

Dorset Council Home Choice guidance document

Dorset Council Home Choice

Dorset Council Home Choice is the scheme used to advertise social housing available from registered housing providers across the Dorset Council area.

See the full Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy 2026 – 2031:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/housing-allocation-policy-2026-to-2031>

Our guidance document explains:

- how to join the Dorset Council Home Choice housing register
- supporting documentation required
- how to view homes that are available
- how to express an interest in a property
- property alerts
- shortlisting
- refusals
- waiting times
- contact us

Pre-application Check

Before starting your application, you can check whether you are likely to be eligible and qualify to join the Dorset Council Housing Register by completing our online pre application check: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/check-you-are-eligible-housing-register>

How to join the Dorset Council Home Choice housing register

The easiest way to join Dorset Council Home Choice is to apply online.

To join the housing register please complete the application form by visiting:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/housing/register-for-housing>

Before you apply to the housing register you must have an account, to do this you must have an email address and create a password.

See our tutorial on how to set up an account: <https://youtu.be/-OXKVOujkhg>

You will need your email address and password to log into your account.

If you forget your password, you can follow the instructions on Dorset Council Home Choice website: <https://www.dorsetcouncilhomechoice.org.uk/login/reset-password> Once you have created your account you will be asked to complete the following forms:

- my profile
- my address
- my family
- my housing register

These will be shown as purple banner at the top of your account.

Providing Documents

You must provide all the information and documents we ask for at that time. We cannot assess an application until we have received everything we need. If the information is not provided and no extra time has been agreed, the application will be closed. If you wish to join the register in the future, you will need to make a new application.

See [a list of the documents required](#).

We aim to assess your application within 8 weeks of receiving all relevant documentation. Once assessed we will send a banding letter to your account confirming what the band and bedroom need is. This letter will give you a right to request a review within 21 days.

How to view homes that are advertised

Homes available for bidding are advertised on the Dorset Council Home Choice website: <https://www.dorsetcouncilhomechoice.org.uk/properties>. It includes both re-lets and newly built properties.

Property adverts can start on any weekday at **midnight** (12:00am), excluding weekends. Each advert is open for at least **five days** and closes at **11.59pm**. Adverts will not close on a Friday or Saturday night.

Each advert provides important information about the property, including:

- the location and type of property
- the number of bedrooms
- rent and other charges
- the minimum and maximum number of people who can live there

- any age restrictions for household members
- whether priority criteria apply (for example, a local connection or need for a ground-floor home)
- whether the property has been adapted
- the name of the registered housing provider
- The closing date of the advert

An example of a typical property advert:



To rent

3 bed house **£239.17 Weekly**

Manor Road , Gillingham, SP8 4AH **apply by 29/03/2026 23:59**

3 Bedroom House- New Build

 3







Reference 107097

Key features

Bedrooms: 3	Property type: house
Bathroom has:: Shower over bath	Property has a dining room?: No
Heating: Gas central heating	Double glazing: Yes
Parking: Off street parking	Garden: Own garden
Pets: Yes - with permission	New build: Yes

£ Costs

Rent: £239.17	Service charge: £0.00
Total: £239.17	
Payment frequency: Weekly	
Rent Type: Affordable Rent	

☒ Who is eligible?

Only people who meet the following can bid on this property

Minimum bedroom need: 3	Maximum bedroom need: 3
Maximum occupancy: 5	

How to express an interest in a property

You can express an interest in homes you would like to be considered for. This is known as bidding.

You can place up to six bids a day. You can only bid for homes that are suitable for your household, based on your assessed bedroom need and the number of people in your household.

There is no advantage in bidding early. Your position on the shortlist may change while the advert is open, and other applicants place bids.

To bid for homes you will need your:

- email address
- password

To bid on the website:

- visit the Dorset Council Home Choice website
- click the login menu
- enter your email address and password. This will take you into your account
- click the icon for properties this will show the properties available to bid on
- click on the apply button for the property or properties you are interested in. This shows a summary in a green banner of number of bids received so far and your position on the shortlist if you place the bid
- if you decide to bid for the property a pop-up box will display. It shows how many bids you have left, any additional information for the property and there is an option to make it your preferred property by clicking the 'heart' icon
- once you bid by clicking on confirm, a message will be displayed at the top of the screen to show that your bid has been made successfully
- when you return to the property screen, the property you have bid on will be highlighted in purple
- if you decide you no longer wish to be considered for the property you can withdraw by clicking the purple 'withdraw' button. The display will then give options to continue to withdraw or not

You will not be able to withdraw bids made on your behalf by Dorset Council if you have an accepted homeless duty.

Please make sure we have your most recent phone number and email address so that we can contact you as soon as possible if you are shortlisted for a property. If we do not have your current contact details, you may miss out on the property.

You can easily update your contact details on the Dorset Council Home Choice website through your account.

Property alerts

You can set up property alerts in 'My Account'. You will find the option for alerts at the bottom of the page in a link named 'My alerts'. Click on the link then scroll down to property alerts where you can either receive a weekly email showing all adverts or just those you can bid for.

You will need to complete the form and select your preferences for the property you are interested in, such as:

- property types
- floors
- bedroom need
- gardens
- pets allowed

Shortlisting

Once the bidding cycle closes a final shortlist is created. This will be based on Banding and time on the Register, however there can be other criteria that takes priority when shortlisting. Such as:

- rural properties with local connection criteria
- properties with a S106
- properties with local lettings plans
- community land trust properties
- properties with adaptations or that are ground floor

The Lettings Team at Dorset Council will contact you if you are being considered. They will ask for supporting information to demonstrate that:

- you still meet the letting criteria for the property
- household circumstances have not changed since the original housing register application was made

If you are shortlisted for a property, you will also be sent a letter to your portal to let you know you are under consideration. You can find this in your account under the heading 'messages'. The letter will include the following:

- summary of property you have been shortlisted for
- evidence required to process the nomination

- additional essential information

Once we have your supporting evidence and we are happy that the nomination is suitable you will receive a nomination letter via your portal. It will confirm that the nomination has been sent to the landlord for consideration.

You can use your account to check on the status of a shortlist. You can do this by going into 'My account' in your portal, scroll to the bottom and click the 'view previous bids' link. This will show the bids you have placed on all properties.

Each property will show:

- banding details of the successful bid including the effective date
- whether the property was withdrawn with reasons for withdrawal
- your position on the shortlist
- the status of the bid and the reason you were not successful

The Registered Provider will carry out their own checks before deciding whether to offer you a tenancy. They will contact you using your preferred contact method.

Registered Providers (RPs) will arrange viewings. When the property is ready you will be contacted to sign the tenancy agreement and receive the keys to the property.

RPs have their own allocations policies. They will use these to make the final decision on whether to accept a nomination or not.

We will only contact you when you are being considered for a property. If you are not contacted and you can see the shortlisting is completed, then you have not been successful.

Refusals

If you refuse more than 3 offers of an accommodation, and they are all considered an unreasonable refusal then your banding priority will be reduced.

If you have an accepted homeless duty by Dorset Council and you refuse a suitable property, your homeless duty may be discharged.

Waiting times

There are just under 7000 applicants on the Dorset Council Housing Register and only about 1000 properties are expected to become available each year. This means the vast number of applicants will not successfully bid for a property. You should always consider other housing options.

We have a limited number of larger homes through the housing register.

On average only 12 four bed properties are allocated per year and there has only been one 5, or 5+ bedroom property allocated in the last five years (2021 to 2026).

The highest demand, and the largest number of allocations, are typically in the main towns, including Weymouth, Dorchester, Gillingham, Wimborne, Sherborne, Shaftesbury and Bridport.

Properties in rural villages become available less frequently, which means applicants who are only interested in specific villages may experience longer waiting times. Being flexible about the areas you are willing to consider may increase your chances of receiving an offer of accommodation sooner.

For more on average wait times see our social housing average wait time calculator:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/housing-wait-times>

Contact us

Housing Register Team

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