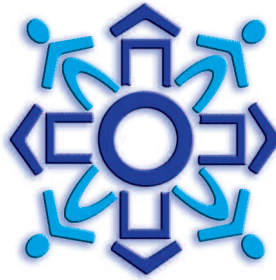


The Oxford Register for Affordable Housing is a partnership between Oxford City Council and the Registered Providers listed on the back page of this form



**OXFORD  
CHOICE BASED  
LETTINGS**

www.oxford.gov.uk



For easy reference, complete your details below

**Housing Application Number**



**REMEMBER! You need your application number, your date of birth and the property reference number to bid.**

**Contact details**

**www.oxfordcitycbl.org.uk**  
**Bidding line: T: 0300 9994474**

Oxford City Council Housing Needs Team  
T: 01865 249811

# User guide to bidding

For those included on the  
Oxford Register for Affordable Housing



## Introduction

This is a guide to Oxford City Council's Choice-Based Lettings Scheme which forms part of the Council's Allocations Scheme.

### What is the Allocations Scheme?

The Allocations Scheme is the housing policy the Council uses to prioritise households in housing need for an offer of social housing in Oxford.

The Allocations Scheme seeks to make the best use of the low number of properties owned by the Council (and partner registered providers of social housing) that become available to let each year in Oxford.

A summary or a full version of the Allocations Scheme is available on the Council's website; [www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk)

### What is the Choice-Based Lettings Scheme?

The Council operates a Choice-Based Lettings Scheme to advertise the limited number of properties becoming available to let each year in Oxford for those who are eligible and qualify for inclusion on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing. The Choice-Based Lettings Scheme increases the choice available to most housing applicants (with some restrictions such as those on the Homeless List) but it cannot increase the number of properties becoming available each year.

### Where can I see properties advertised?

- On the internet at [www.oxfordcitycbl.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcitycbl.org.uk)
- In a free newsletter, *Direction Home*, available at most Council or registered providers' offices across the city (a printable version is also available on the Choice-Based Lettings website).

### Who can bid for properties?

Anyone included on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing in Oxford on the:

- General Register List
- Transfer List (for social housing tenants only)
- Homeless List (for households to whom Oxford City Council has accepted a statutory homeless duty living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council).

**Important, please note inclusion on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing and the Choice-Based Lettings Scheme does not guarantee you will be made an offer of housing.**

For more information on the housing options available and advice about applying for inclusion on Oxford Register for Affordable Housing, please contact the Housing Needs Team on 01865 249811 or check the Council's website for more information.

### How can I bid for a property?

- On-line using the Choice-Based Lettings website.
- Using our automated 24 hr phone bidding line.
- In person at an Oxford City Council or partner registered provider office (if you are unable to use any of the other ways of bidding).



## How do I use the Choice-Based Lettings Scheme?



### Register with Oxford City Council for inclusion on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing

When you register we will advise you of:

- Your housing application number.
- Your housing need priority band.
- The size of property you can apply for.

For more details about applying for housing and other housing options contact the Housing Needs Team or see the Allocations Scheme available on the Council website.



### Choose a property to apply for

Properties are advertised in a *letting cycle* every fortnight:

- On the website at [www.oxfordcitycbl.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcitycbl.org.uk).
- In the Choice-Based Lettings newsletter *Direction Home*.

A *letting cycle* is the length of time a property is advertised as available to bid on. The start and end date of a *letting cycle* is shown on the website and newsletter. *Letting cycles* currently last for 13 days every fortnight\* (starting on a Wednesday and ending on a Monday at midnight).

**\*Important, please note that the length of a *letting cycle* can change so check the website or newsletter carefully or contact the Housing Needs Team for further details.**

The advert details will include:

- The name of the landlord.
- The location (the website has a link to a map).

- The property size and type.
- The rent and other charges.
- Other features of the property such as parking, gardens or adaptations.
- Whether there are any requirements such as minimum age or an assessed need for sheltered accommodation.
- Whether the property has been advertised with preference to a specific household type – such as a household requiring an adapted property.
- Whether the property has been advertised with preference to a specific housing list – General Register List, Transfer List or Homeless List.
- A picture (of the property or a similar property) where available.

The Advert Icon Guide provides more information about symbols used on property adverts and is there to help you. (see page 5)



### Expressing your interest in a property or 'bidding'

There is no money involved in a bid. By placing a bid or 'bidding' for a property you are expressing an interest in being considered for an offer of the property or properties being advertised.

You can only bid for properties where you match what the advert asks for. For example if the advert for a property gives a minimum age. If you try to bid and you are below the minimum age you will not be able to do so.

To bid for a property you will need:

- Your housing application reference number.
- The date of birth of the main housing applicant for your housing application (for security).
- The property reference number of the property you want to apply for. You will be allowed to bid for up to three social rented properties in a bidding cycle (subject to availability).





If you need help with bidding, advice about using the Choice Based Lettings Scheme or to arrange to visit a Council office contact the Housing Needs Team on Oxford 249811

## How to bid on the website

On the website you can view all the properties advertised as available during a *lettings cycle*. You can also search for specific types of properties.

- 1 Type [www.oxfordcitycbl.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcitycbl.org.uk) into the address bar of your internet browser.
- 2 Click the 'Login/My Account' option and enter your housing application number and your 'memorable date' – normally your date of birth (or your partner's date of birth if he/she is the main applicant).

**Helpful Tip:** ensure you enter your date of birth in the format shown. For example if you were born on 1 January 1968 you would enter: 01/01/1968.

- 3 View the properties being advertised that you are eligible to bid for and check the advert details carefully, including the property type and location and decide whether you are interested in applying for the property.

**Helpful Tip:** if you are not shown as eligible for any properties there may be no suitable properties being advertised during the *letting cycle* or you may have already used all of your bids.

### 4 Bidding for a property

After you have decided that you want to apply for a property and to place a bid, select the '**Apply Now**' button on the property advert.

You will see the property details and be asked to confirm your bid. When you confirm your bid, you will be told that your bid has been recorded.

**Helpful Tip:** the property advert shows how many people are above you on the shortlist for the property when you place your bid. Although your position will normally change as people add or remove bids, this will give you an indication of whether your bid is likely to be successful and whether you will receive an offer of housing.

## Bidding on the phone

Call our 24 hr automated bid line number 0300 9994474. You will not be charged for this call if you are calling from a landline, but if you call from a mobile this rate will vary depending on your service provider. You can make bids, withdraw a bid, find out if you are able to bid and what your current queue position is.

Bidding using the telephone system is done using the number keypad on your telephone. As well as using the numbers on the number keypad you will also need to use the # key (found below 9 on most phones).

**Start by calling the bidding line on 0300 9994474 and follow the instructions you hear.**

### What to do

- 1 Press the number on the keypad to choose the language that you want (e.g. press 1 for English). Press 1 on the keypad to confirm.
- 2 Enter your six digit housing application reference followed by #.
- 3 Press 1 on the keypad to confirm.
- 4 Enter the day of the month when you were born followed by #.

For example, if you were born on 15 May 1952 you would enter

1 5 #

Then enter the month you were born followed by #.

For example, if you were born in May you would enter

0 5 #

Then enter the year you were born followed by #.

For example,

1 9 5 2 #

## Then choose what you want to do:

- 5 To make a bid press **1**.  
To review and / or cancel bids that you have already made press **2**.  
To exit press **3**.

## To make a bid

- 6 Enter the reference number of the property that you want to bid for followed by **#**. The number is on the property advert.  
The reference number that you entered will be read back to you.  
If you are not allowed to bid you will be told why. If you are allowed you will be told your queue position.
- 7 Press **1** to confirm your bid, press **2** to change the property reference number.
- 8 You can then make further bids, review your bids or exit **3**.

## Reviewing your bids

- 9 If you want to cancel or review a bid enter **1**, **2**, or **3** depending on which property you want to go to. The property reference number and queue position for this property will be read out to you.  
Press **1** on the keypad to cancel your bid.  
To review or cancel another bid press **1**.  
Press on the keypad to exit **2**.

# Advert icon guide and description

The number of bedrooms in the property.

 Studio flat.

 One bed.


 Two bed.


 Three bed.


 Three bed parlour house.

 Four bed.

 This property has a garage.


 This property has a driveway or other off street parking.


 There is no parking at all at this property.


 This property is fitted with a personal assistance alarm.

 There is controlled entry to this property.

 This property has no gas supply.

 This property has exclusive use of a garden, and you will be responsible for its maintenance.

 The garden at this property is shared with other households.

 The garden at this property is shared with a neighbouring household.







 This property has no garden.

 Pets may be allowed subject to the Landlord's permission.



 Pets are not allowed.

## Mobility

Ground floor properties with level access or adapted properties are advertised with the 'Mobility Icons' (see below).  
Preference is given to households assessed as requiring this type of accommodation.




-  There is level access into and throughout the property.
-  This property has wide door ways and the electric switches have been placed to suit a disabled person.
-  This property has some disabled adaptations. This can include a level access shower, or a stair lift, or a walk in bath. You should check the further details on the web-site advert or ask the landlord about the adaptations.
-  This property has been purpose built or fully adapted for someone who uses a wheelchair indoors and outside.
-  There is either a lift in this property or, there is a communal lift in the block. Please check property details.
-  The energy efficiency rating of the property (where available).

## Tenancy details




-  Affordable rent (a higher rent than normal social rented properties).
-  Flexible tenancy for a fixed term. The length of the tenancy is shown on the icon and will usually be between 2 and 5 years. The landlord may extended the tenancy again after this period.

## Household symbols

These symbols tell you about the people who can live in the property.




-  This is the maximum age of the eldest occupant.
-  This is minimum age of the youngest applicant or household member. If the icon is shown twice on the advert with a different number, the highest number shows the minimum age of the applicant and the lowest number the minimum age of any other household member (for example a child).
-  Preference will be given to applicants of this age or older.

## Sheltered and supported housing

-  Sheltered housing: for older people who have been assessed as having a support need.
-  Extra care sheltered housing: for older people who have been assessed as having a need for extra care sheltered housing.
-  Supported Housing: for people who have been assessed as having a need for extra support.

## Bidding restrictions

These symbols tell you about who will be given preference for properties advertised with these icons.

-  Preference will be given to applicants on the Transfer List.
-  Preference will be given to applicants on the General Register List.
-  Preference will be given to applicants on the Homeless List.



## What happens when a *letting cycle* ends

After a *letting cycle* ends a final shortlist is created listing all the housing applicants who have applied for the property in priority order taking into account their Priority Band, Priority Band Start Date and any other preferences stated on the advert.

An Allocations Officer then checks the shortlist and contacts the successful housing applicant and sends them a written offer of housing. The successful housing applicant is then given an opportunity to view the property before making a final decision about whether to accept the offer of the property they have bid for.

The person who finishes first on the shortlist will normally be offered the property although this is not always the case. The Council and its Registered Provider partners reserve the right not to offer the property to the person highest on the shortlist if the property offers a better match with the needs of another high priority applicant, the person is not considered suitable for an offer of housing or the property is not considered suitable for their housing requirements. If a housing applicant's circumstance have not been fully verified they may also be overlooked for a potential offer.



## Feedback

Information is published about the outcome of each shortlist showing:

- The number of housing applicants that bid for a property.
- The Housing Need Priority Band and Priority Band Start Date of the housing applicant who finished highest on the shortlist (not always the person who was offered the property).
- Whether the Housing Applicant was on the General Register List, Transfer List or Homeless List.

This information is published in the *Direction Home* newsletter and also on the Choice-Based Lettings website under 'outcomes'. This information can give you a better idea of how popular a particular property or area is and whether you are likely to successfully bid for a property or should instead consider other housing options.



## Frequently asked questions

### Q When can I bid?

A You can:

- bid for up to three rented properties in a cycle plus any number of shared ownership homes
- only bid for properties that you are eligible for
- change your bids anytime while the properties are being advertised.

### Q Which properties can I bid for?

A The icons on the adverts show any rules about who is able to bid for a property. These are all shown in the icon guide on page 7.

### Q What is the minimum age?

A For most properties, you have to be 18 to have a tenancy. Properties that have been designated for older people, will have age restrictions and these will be shown in the property details.

### Q What does maximum age mean?

A A small number of supported housing properties have a maximum age limit (for example, projects for young people). This will be shown in the property advert.

### Q What are disabled adapted properties?

A Some homes have been adapted to make them suitable for people with physical disabilities. These properties are usually reserved for applicants where a member of the household has such a need. However, where there is nobody on the housing register with such a need, the property may be offered to the person with highest priority.

### Q Can I take my pet with me?

A Some accommodation is not pet friendly and you should not bid if you have told us that you have a large pet or pets unless you can find another home for them. It is the decision of the landlord which pets are accepted.

### Q What is a direct match property?

A Some properties are offered directly to applicants who have very specific needs, for example for a high level of adaptations. We still show the property in the *Direction Home* newsletter but no-one else can bid for it.

### Q How do I know what size of property I can bid for?

A When you register for housing you will be told the smallest and largest size of property you can bid for.

### Q Can I change my bid?

A You can go back and check your queue position at any time during the two weeks. You can then decide whether to withdraw your bids and bid on other properties.

### Q How do I know where I am in the queue?

A When you bid for a property, you can find out where you are in the shortlist for that property. This information is available on the website and telephone bidline. You then have the option to confirm or withdraw your bid.

### Q Is it better to bid early?

A There is no advantage in placing your bid early. If you do make a bid early, be aware that your position in the queue may change if other people with higher priority bid after you.

### Q How many bids can I make?

A You can bid for up to three properties for rent and any number of properties on the Housing Options list. You can withdraw bids and reuse them up to the end of that period.

**If you have questions about how the scheme applies to you, or about bidding for properties, you can contact staff at Oxford City Council, or your landlord if you are already a social housing tenant in Oxford.**

### Top tips for successful bidding!

- **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** If you don't understand or want guidance, get in touch.
- **Check the property adverts in every lettings cycle.**
- **Check your bids and change them if you are not high enough.**
- **Be realistic!** There are many more people seeking housing in Oxford than properties becoming available to let each year and not all can be housed by the Council and it's partners. Read the feedback tables and use this information to help you decide whether to continue bidding or to pursue other housing options to improve your housing situation instead.





www.oxford.gov.uk



## Contact us

[www.oxfordcitycbl.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcitycbl.org.uk)

**Bidding line: T: 0300 9994474**

Oxford City Council Housing Needs Team  
T: 01865 249811

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**If you need this publication translated,  
in a larger printed version or in another  
format please contact the Housing  
Needs Team.**

The Oxford Register for Affordable Housing  
is a partnership between Oxford City Council  
and the registered providers listed below.

A2Dominion

Bromford Group

Catalyst Housing Group

GreenSquare Group

Home Group

Jephson Housing Association Group

Soha Housing

Thames Valley Housing

