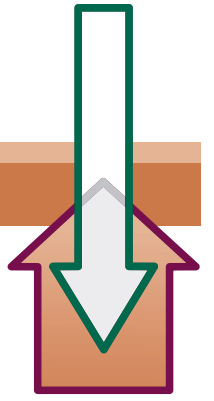
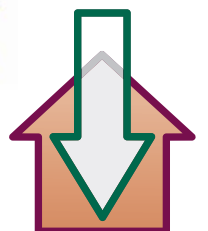


# Your Guide

## Choice Based Lettings - a new way of letting property



*More Choice -  
More Information!*



# What is Choice Based Lettings?

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Choice Based Lettings is a different way of allocating properties owned by councils and housing associations. Instead of the council or housing association contacting you when a suitable home becomes available, the properties will be advertised so that you can choose which ones you are interested in (within certain guidelines).



## Why are we introducing it?

We believe that Choice Based Lettings will provide you with more choice and information to help you find appropriate accommodation in North Yorkshire. The Government supports this and has said that they expect all councils to have introduced Choice Based Lettings by 2010.



## How are we introducing it?

Seven councils and their housing association partners have joined together to introduce one system which covers all their homes. One of the first steps has been to agree a common lettings policy across all organisations. We have tried to make this a simple system of bands, rather than the points systems which most councils and housing associations currently use.

**We want to know whether you think the new lettings policy is fair and gives priority to the right applicants. Please complete and return the Questionnaire enclosed with this pack.**

We also need to decide how Choice Based Lettings should work in our area and, again, we need your help to make sure that we get this right.



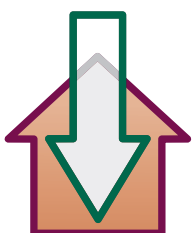
## The new common lettings policy

### Who is eligible?

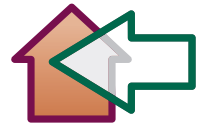
Any UK resident aged 16 or over may apply to join the register. Some people may not be accepted if:

- they are subject to some aspect of immigration control; or
- they fail the acceptable behaviour test. This could be because of:
  - a high level of debt owed to landlords, with no repayments being made;
  - serious anti-social behaviour; or
  - certain unspent convictions.

Applicants aged 16 and 17 will be accepted subject to the necessary support for them to be able to sustain a tenancy.



# How will we prioritise applications?



We will place you in one of 4 bands according to your circumstances:

## Urgent

- You are unable to return to your home from hospital because your current home is permanently unsuitable.
- You are unable to access key facilities in your home without major adaptation works.
- You are at serious risk of violence or harassment and the Police have advised in writing that moving home is the best solution.
- Your home is subject to an emergency prohibition order.

You will only be placed in the urgent band if you have a local connection to the York and North Yorkshire area, unless you are fleeing violence.

## Gold

- You need to move on from care, supported housing or a re-settlement programme and the agency supporting you has provided evidence that you are able to (or will help you to) live independently.
- You are presently under-occupying a home owned by a local authority or housing association within the York and North Yorkshire area and you are willing to move to a property with at least two less bedrooms.
- You are statutory homeless and owed the 'full duty'.
- You are overcrowded\* and require two more bedrooms to relieve the overcrowding.
- You need to move to a specific locality so that proven hardship can be prevented.
- You are classed as a 'Good Neighbour' (This means you are an existing tenant of the partner landlords and have always kept to your tenancy conditions.)
- You are at risk of homelessness.

\*In assessing overcrowding we expect children of different sexes to share up to the age of 10 and for a child under one to share with their parents.

## Silver

- You have a health issue, which will be removed or improved by a move.
- You are statutory homeless but have deemed to be non-priority.
- You are overcrowded and require one more bedroom to relieve the overcrowding.
- You share a bathroom or kitchen facilities with others.
- Your home has no electricity supply or hot water supply.
- You share facilities with separate households of family, friends or an ex-partner.
- You are presently under-occupying a home owned by a local authority or housing association within the partnership area and you are willing to move to a property with one less bedroom.

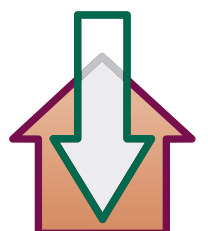
## Bronze

- All other applicants.

# What type of property can I have?

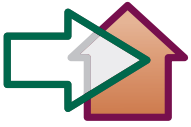
We need to make sure that we make best use of the limited properties that are available. Consequently you will not be considered for any type of property other than the one that is suitable for your family's circumstances. For example bungalows will normally be reserved for older people. You will be allowed to bid for a property with one bedroom more than you need:

We propose to allow families with children to live in flats above the ground floor if they choose to do so.



# How does Choice Based Lettings work?

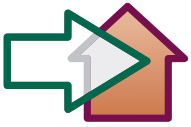
There are 4 easy steps:



## 1. Register

You will still need to register with the scheme but you will only have to complete one form for all the councils and most of the housing associations in the region. You will need to provide information and some evidence of your current circumstances. We will then tell you if you have been accepted and which band you have been placed in.

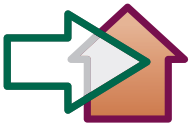
**We need you to choose how you would like to register.**



## 2. Choose

Most of the vacant properties owned by the councils and housing associations will be advertised on a regular basis. (In the same way that estate and lettings agents advertise available homes.) You will be able to see details about the properties you are interested in.

**We need you to choose the best way of advertising the properties.**



## 3. Bid

If you see a property that interests you and is suitable for you (according to the lettings policy) you can express an interest in the property. This is known as bidding – but it does not involve any money.

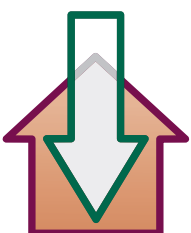
**We need your views about how you would like to be able to bid.**



## 4. Offer

If your bid is successful we will contact you and invite you to view the property. If you do not hear from us you will not have been successful.

Once the property has been let you will be able to see information about the number of bids, the band of the successful applicant and how long they had been waiting. This will help you decide which is the best property to bid for in the future.



# How do we decide who is successful?

If we receive more than one bid for a property then we will sort them in the following way:

## 1. Meeting the property criteria

The property must be the right size for you but you must also meet other criteria included in the advert. For example:

- If the property is adapted for a disabled person we would give priority to a person who is disabled and needs that type of property.
- If a property has a planning condition that says it must be let to a person with a local connection to where the property is situated, we will only consider you if you meet that requirement.

## 2. The highest level of need

We will always allocate to the person in the highest band who meets the property criteria. If you are in the urgent band you will be considered before someone in the gold band and so on.

## 3. Local connection to the partnership area

If you have a local connection to one of the 7 council areas we will consider you before an applicant who doesn't have a local connection.

## 4. Making the best use of the size of the property

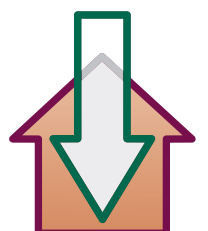
Although you can bid for a property with one bedroom more than you need, if we have to choose between two applicants we will give priority to the applicant who needs all the bedrooms. For example, a family with two children will have priority for a three bedroom house over a family with one child.

## 5. Time on the list

We will give priority to the person who has been in their priority band or on the waiting list for the longest time.

**We need your views as to whether you think this is the right order for sorting the bids.**

*Please complete and return the questionnaire enclosed with this pack.*





## Frequently asked questions



### **What will happen when there is a vacant property?**

Most vacancies will be advertised, and anyone who is registered with the scheme, and who is eligible for the vacancy, will be able to express an interest in the properties they would like. This is called 'bidding'.

We propose to advertise on a weekly basis (an advertising cycle) and applicants will need to bid within a set timescale (usually 4 or 5 days from the advert appearing.) Once bidding closes, the landlord will identify the successful bidder.



### **How many properties can I bid for?**

We propose that you can bid for a maximum of 3 properties in any advertising cycle.



### **Is it best to bid as soon as the property is advertised?**

Bidding is not a race. It does not matter if you bid on the first or last day.



### **Can I change my bid?**

You can change your bid at any point up to the advert closing.



### **Can I find out if there are other bidders?**

If you bid through the website or over the phone you will be able to find out if there are other bidders with a higher priority.



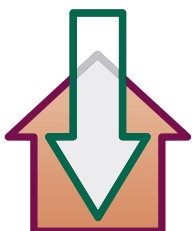
### **How quickly will I find out if I have been successful?**

We will contact you as soon as we have sorted the bids. We may have to do further checks to make sure you are eligible before we can invite you to view the property. We may invite more than one applicant to view the property at the same time in case the person at the top of the list refuses it.



### **Will the property be ready immediately?**

We will normally advertise the property when the outgoing tenant gives four weeks notice. You may, therefore, need to wait for the tenant to leave and repairs to be carried out before you can move in.



## Q Will I get re-housed faster?

There is no certain yes or no answer but:

- The new lettings policy may give you a higher or lower priority than you had under the old system.
- You will be able to see all available properties in the areas that you want to move to without having to apply to different landlords.
- In time you will be able to use the system to advertise your home to exchange with another tenant.
- In future we will also advertise homes for low cost sale and possibly include homes owned by private landlords.

## Q Will I need to fill out a new form?

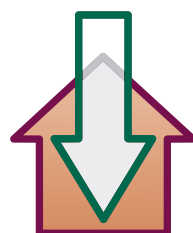
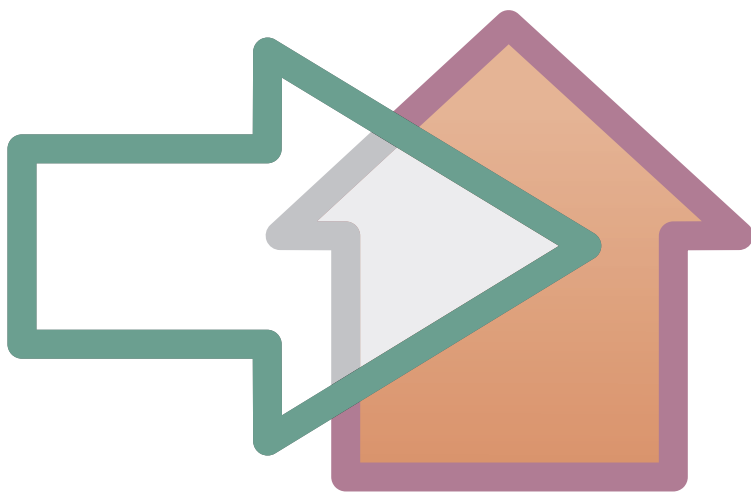
You will probably need to fill out a new form to register on the scheme but we will carry forward any original date to calculate your time priority.

## Q When will the new scheme start?

We expect that the new scheme will start in summer 2010.


## Tell us what you think

- come to one of the consultation events - an invitation is enclosed; or
- fill in the questionnaire included in this pack and return it in the pre-paid envelope.



This information can be provided in your own language.  
我們也用您的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)  
এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)  
Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim (Polish)  
własnym języku.  
Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)  
یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (ہندی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

This information can also be provided in Large Print format

 Please see enclosed sheet for details

