Flat	Lower Brownhill Road, Maybush	67	168
14-Aug-09	631	3 bed	House	Howards Grove, Shirley	97	219
14-Aug-09	639	3 bed	House	Kendal Avenue, Millbrook	154	316
14-Aug-09	651	1 bed	Sheltered Flat	Oldbury Court, Maybush	33	332
28-Aug-09	740	2 bed	Maisonette	Sturminster House, Irving Road, Maybush	25	136
Southampton North						
17-Jul-09	488	1 bed	Sheltered Flat	Avington Court, Winchester Road, Hollybrook	11	63
31-Jul-09	576	3 bed	Parlour House	Violet Road, Bassett	34	182
28-Aug-09	738	studio	Sheltered Flat	Bassett Green Court, Bassett Green Road, Bassett Green	1	156
Southampton South						
05-Jun-09	231	1 bed	Sheltered Flat	Orpen Road, Sholing	5	151
17-Jul-09	484	2 bed	Maisonette	Vanguard Road, Bitterne Manor	55	136
17-Jul-09	445	3 bed	House	Burke Drive, Thornhill	93	208
17-Jul-09	494	3 bed	Flat	144, Holcroft Road, Thornhill	35	243
31-Jul-09	558	2 bed	Maisonette	Montague Avenue, Sholing	16	121
31-Jul-09	547	2 bed	Maisonette	Kingsdown Way, Townhill Park	15	125
31-Jul-09	568	3 bed	Maisonette	Rowlands Walk, Townhill Park	54	162
14-Aug-09	608	2 bed	Maisonette	Baxter Road, Thornhill	33	140
28-Aug-09	684	studio	Flat	Baxter Road, Thornhill	51	146
28-Aug-09	716	2 bed	Maisonette	Macarthur Crescent, Bitterne Manor	70	265
28-Aug-09	695	3 bed	Maisonette	Chettle Road, Thornhill	38	175
28-Aug-09	717	2 bed	Sheltered Flat	Meon Court, Harefield	2	117
Southampton East						
31-Jul-09	544	1 bed	Flat	Ashton House, Kingsclere Avenue, Weston	98	166
31-Jul-09	538	2 bed	Flat	Rotterdam Towers, International Way, Weston	10	132
31-Jul-09	546	3 bed	Maisonette	Kingsclere Close, Weston	61	178
28-Aug-09	708	1 bed	Flat	Rotterdam Towers, International Way, Weston	79	166
Southampton Central						
07-Jun-09	379	1 bed	Sheltered Flat	Biddlesgate Court, Upper Bugle Street, Central South	4	24
19-Jun-09	328	2 bed	House	Earls Road, Portswood	22	120
03-Jul-09	356	studio	Flat	Wyndham Court, Commercial Road, Central West	72	150
14-Aug-09	681	1 bed	Flat	Wilton Avenue, Central North	115	121
14-Aug-09	635	1 bed	Flat	James Street, Central South	99	129
14-Aug-09	625	1 bed	Flat	Golden Grove, Central South	103	146
14-Aug-09	636	1 bed	Flat	James Street, Central South	138	190
14-Aug-09	659	studio	Sheltered Flat	Challis Court, Threefield Lane, Central South	2	98

Contact information

Gateway Southampton

What is Gateway?

Gateway is Southampton City Council's customer service centre. Gateway deals with the vast majority of enquiries and services relating to the council.

Where is it?

It is located just inside the main doors of the Civic Centre to the right.

Opening hours

- Monday, Tuesday & Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm
- Thursday 8.30am – 7pm
- Wednesday 9.30am – 5.30pm

Allocations Advice Line

What is the Allocations Advice Line?

The Advice Line answers telephone enquiries regarding the housing list.

Opening hours

- Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm

Telephone: 023 8083 2777

Minicom: 023 8083 4228

Fax: 023 8083 4477

Email: housing.allocations@southampton.gov.uk

Housing Allocations

Housing Solutions

Southampton City Council

Civic Centre

Southampton, SO14 7LR

Keep us informed

You need to advise us if there are any changes in your household, for example if an adult child leaves home, and also a change of address if you move. This is so we have the right contact details and to make sure you get offered a suitable property of the right size.

We regularly review applications of people we have had no contact from, to ask if you are still seeking accommodation. We may cancel your application if you don't reply. This is another reason why it is very important to keep us informed of your up to date contact details.

For your personal use.

Homebid reference number:

General information

Bid deadline

The closing date is shown on the front of each Homebid magazine and on the website. All bids must be made by 2pm on that date. Bids made after this time cannot be accepted.

Need help bidding?

If you have difficulty bidding, please contact Southampton City Council who will be able to help and advise you on how to make your bids. There will be staff available to help at Gateway Southampton, the Local Housing Offices and on the Allocations Advice Line Tel: 023 8083 2777.

On the website you will also find a short video (Digital Narrator) on how to bid, which some customers may find helpful.



Website

www.southampton.gov.uk/homebid

You can make your bids on the Homebid website. Please make sure you enter your Homebid number and bids correctly. Free internet access is available at all of the libraries across the city.

Bidding telephone number

Tel: 0845 839 8984

To make your bids by telephone, use this number and follow the instructions. Instructions are also available in this Homebid User Guide. (Calls are charged at a local rate).

Making your bids by text message

Tel: 07786 203243

To make your bids by text (SMS), follow the instructions shown in this User Guide.

Change of details

It is important that you keep the Allocations Advice Line updated with any change of contact details so that you can quickly be contacted if you come up for an offer.

This information is available on request in other formats and languages. Please contact 023 8083 2777 for help.

www.southampton.gov.uk/homebid

