

Factsheet 12

Your Choice Your Home

The Your Choice Your Home scheme is a Choice Based Lettings scheme through which vacancies in the affordable housing stock in the area are let. This is a partnership scheme between North Norfolk District Council and the main providers of affordable housing in the area including Victory Housing Trust, Broadland Housing, Flagship Housing, Orbit East, Wherry Housing Association, Cotman Housing Association, Guinness Trust and Riverside. A number of other affordable housing providers with properties in the area also advertise available properties through the scheme.

Available properties are advertised on a weekly basis and can be viewed on the Your Choice Your Home website www.yourchoiceyourhome.org.uk, on property lists displayed around the district in libraries and a number of other locations. The details of the available properties are also recorded on to a telephone answering service. Bidding opens on a Friday morning at 9.00am and closes on the following Thursday at 9.00am giving applicants 6 days to select the properties they wish to bid on and make their bids.

Applicants have to 'bid' or express an interest in a property in order to be considered. Applicants can place bids for available properties through the website, by text or by phone. In certain circumstances Housing Services will support applicants by placing bids on their behalf.

To be able to bid applicants must be registered on the Council's Housing Register. Applicants can apply through the Your Choice Your Home website or by completing an application form. Eligible applicants will be assessed and placed into one of 5 bands (Band 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) which reflect a range of levels of housing need with Band 1 being the highest reflecting the greatest level of housing need and Band 5 the lowest. The Council administers the Housing Register on behalf of the partners and assesses the housing need of applicants. An Emergency Card can be awarded to those who have an urgent and immediate need to move with consideration for the granting of an Emergency Cards being given by all of the partners.

Applicants will be advised of the properties they can bid for when they are accepted onto the Housing Register and they will only be able to bid for the properties for which they are eligible to bid for.

Applicants bidding will be shortlisted using 3 criteria, firstly the Band (with Emergency Cards coming before all bands), secondly whether the applicant has a local connection to North Norfolk and thirdly the relevant date which is the date they moved in to the band for Emergency Cards and Bands 1 and 2 and the date they joined the Housing Register for all other bands.

The partners will allocate their own properties and will contact applicants moving down the shortlist until they find a suitable tenant. The Council will undertake the short-listing on behalf of the affordable housing providers in the area who are not partners to the scheme and for properties on Exception Housing Schemes.

Feedback is provided on the properties that have been let and this is shown at the bottom of the list of available properties. The feedback provides the number of bids received along with the band of the successful applicant, whether they have a local connection and their relevant date (no personal information is supplied). This information enables applicants to assess the likelihood of them being successful in being housed at some point in the future.

The Council has developed the What and Where interactive tool on the Housing pages of the Council's website which shows how many affordable housing properties by type there are in each parish in the district and lettings information for the past 5 years. This is regularly updated and can be used by applicants to assess the likelihood of them being successful in being housed.

There were 3948 applicants on the Housing Register at the end of September 2011 with less than 1% having an Emergency Card, 4% in Band 1, 6% in Band 2, 28% in Band 3, 33% in Band 4 and 28% in Band 5. 364 properties were let through the scheme in 2010/11.

The Housing Register Policy and the Choice Based Lettings Policy – Your Choice Your Home can be found on the Housing pages of the Council's website.

Please telephone Housing Services on 01263 516375 if you have any queries about the Your Choice Your Home scheme.