

Choice Based Lettings - A guide to bidding for properties

When homes become available to rent we advertise them and invite priority applicants to bid for the ones they want. This is called Choice Based Lettings.

Priority housing applicants are given points according to their housing need and those with the most points have the highest priority. The number of points you have depends on your priority for housing.

Your position on the list will depend on the number of points you have and how long you have waited on the list. Older applicants registered for Community Supportive Housing bid for specific type of accommodation.

If several applicants bid for the same property, it is offered to the applicant with the highest priority that has the most points. If you have registered for Choice Based Lettings, you will have been told which priority group you are in.

Main Priority Groups

	List
Under Occupying	Cash Incentive Scheme
Urgent	Decants/Major Works Transfers
	Management Transfer
	Reciprocals
	Homeless in Stage 2 Lease End
	Community Care Nominations
Medical	Category 'A' medical priority
Overcrowding	Council tenants overcrowded by one bedroom or more
	Registered Provider Quota
Homeless	Homeless
Other Priority	Mental Health Hostel Quota
	Street Homeless/Hostel Move On
	Learning Disability
	Studio to 1-bedroom tenants
Community Supportive Housing	Accommodation for Older People

Where and when are properties advertised?

Properties are advertised in the weekly flyer online at;

www.westminster.gov.uk/housing

You can view a copy at:

- The Housing Options Service
- Your local estate office
- Any Westminster library
- By email – register by contacting us at the address at the back of this leaflet
- Your landlord – if you are living in temporary accommodation in East London

If you have registered to receive emails, please make sure you give us your correct email address, keep your email account running and advise us if you change your email address.

Properties are advertised every week, from Wednesday to Sunday.

What type of accommodation can I bid for?

You can bid for properties with the number of bedrooms your household qualifies for and which are suitable for you. In some circumstances you can bid for a smaller property, however, you cannot bid for a property larger than you need. You can bid for as many properties as you like, but in any one week you will only be shortlisted for your top three.

Mobility Categories

Household status	Property status
Category 1: Those who use a wheelchair all the time	Category 1: Property is fully wheelchair accessible
Category 2: Those who use a wheelchair some of the time	Category 2: Property is suitable where a member of the household uses a wheelchair outside the home but can manage in the home without one
Category 3: Those who require level access accommodation with no stairs	Category 3: No more than three stairs to access property and no internal stairs. May be lifted
Category 4: Everyone else	Category 4: All other properties

Your mobility category affects the type of property you can bid for.

Properties that are suitable for wheelchair users (mobility category 1 and 2) will not be advertised through Choice Based Lettings and applicants requiring these properties will be given a direct offer of suitable accommodation. Mobility category 3 applicants will be prioritised above mobility category 4 applicants for a mobility category 3 property.

Your mobility category	Mobility category of properties you can bid for
3	3, 4*
4	3, 4

* Properties classified as mobility category 4 are not likely to be suitable for those registered with mobility category 3. See individual adverts for further information.

When can I bid?

You can bid for a property from the Wednesday it appears on the website and in the property flyer until midnight the following Sunday. Your bid position will depend on your priority group, points and how long you've been registered and not when you placed your bid.

When can't I bid?

It is important that all priority groups have the opportunity to successfully bid for new homes. Placing restrictions on different groups at different times of the year, helps to achieve this. Restricted groups are listed on the weekly flyer. It is important that you check to see if your group is restricted from bidding. You can also check online at www.westminster.gov.uk/housing. Select Home Connections and choose Projections table on the right hand side of the page.

How do I bid?

1. Bidding Online

Step 1: Visit www.westminster.gov.uk/housing and follow the links to 'Home Connections'. Select **Login** at the top of the page or from the left hand menu.

Step 2: Enter your six figure User ID and PIN numbers. Select **Login**.

A page will open showing your points total, registered date, bedroom size required and whether your application is 'suspended' or 'registered' for bidding. Your recent bid history will also be displayed under **My Current Bids**.

Step 3: Click on 'View properties'.

Step 4: If you want to bid for a property you have seen in the weekly property flyer enter the advert number in the 'Search by Advert' box and select the 'Search by Advert' button.

Step 5: If the property is the right size for you and your case is active, you can bid for the property by selecting the 'Click here to bid' button above the property. If you select this property your bid will be registered and you will see the property in your 'My Current Bids' section on the home page.

2. By Mobile Phone

Make sure you have your user ID, PIN number and the property advert numbers ready.

Step 1: Open a new text message on your phone.

Step 2: Leaving no spaces, enter: bid, #, your User ID number, #, your PIN number, then, for each property you are bidding for, #, followed by the advert reference number. For example, if your User ID is 987654, your PIN number 010164 and you want to bid for two properties, with the references 123456 and 555444, your message will be: bid#987654#010164#123456#555444

Step 3: Check the numbers are correct and press send on your keypad and enter the telephone number 0780 014 0739.

If you have followed steps 1 – 3 correctly, you should get a text from us within an hour telling you whether your bid is valid or not. If you have poor reception you will not get our message until you are in an area with a better signal.

3. Download the CBL App

You can bid by downloading the CBL App from the following;

Google Play:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.homeconnection>

Apple AppStore:

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/home-connect/id530096981?mt=8>

Help with Bidding

Contact the Housing Options Service for help with bidding:

Housing Options Service

101 Orchardson Street

London

NW8 8EA

Tel: 020 7641 1000

Will I be invited to view a property?

We will usually invite the five bidders with the highest priority and points to view each property. If you are shortlisted for a property, we will contact you on Monday (the day after the bidding closes) to invite you to view the next day. Viewing days vary for Registered Provider (housing association) properties and you will usually be given longer notice of the viewing date. Occasionally, it may not be appropriate to consider one of the top five bidders to view a property. For example, people with a history of anti-social behaviour are not considered suitable to live in blocks of flats where older people live.

What happens after I have viewed a property?

In most cases, the property will be offered to the bidder in the highest priority group with the most points who has waited the longest. If they are no longer interested, it will be offered to the bidder in second place and so on. If a housing co-op or a tenant management organisation (TMO) manages the property, they may interview the shortlisted bidders. There is no guarantee the property will be offered to the applicant with the highest priority.

If your bid is successful we will normally expect you to move in on the Monday following the viewing. This means you may have only a few days in which to organise your move. Please be prepared for this.

Please remember

- You cannot place bids before Wednesday morning.
- Ensure your contact details are correct so that we can get in touch with you quickly.
- The weekly flyer will have updated information on who can or cannot bid. You will be restricted from bidding if your re-housing list has been met.
- If you are a tenant or homeless household and have rent or service charge arrears you will be unable to bid.
- There is no guarantee that you will be offered a TMO property if you are the highest priority applicant.
- There are no penalties for refusing a property after viewing, but if you sign for a property and then change your mind, you will not be able to bid for another property for six months.
- Registered Providers (Housing Associations) may limit the size of households they accept for some of their properties.
- You can view the results of previous week's bidding on the Home Connections website.
- Please keep your user ID and PIN number in a safe place.
- Westminster City Council retains the right to make direct offers to some households in exceptional circumstances and to those on waiting lists not included in the Choice Based Lettings Scheme.
- Once you have been given your ID and PIN numbers it is likely to be some time before you are successful in bidding for a permanent home through Choice Based Lettings. You may want to consider other housing options. Contact the Housing Options Service and/or your local estate office for further information on the options available to you.

Contact:

Housing Options Service
101 Orchardson Street
London
NW8 8EA

Telephone: 020 7641 1000

Minicom: 020 7641 8200

Email: hoscustomerservices@wcchos.org.uk

The Choice Based Lettings website: www.westminster.gov.uk/housing