

Dorset Council social housing allocations summary

Introduction

Dorset Council manages the housing register for people who need help finding social housing. [Our Allocations Policy explains how we assess applications](#), how we decide priority, and how we offer homes when they become available.

Our new policy comes into effect from 1 September 2026, replacing the previous version from 2021- 2026. It applies across the whole Dorset Council area and works in partnership with local housing providers who manage social housing in Dorset.

Demand for social housing is extremely high, with approximately 10000 homes becoming available each year. As a result, households may wait a long time for an offer and being on the housing register does not guarantee that we will offer you a home.

We allocate social housing when we nominate someone to be an assured tenant of housing owned by a private registered provider of social housing.

The housing register

If you want to be on the housing register, you must meet the eligibility and qualification criteria for social housing.

The operation of the housing register involves adding or removing people from it.

We will:

- notify you of our decisions and your rights to review
- keep all information held on the housing register secure

Eligibility for allocation of social housing

We will allocate social housing only to eligible persons.

If you are under immigration control or you do not currently live in the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or the Republic of Ireland you may not be eligible for an allocation of social housing.

If you already live in social housing and are applying for a transfer, you are automatically eligible.

Qualifying persons for an allocation of social housing

We will only allocate social housing to qualifying persons if you:

- are capable of holding a tenancy
- are not guilty of unacceptable behaviour
- have a local connection to Dorset Council
- do not have gross earning over £60,000
- do not have savings of over £16,000

To meet the local connection criteria, you must:

- normally be resident for 2 years or more
- be employed in the Dorset Council area for 2 years or more for a minimum of 16 hours per week
- have close family members (defined as adult children, parents, siblings, or other near relatives)
- any local connection requirements in a s106

Exceptions to local connection

There are exceptions to local connection. Groups of people that do not require a local connection include:

- UK Armed Forces personnel
- social housing tenants with a right to move
- those escaping domestic abuse or violence
- care leavers
- homeless households that we owed a duty by Dorset Council

See a full list of the exceptions in the Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy.

We will tell all applicants in writing whether they are eligible and qualify for social housing. If we refuse your application, you can reapply in the future if your circumstances change.

Applications for social housing

We will provide advice and assistance to make an application for social housing, to those who need it.

Find out [how to apply for social housing and a list of required documents](#) to support your application.

We aim to assess your application within 8 weeks of [receiving all relevant documentation](#).

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 you do not provide the information and do not agree extra time with us, we will close your application. If you then decide to join the housing register in the future, you will need to make a new application.

We will put our decision in writing. We will automatically send these to your portal. You can find them under the 'messages' heading.

The letter will include:

- an effective date
- what band your application is in, and the reason for this
- your bedroom entitlement
- your housing register application and reference number
- details of your right to review

All decisions carry a right to review. You must request a review within 21 days of receiving a decision.

You must tell us about any changes in your circumstances as soon as possible. Change may affect your housing need and your priority on the housing register.

You must not make false statements and must not refuse to share information when applying to be on the housing register or when we offer you social housing. Providing false information may result in disqualification from the housing register or legal action.

If you do not keep us updated, we may not consider you for a property later.

Housing allocation scheme

We assess all applications and place them in one of four bandings. They will be based on our assessment of your housing need and whether you have a connection to the Dorset Council area.

You will be in 'Band One – Priority Housing Need' if you are:

- owed a main homelessness duty
- a priority because of medical needs
- a member of the UK armed forces and in urgent housing need
- fleeing domestic abuse
- a priority because of a welfare need
- currently facing a disaster or emergency

You will be in 'Band Two – High Housing Need' if you:

- are homeless and we owe you a homelessness relief duty
- are under occupying one or more bedrooms in social rented housing in the Dorset Council area
- have two or more bedrooms less than you need so count as overcrowded
- are a foster carer, adopters or care leavers requiring a home
- are living in insanitary and unsatisfactory housing conditions
- have a need to move because of medical grounds
- have a need to move for because of welfare grounds
- are suffering under hardship grounds in your current home
- giving up accessible housing

You will be in 'Band Three – Medium Housing Need' if you:

- are a homeless household in the Dorset Council area
- have a homeless prevention duty
- are a social housing tenant with a right to move
- are part of the UK armed forces community and in housing need
- are assessed overcrowded by one bedroom under the bedroom standard

You will be in 'Band Four – Low Housing Need' if you do not qualify for bands 1,2 or 3, and you:

- are a social housing tenants seeking a transfer
- have a need for older person housing
- are in supported housing and not ready to move

- have a reduced preference for 12 months
- have a low housing need

When homes are allocated, priority is usually based on how urgent someone's housing need is and how long they have been on the housing register.

Some homes may have special requirements. For example, people with a local connection to a parish may have priority first.

See the Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy for [full details on 'other rules outside this policy'](#)

Bedroom Assessment

We will assess the size of home that you can apply for under the Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy. Each of the following are usually allocated a separate bedroom:

- people living together as a couple
- other adults, aged 16 years old or over any person
- two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
- two children aged 9 years or under
- any other child

There are [exceptions to the assessment of bedroom need which can be found in the Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy](#).

If you rent a social housing property in the Dorset Council area, and have more bedrooms than you need, we will use the same rules to work out how many spare bedrooms you have.

We use the UK Government's Bedroom Standard to work out how many bedrooms your household needs. This helps us decide if your home counts as overcrowded.

Under the bedroom standard, you usually need a separate bedroom for:

- any adult couple
- any other adult aged 21 years or over
- two males aged 10 to 20 years
- one male aged 10 to 20 years, and one male aged 9 years or under
- two females aged 10 to 20 years
- one female aged 10 to 20 years, and one female aged 9 years or under
- two children regardless of sex aged 9 years or under
- any remaining child aged 9 years or under

These calculations do not apply if we have placed you in temporary accommodation.

Housing allocation rules

We follow [guidance from the UK government for local authorities](#).

In Dorset private registered providers own social housing. We work with the registered providers to allocate social housing fairly.

You must not make false statements and must not refuse to share information when applying to be on the housing register or when we offer you social housing.

Private registered providers may have their own rules and priorities for allocating social housing.

Equality and fair access

We follow our public sector equality duty and work to make sure we treat everyone fairly.

We can give free information to anyone living in the Dorset Council area about applying to join the housing register, even if they are not sure whether they want to apply.

Contact Us

Housing Register Team

Email: dorsetcouncilhomechoice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Phone: 01305 221739

Lettings Team

Email: lettings@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk