

Homefinder Somerset Quarterly Monitoring Report January 2020

Introduction

This report provides the latest key information from Homefinder Somerset.

Households registered with Homefinder Somerset

The number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset fell by 1.4% (140 households) between 7 November 2019 and 2 January 2020.

The proportion of households in Gold Band varies from 6% in Mendip to 10% in South Somerset. It can be seen that the proportion of households in the Silver and Bronze Bands are very similar in 3 of the 4 local authorities (35% or 36% in Silver and 56% in Bronze), whilst Mendip has a higher proportion of households in Silver (46%) and a lower proportion in Bronze (48%).

Table 1: Number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset by local authority and Band as at 2 January 2020

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mendip	2	0%	96	6%	703	46%	726	48%	1,527	15%
Sedgemoor	3	0%	164	7%	859	36%	1,331	56%	2,357	24%
Somerset West & Taunton	11	0%	322	8%	1,451	36%	2,256	56%	4,040	41%
South Somerset	3	0%	192	10%	699	35%	1,123	56%	2,017	20%
Total	19	0%	774	8%	3,712	37%	5,436	55%	9,941	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).

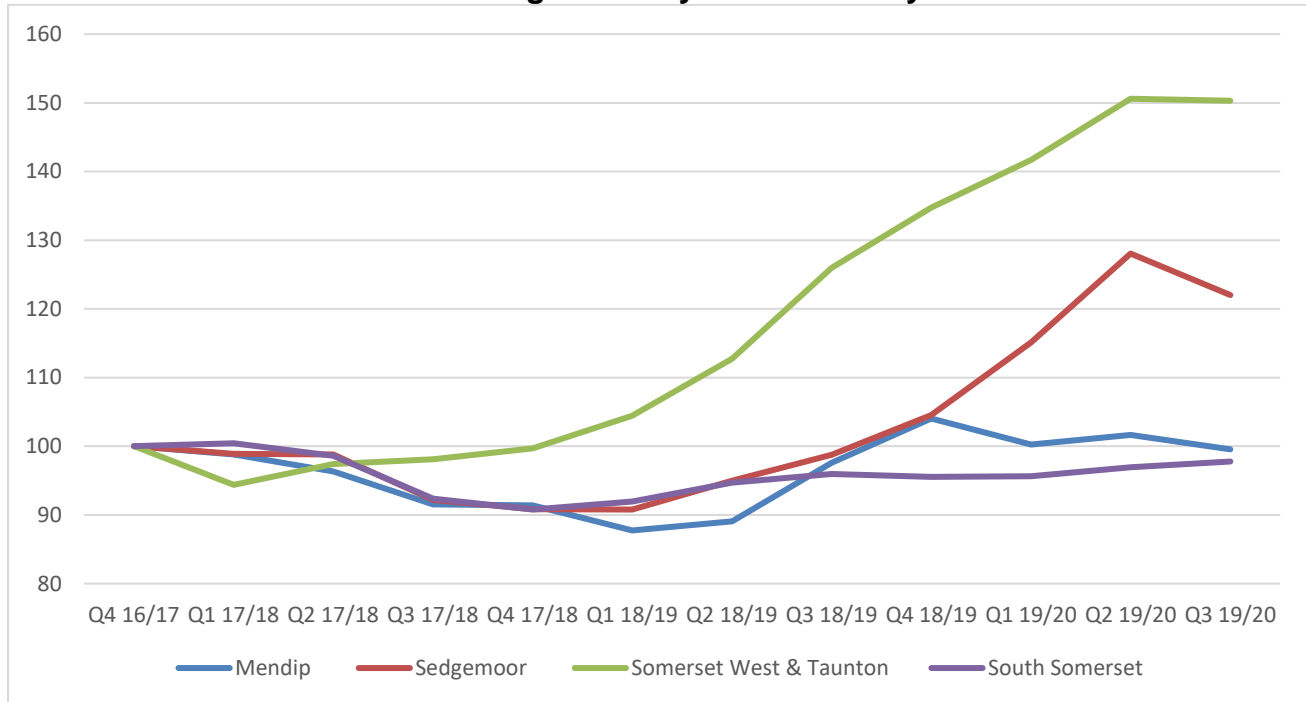
It can be seen from Table 2 and Chart 1 that the number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset has increased by 21% since Q4 2016/17. However, as previously reported this increase is largely due to the growth in the register in Somerset West & Taunton, which has increased by 50% during this 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. However the number of households registered with Somerset West & Taunton did drop very slightly over the last quarter, the local authority have started work to review the register.

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	Q3 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	1,527
Sedgemoor	1,932	1,911	1,909	1,781	1,755	1,754	1,835	1,908	2,020	2,224	2,474	2,357
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	4,040
South Somerset	2,063	2,072	2,035	1,906	1,873	1,897	1,954	1,980	1,971	1,973	2,000	2,017
Total	8,217	8,036	8,040	7,728	7,710	7,805	8,185	8,771	9,209	9,543	10,081	9,941

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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 just under a third (31%) need a 2 bed home.

Table 3: Size of home needed. Households registered as at 2 January 2020

	1 Bed		2 Beds		3 Beds		4+ Beds		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	766	50%	495	32%	210	14%	56	4%	1,527
Sedgemoor	1,127	48%	787	33%	343	15%	100	4%	2,357
Somerset West & Taunton	2,133	53%	1,210	30%	524	13%	173	4%	4,040
South Somerset	967	48%	629	31%	324	16%	97	5%	2,017
Total	4,993	50%	3,121	31%	1,401	14%	426	4%	9,941

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Bidding Analysis

Between 1 January and 31 December 2019 a total of 141,695 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
November	11,551	2,992
December	10,628	2,816
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 2 January 2020

	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Mendip	0%	38%	33%	52%	42%
Sedgemoor	33%	33%	41%	53%	47%
Somerset West & Taunton	27%	53%	50%	65%	58%
South Somerset	0%	34%	35%	50%	43%
Total	21%	42%	42%	57%	50%

Table 6 reveals that an average of 53 bids were placed for the 616 homes advertised between 1 October and 31 December 2019. The average number of bids varied considerably between local authority areas and property type/ size.

The average number of bids for houses (81) is much higher than for flats (33). 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 quarter ranged from 38 bids in South Somerset (242 homes advertised) to 74 in Somerset West & Taunton (163 homes advertised). This is mainly due to the significantly higher number of flats advertised in South Somerset (111) compared to the other local authority areas.

Table 6: Number of homes and average number of bids by type, size and local authority (1 October – 31 December 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	16	54	18	72	20	68	38	30	92	51
1 Bedroom	10	59	15	80	13	74	25	29	63	55
2 Bedroom	6	45	2	27	7	57	13	32	28	41
3 Bedroom			1	50					1	50
Flat	46	30	49	40	72	53	111	19	278	33
1 Bedroom	26	38	22	46	38	67	70	20	156	38
2 Bedroom	20	20	27	35	34	38	41	16	122	27
House	27	59	42	94	65	102	90	66	224	81
1 Bedroom	2	115	0		0		2	64	4	89
2 Bedroom	10	80	15	134	32	138	50	78	107	104
3 Bedroom	13	38	25	75	31	67	37	50	106	59
4 Bedroom	2	33	2	30	2	68	1	33	7	42
Maisonette	2	46	5	25	3	11	0		10	25
1 Bedroom	1	76	1	38	0		0		2	57
2 Bedroom	1	15	2	24	3	11	0		6	16
3 Bedroom	0		2	19	0		0		2	19
Studio flat	1	49	5	27	3	61	3	38	12	40
Studio	1	49	5	27	3	61	3	38	12	40
Total	92	43	119	62	163	74	242	38	616	53

Note: This data excludes homes let by direct match

Of the 616 homes advertised during the last 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 1,176 bids to match or offer rejected. Table 7 shows the reasons used. 699 households were match or offer rejected (as some households were match or offer rejected for more than 1 property) by landlords for 374 homes (as more than one household was match or offer rejected on some homes). Five households were match or offer rejected 10 or times. One of these households, in Gold Band as an accepted homeless case, was rejected 19 times by 5 different landlords during the quarter. This was primarily due to the applicant having been evicted by a Homefinder Somerset partner landlord in May 2018

The most common reasons used for rejecting households were: 'Landlord does not consider property suitable for applicant', 'Applicant not responded & Applicant did not respond to offer'

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(these 2 reasons have been grouped as they are the same), 'Applicant no longer wants to be considered', 'Landlord not prepared to accept due to ASB/Convictions, and 'Landlord considers unsuitable due to arrears/debts'. These were also the most common reasons in the previous quarter. Together these reasons accounted 61% of all rejections during the quarter.

Yarlington accounted for just over a third (45%) of match and offer rejections in the last quarter, which is to be expected given that Yarlington is the largest landlord in Homefinder Somerset.

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, 'Landlord does not consider property suitable for applicant' was the most common reason used by Aster (29% of all rejections), LiveWest (24%) and Magna (20%). Whilst 'Applicant not responded & Applicant did not respond to offer' was the most common rejection used by Homes in Sedgemoor (26%), 'Landlord not prepared to accept due to ASB/Convictions' was the most common reason used by Stonewater (24%), 'Landlord considers unsuitable due to arrears/debts' was the most common reason used by Taunton Deane BC and 'Applicant no longer wants to be considered' was the most common reason used by Yarlington (16%).

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Table 7: Match or Offer Rejection reasons used by landlords (1 October – 31 December 2019).

	Aster		HiS		LiveWest		Magna		Stonewater		TDBC		Yarlington		Other ¹		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of total
Landlord does not consider property suitable for applicant	55	29%	4	9%	23	24%	18	20%	28	18%	22	15%	60	15%	2	3%	212	18%
Applicant not responded & Applicant did not respond to offer	6	3%	11	26%	19	20%	12	13%	24	16%	17	12%	48	12%	15	25%	152	13%
Applicant no longer wants to be considered	16	8%	3	7%	11	11%	14	15%	8	5%	8	6%	62	16%	9	15%	131	11%
Landlord not prepared to accept due to ASB/Convictions	10	5%	1	2%	1	1%	3	3%	37	24%	3	2%	53	13%	7	12%	115	10%
Landlord considers unsuitable due to arrears/debts	19	10%	1	2%	12	13%	7	8%	8	5%	23	16%	40	10%	3	5%	113	10%
Applicant states area is unsuitable	3	2%	6	14%	3	3%	5	5%	3	2%	21	15%	17	4%	1	2%	59	5%
Applicant states property not suitable	2	1%	4	9%	2	2%	13	14%	5	3%	13	9%	10	3%	4	7%	53	5%
Change of circumstances identified	4	2%	3	7%	6	6%	11	12%	2	1%	6	4%	11	3%	0	0%	43	4%
Adapted housing required	14	7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10	7%	0	0%	2	3%	26	2%
Unsuitable location deemed by Agency/landlord	0	0%	2	5%	4	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	13	3%	4	7%	23	2%
Landlord not prepared to accept as they consider it unaffordable	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	4	3%	0	0%	11	3%	3	5%	20	2%
Landlord not prepared to accept due to tenancy conduct	4	2%	1	2%	0	0%	2	2%	6	4%	2	1%	3	1%	0	0%	18	2%
Health Reasons prevent applicant from moving	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%	13	3%	1	2%	17	1%
Requires ground floor	4	2%	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%	1	1%	5	3%	5	1%	0	0%	17	1%
Fails to meet housing needs	4	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	5	3%	5	1%	0	0%	15	1%
Equal Bid given greater priority	13	7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	14	1%
Offer withdrawn by landlord	4	2%	1	2%	1	1%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%	5	1%	0	0%	13	1%
Applicant failed to attend viewing/letting	1	1%	4	9%	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%	2	1%	2	1%	0	0%	11	1%
Applicant did not complete verification	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	2	1%	4	1%	0	0%	10	1%

¹ 'Other' includes Guinness, Hastoe, Sanctuary, Selwood and SHAL, who each rejected less than 35 households.

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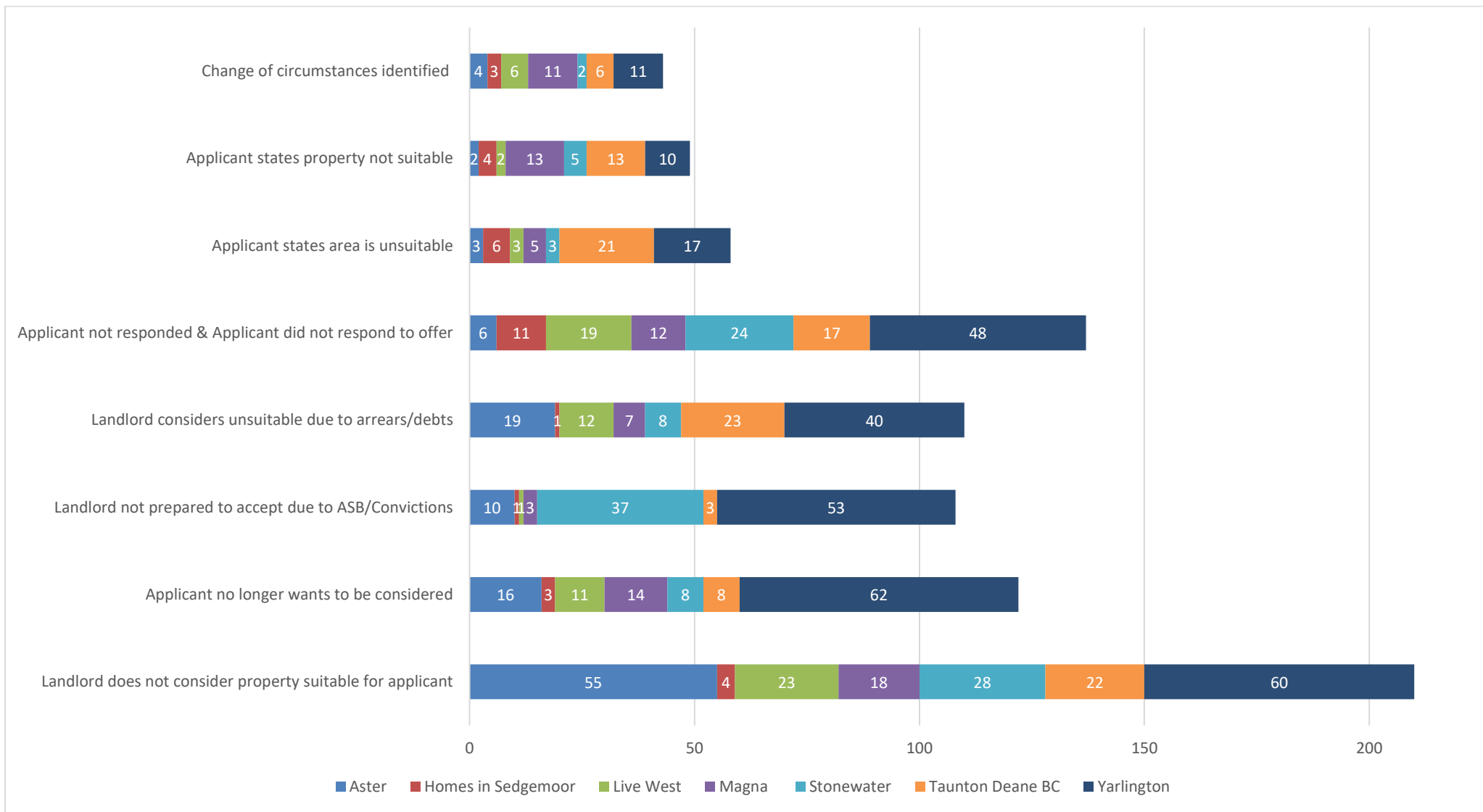
	Aster		HiS		LiveWest		Magna		Stonewater		TDBC		Yarlington		Other ²		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of total
Applicant is on autobid	16	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	2	1%	1	2%	10	1%
Does not meet rural lettings policy	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6	4%	0	0%	3	1%	1	2%	9	1%
Pets – No/type incompatible with property	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	4	1%	2	3%	9	1%
Does not require supported housing	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	2%	2	3%	8	1%
Doesn't meet agreed local lettings Plan	6	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	8	1%
Applicant doesn't want to move	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%	3	2%	0	0%	0	0%	3	5%	7	1%
Applicant states they can't afford to move	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	2	1%	4	1%	2	3%	7	1%
Ground floor not required	6	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%	7	1%
No housing need	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	4	1%	0	0%	6	1%
Applicant has no need for adaptations	5	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6	1%
Applicant state unable to afford rent in advance	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%	0	0%	5	0%
Applicant states bedrooms too small	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	3	1%	0	0%	5	0%
Not suitable due to harassment risk to applicant	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	4	0%
Applicant states condition not satisfactory	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	3%	3	0%
Doesn't meet band criteria	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	1	2%	3	0%
Requires supported housing	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%	3	0%
Sensitive let applicant unsuitable	1	1%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	0%
Applicant doesn't like community or Neighbours	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Applicant feels property isn't affordable	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Landlord unable to make contact with applicant	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	2	0%
Non-compliance with tenancy conditions	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	2	0%
No children under 16	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Owner occupier/financially secure	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Total	192	100%	43	100%	96	100%	91	100%	152	100%	144	100%	398	100%	60	100%	1176	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)

² 'Other' includes Guinness, Hastoe, Sanctuary, Selwood and SHAL, who each rejected less than 35 households.

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Chart 2: Number of times the most common match & offer rejection reasons were used by the largest landlords (1 October – 31 December 2019)



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Homes Let

Between 1 October and 31 December 2019 757 homes across Somerset were set to let³. This is a higher number than usual due to a number of older adverts being updated to let in the last quarter (218 homes set to let in the last quarter were advertised between 2011 and 2018). The number, and proportion, of homes let by local authority and landlord is affected by these older adverts that were updated in the last quarter.

Similar numbers of 1 bed and 2 bed homes were let, and together accounted for nearly 80% of all homes let.

Tables 8 and 9 set out the profile of the homes set to let in the last quarter by size, local authority and landlord.

Table 8: Homes let between 1 October and 31 December 2019 by property local authority

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	Total	%
Mendip	1	56	67	29	4	0	157	21%
Sedgemoor	7	58	62	38	2	0	167	22%
Somerset West & Taunton	3	97	97	26	1	1	225	30%
South Somerset	3	87	76	39	3	0	208	27%
Total	14	298	302	132	10	1	757	100%

Table 9: Homes let between 1 October and 31 December 2019 by landlord

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	Total	%
Acorn	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0%
Aster	0	24	32	7	0	0	63	8%
Falcon Rural	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0%
Guinness	0	5	6	6	0	0	17	2%
Habinteg	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0%
Hanover	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	1%
Hastoe	0	1	4	3	1	0	9	1%
Homes in Sedgemoor	7	37	16	13	1	0	74	10%
LiveWest	1	21	44	14	1	0	81	11%
Magna	0	18	25	13	0	0	56	7%
Places For People	0	8	2	2	1	0	13	2%
Sanctuary	0	9	15	3	1	0	28	4%
Selwood	0	15	2	2	0	0	19	3%
SHAL	0	2	3	1	0	0	6	1%
Southwestern HS	0	0	1	2	0	0	3	0%
Sovereign	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0%
Stonewater	0	42	58	26	4	1	131	17%
Taunton Deane BC	3	44	27	19	1	0	94	12%
Wyvern Rural	0	1	5	2	0	0	8	1%
Yarlington	3	65	59	19	0	0	146	19%
Total	14	298	302	132	10	1	757	100%

³ These homes were set to Offer Accepted

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Tables 10 and 11 show that just over a third (36%) of homes were let to households in the Gold band, whilst just under a half (46%) were let to households in the Silver band. The proportion of homes let to households in the Gold Band varied from 30% of homes in Mendip to 40% of homes in Sedgemoor. Whilst the proportion of homes let to households in Silver band was very similar across the 4 local authority areas, ranging from 44% in Somerset West & Taunton to 47% in South Somerset. 15% of homes were let to households in Bronze band. In a small number (12) of older cases the Band is not known.

Table 10: Homes let between 1 October and 31 December 2019 by property local authority and Band

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Not known		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	3	2%	47	30%	72	46%	29	18%	6	4%	157
Sedgemoor	3	2%	66	40%	77	46%	20	12%	1	1%	167
Somerset West & Taunton	3	1%	81	39%	92	44%	27	13%	5	2%	208
South Somerset	4	2%	80	36%	105	47%	36	16%	0	0%	225
Total	13	2%	274	36%	346	46%	112	15%	12	2%	757

The proportion of homes let to applicants in different Bands also varied by landlord (Table 11). Amongst the 7 landlords who let the most homes in the second quarter, the proportion of homes let to households in Gold Band ranged from 31% for Stonewater to 46% for LiveWest.

Table 11: Homes let between 1 October and 31 December 2019 by landlord and Band

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Not known		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Acorn	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1
Aster	2	3%	21	33%	32	51%	8	13%	0	0%	63
Falcon Rural	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	2
Guinness	1	6%	3	18%	8	47%	5	29%	0	0%	17
Habinteg	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1
Hanover	0	0%	0	0%	2	50%	2	50%	0	0%	4
Hastoe	0	0%	2	22%	2	22%	0	0%	5	56%	9
Homes in Sedgemoor	3	4%	31	42%	35	47%	5	7%	0	0%	74
LiveWest	1	1%	37	46%	35	43%	8	10%	0	0%	81
Magna	1	2%	20	36%	28	50%	7	13%	0	0%	56
Places For People	1	8%	1	8%	6	46%	3	23%	2	15%	13
Sanctuary	0	0%	16	57%	7	25%	5	18%	0	0%	28
Selwood	0	0%	6	32%	10	53%	3	16%	0	0%	19
SHAL	0	0%	2	33%	1	17%	3	50%	0	0%	6
Southwestern HS	0	0%	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Sovereign	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	1
Stonewater	0	0%	40	31%	55	42%	33	25%	3	2%	131
Taunton Deane BC	2	2%	39	41%	48	51%	5	5%	0	0%	94
Wyvern Rural	0	0%	1	13%	2	25%	4	50%	1	13%	8
Yarlington	2	1%	52	36%	73	50%	19	13%	0	0%	146
Total	13	2%	274	36%	346	46%	112	15%	12	2%	757

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82 homes were let to homeless applicants in Gold Band between 1 October and 31 December 2019, which is 7 more than the previous quarter. Lets to homeless applicants in Gold Band accounted for 15% of homes let in Sedgemoor and Somerset West & Taunton during the quarter, but only 4% in Mendip – see Table 12. Similarly, amongst the 7 landlords who let the most homes in the second quarter the proportion of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band varied from 18% of homes let by Homes in Sedgemoor to 3% of homes let by Aster – see Table 13.

Table 12: Homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band between 1 October and 31 December 2019 by property local authority

	No. of homes let	No. of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band	% of all homes let
Mendip	157	7	4%
Sedgemoor	167	25	15%
Somerset West & Taunton	208	32	15%
South Somerset	225	18	8%
Total	757	82	11%

Table 13: Homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band between 1 October and 31 December 2019 by landlord

	No. of homes let	No. of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band	% of all homes let
Acorn	1	0	0%
Aster	63	2	3%
Falcon Rural	2	0	0%
Guinness	17	0	0%
Habinteg	1	0	0%
Hanover	4	0	0%
Hastoe	9	1	11%
Homes in Sedgemoor	74	13	18%
LiveWest	81	10	12%
Magna	56	6	11%
Places For People	13	0	0%
Sanctuary	28	3	11%
Selwood	19	2	11%
SHAL	6	1	17%
Southwestern HS	3	0	0%
Sovereign	1	0	0%
Stonewater	131	12	9%
Taunton Deane BC	94	9	10%
Wyvern Rural	8	0	0%
Yarlington	146	23	16%
Total	757	82	11%

**Homefinder Somerset
Quarterly Monitoring Report
January 2020**

Over 29,000 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	32	905	913	376	38	2	1	2,267
Total	467	10,115	12,308	5,665	468	39	5	29,067