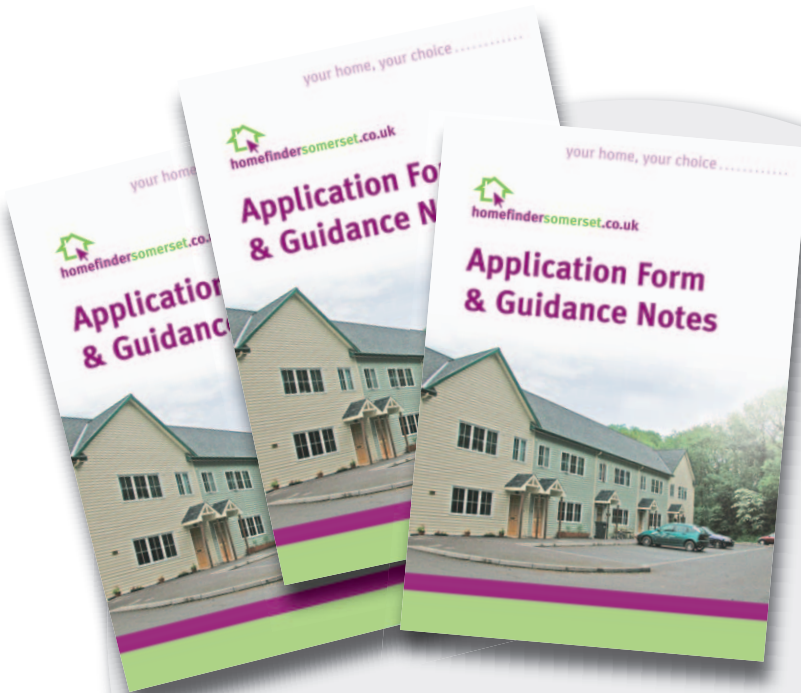




[homefindersomerset.co.uk](http://homefindersomerset.co.uk)

# A guide to the new way of finding a home in Somerset



your home, your choice .....

[www.homefindersomerset.co.uk](http://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk)



**homefindersomerset.co.uk**

Homefinder Somerset is the new way of finding a home to rent which lets you select the homes you would like to be considered for. Almost anyone can apply to join the scheme including existing tenants who would like to transfer.

### What is Homefinder Somerset?

It is a partnership of local authorities and housing associations who are working together to make the process of finding a home simple and transparent for all applicants across Somerset.

### How the Scheme works

Anyone looking for social housing anywhere in Somerset now only has to complete one application form and their needs will be assessed against the same clear set of criteria no matter where they live. Depending on their circumstances applicants are placed into one of 4 bands, Gold, Silver, Bronze or in a very small number of cases an emergency band.

From November onwards, if you have registered with the homefinder somerset scheme you will be advised of your banding, together with your application date (this will be transferred from your existing application no one will lose out because of the change) and your personal reference number which will enable you to bid for homes which will be advertised on a weekly basis when the scheme begins.

### What should I do now?

You can complete an application form online at [www.homefindersomerset.co.uk](http://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk), but it is very important to use the reference number you are given in the letter enclosed with this leaflet. This is important because it will ensure that you do not lose priority within the Homefinder Somerset scheme. Alternatively, you can collect a form from your local council office, but you will need to give your personal reference number, so take this letter with you.

**It will take us some weeks to register your application, but by the end of November you will receive a letter telling you:**

- Your Registration Number which you will need in order to bid.
- When you can start to bid for properties.
- Your Band. If you would like to appeal against your band you have 28 days to do so from the date you receive your banding letter and the procedure will be explained in the letter you receive at that time.

Your date of registration, will normally be the day your local authority receives your application. The date of registration will be transferred to the new system. But you must use your personal reference number when completing a paper form in order to make sure that the date is kept within the system. For accepted homeless applicants in Somerset this will be the date you applied as homeless to your local authority.

### What do I do if I move or my circumstances change?

If you move or your circumstances change you will need to contact your local housing office for advice. It is very important to keep us informed of changes, which affect your application. Failure to do so could lead to you not being made an offer even if your bid is successful.

For applicants whose circumstances change, moving them to a **higher band** including those placed in the emergency band, the registration date will start from the date they moved to the higher band.

For applicants whose circumstances change, moving them into a **lower band** their registration date will remain unchanged.

## Where do I find details of vacancies?

- Using our website at [www.homefindersomerset.co.uk](http://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk) at home or using computers available in the library or your local council.
- Looking at a weekly property Newsletter at your local housing office or council office.
- By ringing the Property Hotline to hear details of vacancies.

## How can I bid for Homes?

- Via our website at home or using computers available in the library, your local council or housing office.
- Via the automated telephone bidding line.
- In person at your local housing or council office.
- With the help of your support worker.

Once the bidding deadline has passed it is the applicant in the highest band who has waited the longest on the housing register who is successful. You will receive a pre offer visit from the prospective landlord and the details on your application form will be formally validated.

## How do I know the banding and application date of successful applicants?

In each weekly advertisement we will print details of the highest placed bid for any advertised property showing the banding and application date of the applicant.

## Who should I contact if I have a question about my application?

If you have a question about your application you should contact the Housing Service at your local council. For enquires about your existing tenancy you should contact your landlord.

During the period 4th August to 26th September 2008 you can contact the Housing Register Helpline on 0845 241 5948 for enquiries about your re-registration.

## What happens if my bid is successful?

Your prospective new landlord will contact you to arrange for a housing officer to visit you. At this stage the officer will validate the details you have given in your application. You will be given the opportunity to view the property but it is your responsibility to ensure that you are available to do so.

## When will I receive a formal offer of accommodation?

Once we are satisfied that the details on your application are correct and you have told us that you would like the property a formal offer will be made. Unfortunately if the visit shows differences between your application and your current housing position you will not be offered the property.

## What size of accommodation can I bid for?

In general applicants will not be offered properties which are larger or smaller than their needs. For more information please see our website [www.homefindersomerset.co.uk](http://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk) or visit your local housing office.

## Which Band will I be in?

Applicants are placed into one of four bands that show their priority for housing:

### Gold Band

For Households with a High need to move



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Tenants of Homefinder Somerset partner landlords who live within the Homefinder Somerset area and under-occupy their home. | residents assessed as ready to move to independent living.   |
| 2 Homeless households who are owed a main homeless duty by a Homefinder Somerset Partner authority.                          | 5 High disrepair for people living in the private sector.  |
| 3 Severely overcrowded (applicants who lack 2 or more bedrooms).   | 6 High medical need.   |
| 4 Current supported housing  | 7 Applicants awarded a 'medium' medical priority, combined with a 'medium' disrepair award from the silver band. |
|  | 8 Victim of harassment or violence.  |

# Silver Band

For Households with a Medium need to move



- 1 Where the applicant lacks one bedroom in their current home.
- 2 Social needs to move for employment reasons or to give or receive support.
- 3 Applicant who is pregnant or has children under the age of 10 living in a first floor flat or above.
- 4 Where there is a medium medical need.
- 5 Medium disrepair for people living in the private sector.
- 6 Applicant lodging with friends or family.
- 7 Applicants wishing to live independently but who still reside with their ex-partner /spouse following a relationship breakdown.
- 8 Other homelessness (where Homefinder Somerset partners do not owe an applicant a full duty).
- 9 Applicants of split families who not by choice are living separately.
- 10 Households who have a child/ children under 10 years of age without access to an enclosed garden.

# Bronze Band

For Households with a Low need to move



- 1 Where the applicant is adequately housed.
- 2 Where applicants own their own property but whose home is not suitable for their needs.
- 3 Where there is a low medical/welfare or disrepair assessment.
- 4 Applicants living in short term supported housing until such time as they are ready to move on.

There is also an **Emergency Band** for applicants who require an 'urgent' move to ensure their safety and welfare.

## Sheltered Housing

Applicants seeking sheltered housing will also have an assessment of their support needs to ensure that they comply with the criteria for the scheme.

## A Reminder - What you need to know

It is important that you do the following **now**:

- Re-register your application for housing by going online at [www.homefindersomerset.co.uk](http://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk) and using the personal reference number stated in the enclosed letter.
- Wait for your banding letter to arrive from November onwards.
- Remember that whilst this process is going on you will still be considered for housing under the existing scheme.
- If you have any queries about re-registration please call 0845 241 5948.



For further information please contact your Local Authority at:



### Mendip District Council

Tel: 01749 648999

Web: [www.mendip.gov.uk](http://www.mendip.gov.uk)



### Sedgemoor District Council

Tel: 0845 4082540

Web: [www.sedgemoor.gov.uk](http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk)



### South Somerset District Council

Tel: 01935 462462

Web: [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)



### West Somerset Council

Tel: 01643 703704

Web: [www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk](http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk)



### Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tel: 01823 356356

Web: [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)

<p><b>English</b></p> <p>If you would like this document translated into other languages or in Braille, large print, audio tape, or CD please telephone us on 0845 241 5948</p>
<p><b>Bengali</b></p> <p>অপনি যদি এই দলিলপত্র অন্য কোন ভাষায় অনুবাদ করে চান, বা ব্রেইল, বড়ো ছাপার অক্ষর, অডিও-ট্রিপ বা সিডিতে চান, তাহলে আমাদের টেলিফোন করুন এই নম্বরে 0845 241 5948</p>
<p><b>Chinese</b></p> <p>如果你要這文件翻譯成其他語言或盲人凸字、大號字、聲帶、或光碟、請致電我們、電話 0845 241 5948</p>
<p><b>Hindi</b></p> <p>अगर आप इस दस्तावेज़ का अनुवाद दूसरी भाषाओं या ब्रेल, बड़े अक्षरों वाली छपाई, ऑडियो टेप, या सीडी में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया हमें इस नंबर पर फ़ोन कीजिये 0845 241 5948</p>
<p><b>Portuguese</b></p> <p>Se desejar a tradução deste documento para um outro idioma ou em Braille, letras grandes, cassete de áudio ou CD, contacte-nos pelo telefone 0845 241 5948</p>
<p><b>Polish</b></p> <p>W celu uzyskania niniejszego dokumentu w innym języku, w języku Braille'a, wydrukowanego dużym drukiem, nagranych na taśmę dźwiękową lub CD prosimy o kontakt pod numerem telefonu 0845 241 5948</p>