

Homefinder Somerset Quarterly Monitoring Report October 2019

Introduction

This report provides the latest key information from Homefinder Somerset.

Households registered with Homefinder Somerset

The number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset increased by 6% (543 households) between 30 June and 7 November.

A similar proportion (8%) of households across the 4 local authorities are in Gold Band. However there are differences between the local authorities in the proportion of households in Silver and Bronze. The proportion of households in Silver ranges from 35% in South Somerset to 47% in Mendip, whilst the proportion in Bronze ranges from 46% in Mendip to 56% in both Somerset West & Taunton and South Somerset.

Table 1: Number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset by local authority and Band as at 7 November 2019

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mendip	3	0%	109	7%	735	47%	712	46%	1,559	15%
Sedgemoor	2	0%	169	7%	933	38%	1,370	55%	2,474	25%
Somerset West & Taunton	7	0%	342	8%	1,443	36%	2,256	56%	4,048	40%
South Somerset	6	0%	184	9%	699	35%	1,111	56%	2,000	20%
Total	18	0%	804	8%	3,810	38%	5,449	54%	10,081	100%

Note: The percentages refer to the proportion of households who are in that Band (e.g. 8% of all households are in Gold Band). The percentage given for the total refers to the proportion of all households registered with a particular local authority (e.g. 25% of households are registered with Sedgemoor DC).

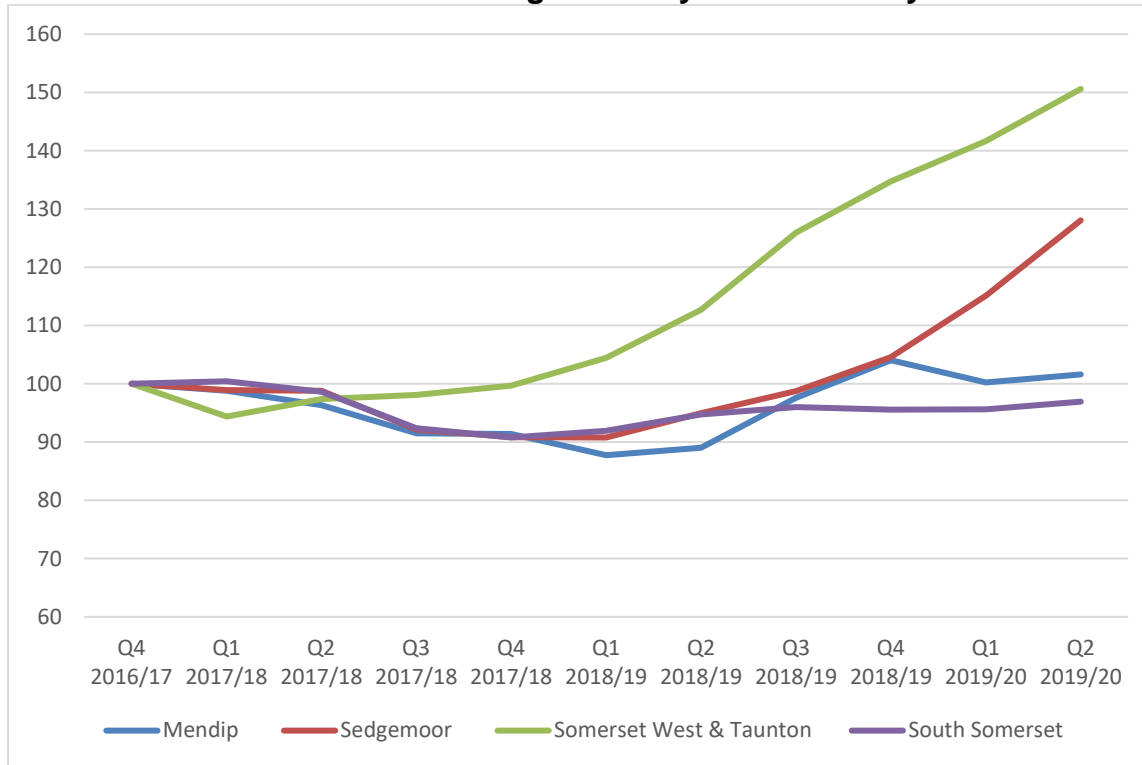
It can be seen from Table 2 and Chart 1 that the number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset has increased by 23% since Q4 2016/17. However, this increase is largely due to the growth in the register in Somerset West & Taunton, which has increased by 50% during this time. This increase is due to the local authority being unable to undertake the renewals process due to transformation and merger of the 2 local authorities. The numbers of households registered with Mendip and South Somerset have remained fairly consistent.

Table 2: Number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset by local authority

	Q4 16/17	Q1 17/18	Q2 17/18	Q3 17/18	Q4 17/18	Q1 18/19	Q2 18/19	Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20
Mendip	1,534	1,516	1,478	1,404	1,402	1,346	1,366	1,497	1,596	1,538	1,559
Sedgemoor	1,932	1,911	1,909	1,781	1,755	1,754	1,835	1,908	2,020	2,224	2,474
Somerset West & Taunton	2,688	2,537	2,618	2,637	2,680	2,808	3,030	3,386	3,622	3,808	4,048
South Somerset	2,063	2,072	2,035	1,906	1,873	1,897	1,954	1,980	1,971	1,973	2,000
Total	8,217	8,036	8,040	7,728	7,710	7,805	8,185	8,771	9,209	9,543	10,081

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Chart 1: Number of households registered by local authority. Q4 2016/17 as the base



Half of all households registered with Homefinder Somerset need a 1 bed home, whilst a third need a 2 bed home.

Table 3: Size of home needed. Households registered as at 7 November 2019

	1 Bed		2 Beds		3 Beds		4+ Beds		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	784	50%	511	33%	214	14%	50	3%	1,559
Sedgemoor	1,176	48%	836	34%	369	15%	101	4%	2,474
Somerset West & Taunton	2,152	53%	1,199	30%	526	13%	171	4%	4,048
South Somerset	962	48%	635	32%	311	16%	92	5%	2,000
Total	5,074	50%	3,181	32%	1,420	14%	414	4%	10,081

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Bidding Analysis

Between 1 January and 30 October 2019 a total of 119,112 bids were placed by 7,801 households on homes across Somerset. 98% of these bids were made via the website (www.homefindersomerset.co.uk).

Table 4 shows that the number of households bidding each month during 2019 has remained fairly consistent, ranging from just under 2,800 in April to just over 3,100 in October.

Table 4: Number of bids and bidders during 2019

	No. of bids	No. of bidders
January	11,493	2,867
February	12,442	2,833
March	11,976	2,998
April	9,397	2,792
May	14,484	3,091
June	10,992	2,930
July	12,349	2,836
August	12,284	2,969
September	11,049	2,815
October	12,746	3,141
Average	11,921	2,927

Table 5 below shows the proportion of households by local authority and Band who are considered to be inactive (e.g. they have not bid during the last 6 months and are not on autobid).

It can be seen that half of households registered with Homefinder Somerset can be considered as inactive. The proportion of inactive households varies by Band and local authority. Generally, the proportion of inactive households increases as priority reduces. The figures for Somerset West & Taunton will be affected by the fact that the renewal process has not run for some time, as detailed above.

Table 5: Percentage of households who have not bid during the last 6 months, and are not on autobid as at 11 November 2019

	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Mendip	0%	36%	34%	50%	41%
Sedgemoor	0%	38%	41%	55%	49%
Somerset West & Taunton	50%	52%	48%	64%	57%
South Somerset	20%	31%	36%	51%	44%
Total	28%	42%	41%	57%	50%

Table 6 reveals that an average of 57 bids were placed for the 616 homes advertised between 1 July and 30 September 2019. The average number of bids varied considerably between local authority areas and property type/ size.

The average number of bids for houses (91) is much higher than for flats (36). Households can increase their chances of finding a home by considering flats as well as houses.

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The average number of bids for homes advertised during the second quarter ranged from 35 bids in South Somerset (231 homes advertised) to 82 in Somerset West & Taunton (141 homes advertised). This is mainly due to the significantly higher number of flats advertised in South Somerset (122 in Q2) compared to the other local authority areas.

Table 6: Number of homes and average number of bids by type, size and local authority (1 July – 30 September 2019)

	Mendip		Sedgemoor		Somerset West & Taunton		South Somerset		Total	
	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids
Bungalow	23	65	5	104	28	91	35	36	91	64
1 Bedroom	17	71	4	125	18	96	22	34	61	68
2 Bedroom	6	46	1	21	10	84	13	41	30	55
Flat	61	29	64	41	69	66	122	20	316	36
Studio	1	4	1	47					2	26
1 Bedroom	39	29	29	50	37	85	70	23	175	42
2 Bedroom	21	30	34	33	32	45	52	16	139	29
House	31	75	54	123	41	105	66	63	192	91
1 Bedroom	1	115	1	167			1	65	3	116
2 Bedroom	20	84	22	133	21	126	29	71	92	101
3 Bedroom	10	55	30	117	20	83	33	58	93	82
4 Bedroom			1	66			3	44	4	49
Maisonette	1	6	3	28	1	52	2	15	7	24
1 Bedroom							1	23	1	23
2 Bedroom			3	28	1	52	1	6	5	28
3 Bedroom	1	6							1	6
Studio flat			2	59	2	77	6	9	10	32
Studio			2	59	1	82	5	10	8	31
1 Bedroom					1	71	1	2	2	37
Total	116	48	128	78	141	82	231	35	616	57

Note: This data excludes homes let by direct match

Of the 616 homes advertised during the second quarter, 40 (6%) received over 150 bids. The highest number of bids received was 296, for a 1 bed bungalow in the centre of Taunton. At the other end of the scale, 37 homes received less than 5 bids. Almost all (95% - 35 homes) of these were flats.

Rejection Reasons

During the second quarter landlords set a total of 885 bids to match or offer rejected. Table 7 shows the most common reasons used. 592 households were match or offer rejected (as some households were match or offer rejected for more than 1 property) by landlords for 302 homes (as more than one household was match or offer rejected on some homes). One household, a Gold Band applicant seeking to move on from supported accommodation, was match or offer rejected 14 times by 5 different landlords during the quarter.

The most common reasons used for rejecting households were: 'Landlord considers unsuitable due to arrears/debts', 'Landlord does not consider property suitable for applicant', 'Applicant not

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responded & Applicant did not respond to offer' (these 2 reasons have been grouped as they are the same) and 'Applicant no longer wants to be considered'. Together these reasons accounted for just over half (51%) of all rejections during the quarter.

Yarlington accounted for just over a third (35%) of match and offer rejections in the last quarter, whilst Aster accounted for a quarter (25%).

Table 7 and Chart 2 show that there was variation between landlords in the most common match and offer rejection reasons they used during the last quarter. For example, 'Applicant not responded & Applicant did not respond to offer' was the most common rejection used by Homes in Sedgemoor (33% of all rejections), LiveWest (18%) and Yarlington (16%), whilst 'Landlord does not consider property suitable for applicant' was the most common reason used by Aster (22%) and Stonewater (33%).

The data reveals some other differences between the use of different rejection reasons. For example, Aster were the only landlord to use the 'Property is adapted & applicant has no requirement for adaptations' rejection reason in the last quarter (using it 47 times). Whilst Yarlington accounted for the majority (79%) of households rejected due to not meeting an agreed local lettings plan.

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Table 7: Match or Offer Rejection reasons used by landlords (1 July – 30 September 2019).

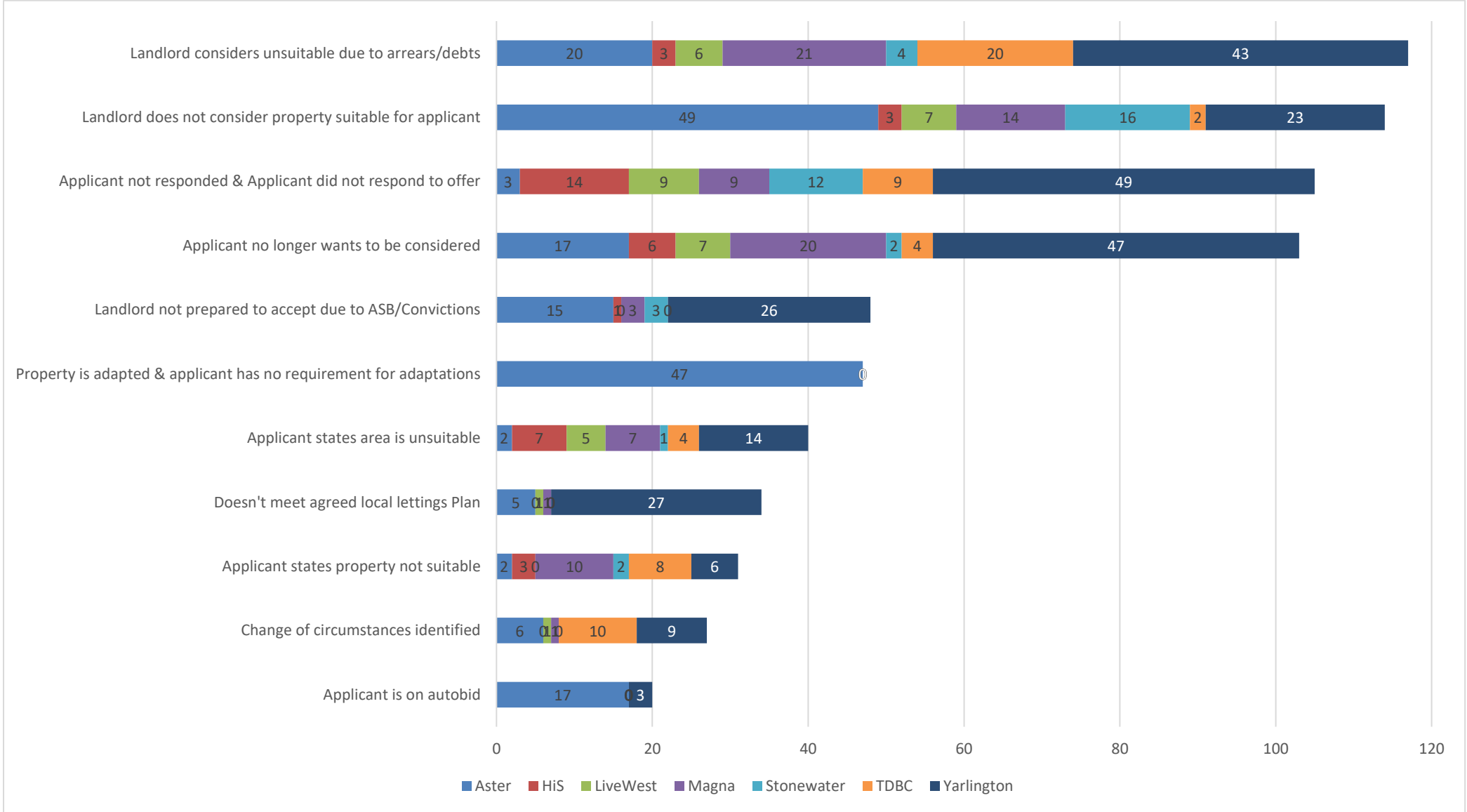
	Aster		HiS		LiveWest		Magna		Stonewater		TDBC		Yarlington		Other ¹		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of total
Landlord considers unsuitable due to arrears/debts	20	9%	3	7%	6	12%	21	22%	4	8%	20	27%	43	14%	2	6%	119	13%
Landlord does not consider property suitable for applicant	49	22%	3	7%	7	14%	14	15%	16	33%	2	3%	23	7%	2	6%	116	13%
Applicant not responded & Applicant did not respond to offer	3	1%	14	33%	9	18%	9	9%	12	24%	9	12%	49	16%	9	25%	114	13%
Applicant no longer wants to be considered	17	8%	6	14%	7	14%	20	21%	2	4%	4	5%	47	15%	7	19%	110	12%
Landlord not prepared to accept due to ASB/Convictions	15	7%	1	2%	0	0%	3	3%	3	6%	0	0%	26	8%	1	3%	49	6%
Property is adapted & applicant has no requirement for adaptations	47	21%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	47	5%
Applicant states area is unsuitable	2	1%	7	16%	5	10%	7	7%	1	2%	4	5%	14	5%	3	8%	43	5%
Doesn't meet agreed local lettings Plan	5	2%	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	27	9%	0	0%	34	4%
Applicant states property not suitable	2	1%	3	7%	0	0%	10	10%	2	4%	8	11%	6	2%	0	0%	31	4%
Change of circumstances identified	6	3%	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%	0	0%	10	13%	9	3%	1	3%	28	3%
Applicant is on autobid	17	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%	0	0%	20	2%
Offer withdrawn by landlord	2	1%	1	2%	3	6%	1	1%	1	2%	0	0%	7	2%	0	0%	15	2%
Landlord not prepared to accept due to tenancy conduct	6	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%	4	8%	0	0%	1	0%	1	3%	14	2%
Adapted housing required	5	2%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	5	7%	1	0%	0	0%	12	1%
Landlord not prepared to accept as they consider it unaffordable	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	5%	0	0%	0	0%	6	2%	1	3%	12	1%
Fails to meet housing needs	4	2%	3	7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1%	0	0%	11	1%
Requires ground floor	3	1%	2	5%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	7%	1	0%	0	0%	11	1%
Other reasons (less than 10 households rejected for each reason)	21	9%	0	0%	10	20%	2	2%	4	8%	8	11%	44	14%	10	28%	99	11%
Total	224	100%	43	100%	50	100%	96	100%	49	100%	75	100%	311	100%	36	100%	885	100%

Note: Percentages for each landlord refer to % of total rejections for that landlord (e.g. 9% of households rejected by Aster were due to arrears/debts)

¹ 'Other' includes Guinness, Sanctuary, Selwood and SHAL, who each rejected less than 20 households.

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Chart 2: Number of times the most common match & offer rejection reasons were used by the largest landlords (1 July – 30 September 2019)



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Homes Let

Between 1 July and 30 September 2019 514 homes across Somerset were set to let². Similar numbers of 1 bed and 2 bed homes were let, and together accounted for over 80% of all homes let.

Tables 8 and 9 set out the profile of these homes by size, local authority and landlord. It can be seen that Yarlington accounted for 35% of all homes set to let in the second quarter.

Table 8: Homes let between 1 July and 30 September 2019 by property local authority

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	Total
Mendip	0	37	48	14	1	0	0	100
Sedgemoor	3	35	42	15	1	0	1	97
Somerset West & Taunton	1	52	46	17	2	0	0	118
South Somerset	2	83	76	35	3	0	0	199
Total	6	207	212	81	7	0	1	514

Table 9: Homes let between 1 July and 30 September 2019 by landlord

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	Total
Aster	0	31	36	7	1	0	0	75
Curo	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
Hastoe	0	0	6	1	1	0	0	8
Homes in Sedgemoor	3	31	24	3	1	0	1	63
LiveWest	0	8	19	9	1	0	0	37
Magna Housing	0	11	15	10	0	0	0	36
Sanctuary HA	0	6	5	1	0	0	0	12
Selwood Housing	0	2	7	4	0	0	0	13
SHAL	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
Southwestern Housing Society	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Stonewater	0	1	9	1	0	0	0	11
Taunton Deane BC	1	39	18	9	1	0	0	68
Yarlington	2	76	68	32	2	0	0	180
Total	6	207	212	81	7	0	1	514

Tables 10 and 11 show that the same proportion of homes (43%) were let to households in the Gold and Silver bands. The proportion of homes let to households in the Gold Band varied from 30% of homes in Mendip to 52% of homes in Somerset West & Taunton. Whilst the proportion of homes let to households in Silver band ranged from 34% in Somerset West & Taunton to 52% in Mendip. 12% of homes were let to households in Bronze band.

The proportion of homes let to applicants in different Bands also varied by landlord (Table 11). Amongst the 6 landlords³ who let the most homes in the second quarter, the proportion of homes let to households in Gold Band ranged from 28% for Aster to 59% for Taunton Deane BC.

² These homes were set to Offer Accepted

³ Yarlington, Aster, Taunton Deane BC, Homes in Sedgemoor, LiveWest & Magna

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Table 10: Homes let between 1 July and 30 September 2019 by property local authority and Band

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	3	3%	30	30%	52	52%	15	15%	100
Sedgemoor	2	2%	47	48%	37	38%	11	11%	97
Somerset West & Taunton	2	2%	61	52%	40	34%	15	13%	118
South Somerset	5	3%	82	41%	91	46%	21	11%	199
Total	12	2%	220	43%	220	43%	62	12%	514

Table 11: Homes let between 1 July and 30 September 2019 by landlord and Band

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Aster	4	5%	21	28%	38	51%	12	16%	75
Curo	0	0%	2	50%	2	50%	0	0%	4
Hastoe	0	0%	1	13%	6	75%	1	13%	8
Homes in Sedgemoor	1	2%	28	44%	24	38%	10	16%	63
LiveWest	2	5%	21	57%	12	32%	2	5%	37
Magna Housing	1	3%	14	39%	19	53%	2	6%	36
Sanctuary	0	0%	6	50%	5	42%	1	8%	12
Selwood Housing	0	0%	4	31%	7	54%	2	15%	13
SHAL	0	0%	2	50%	2	50%	0	0%	4
Southwestern Housing Society	1	33%	1	33%	0	0%	1	33%	3
Stonewater	0	0%	7	64%	3	27%	1	9%	11
Taunton Deane BC	0	0%	40	59%	17	25%	11	16%	68
Yarlington	3	2%	73	41%	85	47%	19	11%	180
Total	12	2%	220	43%	220	43%	62	12%	514

75 homes were let to homeless applicants in Gold Band between 1 July and 30 September 2019. Lets to homeless applicants in Gold Band accounted for 22% of homes let in Sedgemoor during the quarter, but only 5% in Mendip – see Table 12. Similarly, amongst the 6 landlords who let the most homes in the second quarter the proportion of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band varied from 30% of homes let by LiveWest to 5% of homes let by Aster – see Table 13.

Table 12: Homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band between 1 July and 30 September 2019 by property local authority

	No. of homes let	No. of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band	% of all homes let
Mendip	100	5	5%
Sedgemoor	97	21	22%
Somerset West & Taunton	118	17	14%
South Somerset	199	32	16%
Total	514	75	15%

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Table 13: Homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band between 1 July and 30 September 2019 by landlord

	No. of homes let	No. of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band	% of all homes let
Aster	4	75	5%
Curo	0	4	0%
Hastoe	0	8	0%
Homes in Sedgemoor	11	63	17%
LiveWest	11	37	30%
Magna Housing	4	36	11%
Sanctuary HA	1	12	8%
Selwood Housing	0	13	0%
SHAL	2	4	50%
Southwestern Housing Society	1	3	33%
Stonewater	3	11	27%
Taunton Deane BC	7	68	10%
Yarlington	31	180	17%
Total	75	514	15%

Over 28,500 homes have been let through Homefinder Somerset since 2009. The total number of lets per year by size is shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Number of properties let

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	Total
2009	41	927	1,063	477	42	2	0	2,552
2010	41	926	1,078	576	52	4	1	2,678
2011	48	933	1,381	635	56	6	0	3,059
2012	46	944	1,358	717	55	3	1	3,124
2013	50	969	1,264	588	49	8	0	2,928
2014	54	935	1,148	547	48	4	0	2,736
2015	40	1,031	1,294	605	36	4	2	3,012
2016	43	832	1,065	446	31	3	0	2,420
2017	37	847	953	365	27	2	0	2,231
2018	35	866	791	333	34	1	0	2,060
2019 to date	28	715	705	289	29	1	1	1,768
Total	463	9,925	12,100	5,578	459	38	5	28,568