

Homefinder Somerset Quarterly Monitoring Report January 2021

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 1,308 (12%) to 9,251 between 6 October 2020 and 4 January 2021. This change is almost entirely accounted for by the reduction in the number of households registered with Somerset West & Taunton over the quarter, following the work they are undertaking to review the register.

The proportion of households in Gold Band varies from 6% in Sedgemoor to 10% in South Somerset. It can be seen that the proportion of households in the Silver Band is similar in 3 of the 4 local authorities (34 - 39%), whilst Mendip has a higher proportion (50%). The proportion of households in Bronze Band ranges from 43% in Mendip to 59% in Sedgemoor.

Table 1: Number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset by local authority and Band as at 4 January 2021

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mendip	3	0%	113	7%	778	50%	664	43%	1,558	17%
Sedgemoor	4	0%	166	6%	909	34%	1,576	59%	2,655	29%
Somerset West & Taunton	4	0%	227	7%	1,196	39%	1,677	54%	3,104	34%
South Somerset	2	0%	200	10%	714	37%	1,018	53%	1,934	21%
Total	13	0%	706	8%	3,597	39%	4,935	53%	9,251	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. 29% of households are registered with Sedgemoor DC).

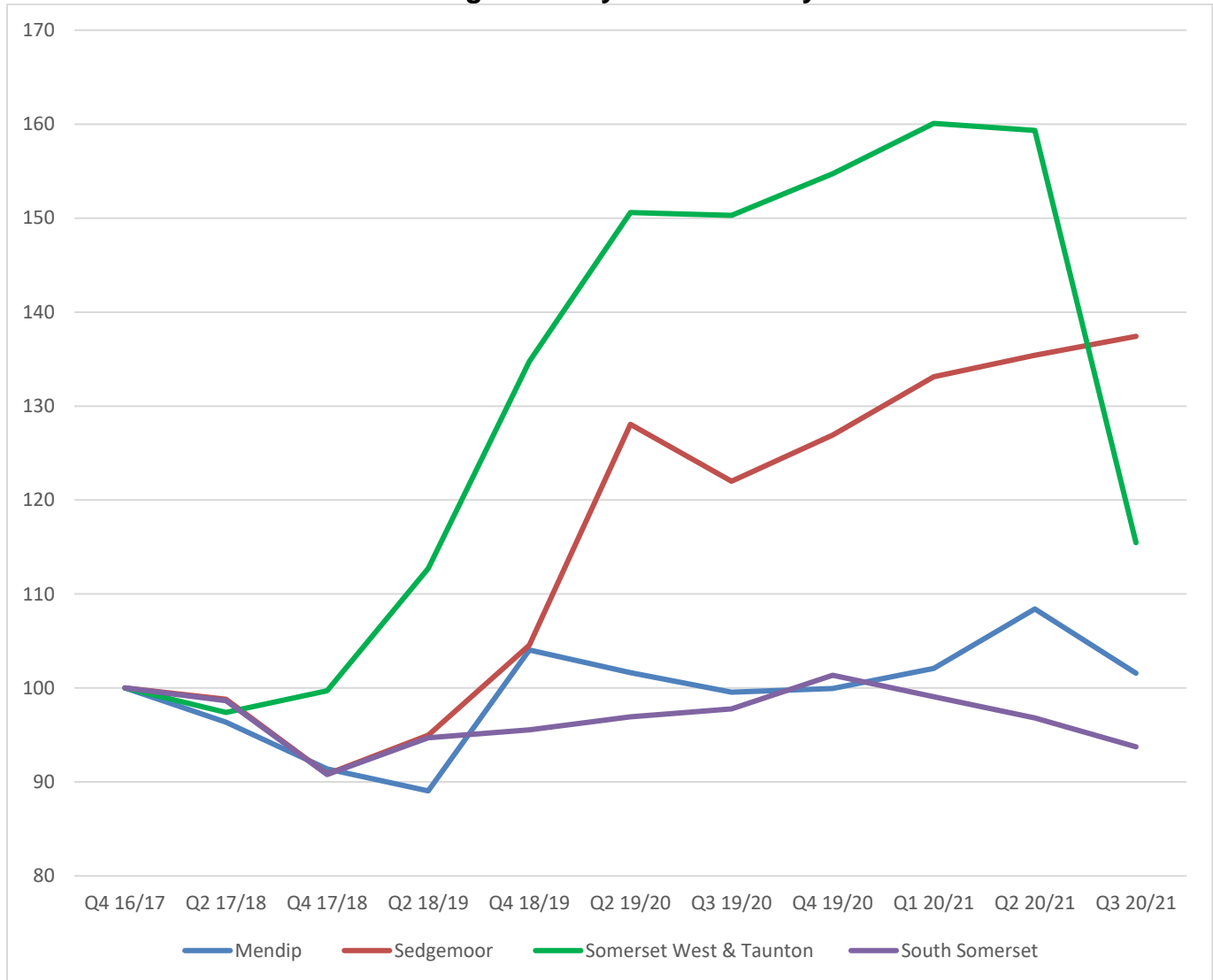
It can be seen from Table 2 and Chart 1 that the number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset has increased by 13% since Q4 2016/17. As reported in previous reports, the increase had been much higher due to the growth in the register in Somerset West & Taunton, caused by the local authority being unable to undertake the renewals process due to transformation and merger of the 2 local authorities. However, the impact of the work undertaken by Somerset West & Taunton to review the register over the last quarter can be seen very clearly from Chart 2.

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

	Q4 16/17	Q2 17/18	Q4 17/18	Q2 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q2 19/20	Q3 19/20	Q4 19/20	Q1 20/21	Q2 20/21	Q3 20/21
Mendip	1,534	1,478	1,402	1,366	1,596	1,559	1,527	1,533	1,566	1,663	1,558
Sedgemoor	1,932	1,909	1,755	1,835	2,020	2,474	2,357	2,452	2,572	2,616	2,655
Somerset West & Taunton	2,688	2,618	2,680	3,030	3,622	4,048	4,040	4,159	4,303	4,283	3,104
South Somerset	2,063	2,035	1,873	1,954	1,971	2,000	2,017	2,091	2,044	1,997	1,934
Total	8,217	8,040	7,710	8,185	9,209	10,081	9,941	10,235	10,485	10,559	9,251

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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 30% need a 2 bed home.

Table 3: Size of home needed. Households registered as at 4 January 2021

	1 Bed		2 Beds		3 Beds		4+ Beds		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	773	50%	498	32%	226	15%	61	4%	1,558
Sedgemoor	1,323	50%	830	31%	386	15%	116	4%	2,655
Somerset West & Taunton	1,616	52%	863	28%	461	15%	164	5%	3,104
South Somerset	933	48%	589	30%	305	16%	107	6%	1,934
Total	4,645	50%	2,780	30%	1,378	15%	448	5%	9,251

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Bidding Analysis

Between 1 October and 31 December a total of 37,904 bids were placed by 4,467 households on homes across Somerset. This is very similar to the previous quarter.

98% of bids made during the quarter were placed via the website.

Table 4: Number of bids and bidders 1 April 2019 – 31 December 2020

	No. of bids	No. of bidders
2019		
April	9,100	2,733
May	13,600	3,055
June	10,392	2,903
July	11,585	2,796
August	11,540	2,932
September	10,823	2,775
October	12,819	3,093
November	11,276	2,945
December	10,215	2,788
2020		
January	11,668	2,987
February	13,567	2,970
March	9,884	2,686
April	4,468	1,546
May	5,073	1,881
June	11,713	2,684
July	11,776	2,939
August	10,253	2,752
September	11,943	3,084
October	13,054	3,162
November	13,354	3,111
December	11,495	2,832
Average	10,933	2,793

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 or logged onto the Homefinder Somerset website during the last 6 months). This analysis excludes those households who have only registered in the last month and may not have had the opportunity to bid or login to the website.

It can be seen that 29% of households registered with Homefinder Somerset can be considered as inactive. This has fallen from 31% in October due to the work undertaken by Somerset West & Taunton to review the register. The proportion of inactive households varies by Band and local authority. The proportion of inactive households in Somerset West & Taunton has fallen from 45% to 31% since the last report. Similarly, the proportion of inactive households in Gold Band has fallen from 21% to 16% since the last report in October, and ranges from 7% in Mendip to 24% in Somerset West & Taunton.

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Table 5: Percentage of households who have not bid or logged onto the Homefinder Somerset website during the last 6 months as at 4 January 2021 (excluding those households who have registered in the last month)

	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Mendip	0%	7%	12%	28%	19%
Sedgemoor	0%	21%	32%	45%	39%
Somerset West & Taunton	0%	24%	27%	34%	31%
South Somerset	0%	9%	12%	26%	19%
Total	0%	16%	22%	35%	29%

Table 6 reveals that an average of 65 bids were placed for the 608 homes advertised in letting cycles that ended between 1 October and 31 December 2020.

The average number of bids varied considerably between local authority areas and property type/size. The average number of bids for houses (98) was more than twice than that for flats (47). This difference can be even more marked. For example in Sedgemoor there was an average of 154 bids for 2 bed houses compared to an average of only 30 bids for 2 bed flats.

The average number of bids for homes advertised during the quarter ranged from 47 bids in South Somerset (213 homes advertised) to 87 in Somerset West & Taunton (171 homes advertised).

Table 6: Number of homes and average number of bids by type, size and local authority (letting cycles ending between 1 October and 31 December 2020)

	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	70	12	49	28	70	41	35	104	54
1 Bedroom	16	83	10	50	19	73	23	34	68	59
2 Bedroom	7	42	2	42	8	63	18	37	35	44
4 Bedroom					1	57			1	57
Flat	29	44	65	40	85	75	83	23	262	47
1 Bedroom	13	62	39	48	57	98	44	32	153	63
2 Bedroom	16	29	25	30	28	27	39	14	108	23
3 Bedroom			1	4					1	4
House	26	79	52	118	52	122	83	76	213	98
1 Bedroom			1	150			11	66	12	73
2 Bedroom	15	89	18	154	28	144	37	94	98	119
3 Bedroom	11	65	27	109	23	96	31	65	92	86
4 Bedroom			6	44	1	73	3	30	10	43
5 Bedroom							1	11	1	11
Maisonette	1	23	7	17	5	36			13	24
2 Bedroom	1	23	4	23	5	36			10	29
3 Bedroom			3	9					3	9
Studio flat			9	22	1	57	6	56	16	37
Total	79	63	145	67	171	87	213	47	608	65

Note: This data excludes homes set up for direct match

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143 homes (24%) advertised during the last quarter received over 100 bids. The highest number of bids received was 242, for a 2 bed house in Taunton.

Rejection Reasons

During the last quarter landlords set 579 bids to match or offer rejected. 426 households were match or offer rejected (as some households were match or offer rejected for more than 1 property) by landlords for 265 homes (as more than one household was match or offer rejected on some homes).

Table 7 shows that the most common reason why bids were rejected, as in the previous quarter, was 'Applicant no longer wants to be considered', which accounted for 13% of cases. The other most common reasons why applicants were rejected were: 'Applicant states property is unsuitable' (12%), 'Applicant considered unsuitable due to arrears/debts' (10%), 'Applicant did not respond' (8%), 'Landlord_Property not suitable for applicant' (8%), and 'Applicant states area is unsuitable' (8%). Together these reasons accounted 59% of all rejections during the quarter.

However, table 8 shows that a far larger number of bids were skipped rather than be set to match or offer rejected. Landlords skipped 2,443 bids from 1,340 households on 312 homes in the last quarter (see Table 8). By far the most common reason used for skipping a bid was 'Shortlist order ignored for more suitable applicant', which accounted for 81% of all bids skipped. This issue will be considered by local authority and landlord partners at the CBL Working Group later in January.

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Table 7: Match or Offer Rejection reasons used by landlords (1 October - 31 December 2020)

	Abri		Aster		Homes in Sedgemoor		LiveWest		Magna Housing		Somerset West & Taunton		Stonewater		Other ¹		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of total
Applicant no longer wants to be considered	29	21%	5	5%	10	14%	4	6%	3	5%	10	14%	7	33%	3	12%	71	13%
Applicant states property not suitable	12	9%	4	4%	15	21%	5	7%	13	20%	14	20%	1	5%	4	15%	68	12%
Applicant considered unsuitable due to arrears/debts	17	13%	4	4%	2	3%	11	16%	13	20%	7	10%	2	10%			56	10%
Applicant did not respond	13	10%	2	2%	4	5%	9	13%	5	8%	1	1%	4	19%	6	23%	44	8%
Landlord_Property not suitable for applicant	3	2%	13	14%	2	3%	10	15%	9	14%	4	6%	2	10%	1	4%	44	8%
Applicant states area is unsuitable	10	7%	2	2%	12	16%	5	7%	5	8%	7	10%	1	5%	1	4%	43	8%
Landlord_Change of circumstances identified - Inform LA	5	4%	3	3%	4	5%	4	6%	6	9%	7	10%	1	5%			30	5%
Landlord_Location deemed unsuitable	4	3%	1	1%	5	7%	7	10%	5	8%	1	1%	1	5%			24	4%
Landlord_Does not meet rural lettings policy	1	1%	19	20%													20	4%
Applicant considered unsuitable due to ASB/Convictions	10	7%	3	3%	1	1%	1	1%	1	2%	3	4%					19	3%
Landlord_Doesn't meet agreed local lettings Plan	3	2%	12	13%							1	1%			2	8%	18	3%
Landlord_Offer withdrawn by landlord	2	1%			5	7%	2	3%		0%	1	1%			2	8%	12	2%
Landlord_Requires ground floor	1	1%	1	1%	5	7%	3	4%		0%	1	1%	1	5%			12	2%
Landlord_Applicant is on autobid	2	1%	6	6%													8	1%

¹ Other includes Curo, Flower & Hayes Development, Guinness, Sanctuary, Selwood, Southwestern HS, & White Horse Housing

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Table 7 (continued): Match or Offer Rejection reasons used by landlords (1 October - 31 December 2020).

	Abri		Aster		Homes in Sedgemoor		LiveWest		Magna Housing		Somerset West & Taunton		Stonewater		Other		Total		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of total	
Landlord_Adapted housing required	5	4%	2	2%														7	1%
Applicant: Bedrooms too small			2	6%			1	3%			2	18%	3	2%				8	2%
Landlord_Property is adapted & applicant doesn't need	7	8%											1	1%				8	2%
Landlord_Tenancy Support not available											6	9%						6	1%
Applicant did not complete verification	2	1%	2	2%							1	1%						5	1%
Applicant doesn't want to move	3	2%	2	2%														5	1%
Applicant: Can't afford to move	1	1%			2	3%	1	1%	1	2%								5	1%
Landlord_Does not require supported housing			3	3%	2	3%												5	1%
Landlord_Fails to meet housing needs	3	2%	1	1%					1	2%								5	1%
Landlord_Health Reasons prevent applicant from moving	2	1%									2	3%	1	5%				5	1%
Landlord_Property unaffordable for applicant	2	1%					2	3%	1	2%								5	1%
Applicant failed to attend viewing/letting			1	1%	3	4%												4	1%
Landlord_Sensitive let applicant unsuitable			1	1%	1	1%									2	8%		4	1%
Other reasons (used once or twice in total by all landlords)	4	3%					3	4%	1	2%	1	1%			3	12%		12	2%
Total	136	100%	93	100%	73	100%	67	100%	64	100%	69	100%	21	100%	26	100%		549	100%

Note: Percentages for each landlord refer to % of total rejections for that landlord (e.g. 11% of households rejected by Homes in Sedgemoor were rejected using the reason 'Applicant no longer wants to be considered')

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Table 8: Bid Skipping reasons used by landlords (1 October - 31 December 2020)

	Shortlist order ignored for more suitable applicant	App no longer active	Matched/ Offered on another shortlist	Restored shortlist and previously skipped	Total no. of bids skipped	No. of Adverts where bids skipped
Abri	190	1	79	17	287	65
Aster	313		36	14	363	42
Bridgeman Letting Ltd	102				102	2
Curo			1		1	1
Flower & Hayes	5				5	1
Guinness	6	1	3		10	3
Homes in Sedgemoor	535	6	82	3	626	67
LiveWest	459		46		505	36
Magna Housing	193	1	33	9	236	28
Sanctuary HA	20		22		42	9
Selwood Housing	30		3		33	2
SHAL	23		2		25	5
Somerset West & Taunton	21	2	52	7	82	30
Southwestern HS	8		1		9	1
Stonewater	13	2	35		50	17
Tamar Housing	66				66	2
White Horse Housing		1			1	1
Total	1,984	14	395	50	2,443	312

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Homes Let

511 homes across Somerset were set to let² between 1 October and 31 December, down from 554 in the previous quarter.

Tables 9 and 10 set out the profile of the homes let in the last quarter by size, local authority and landlord. 41% of homes let in the last quarter were 1 bed or studio homes and 42% were 2 bed homes. South Somerset again accounted for the highest number of homes let (172).

Table 9: Homes let between 1 October and 31 December 2020 by property local authority

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Total	%
Mendip	2	34	30	8	1	75	15%
Sedgemoor	3	37	49	28	2	119	23%
Somerset West & Taunton	2	62	61	20		145	28%
South Somerset	3	67	76	23	3	172	34%
Total	10	200	216	79	6	511	100%
% of total	2%	39%	42%	15%	1%	100%	

Abri (26%), Homes in Sedgemoor (16%), Aster (14%), LiveWest (11%) and Somerset West & Taunton (11%) together accounted for 79% of homes let in the last quarter.

Table 10: Homes let between 1 October and 31 December 2020 by landlord

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Total	%
Abri	2	51	61	20	1	135	26%
Aster	2	35	25	10	1	73	14%
Bridgeman Letting Ltd				2		2	0%
Flower & Hayes Devt			1	1		2	0%
Guinness Hermitage		2				2	0%
Hastoe HA			1			1	0%
Homes in Sedgemoor	3	32	28	18	1	82	16%
LiveWest		14	29	12		55	11%
Magna Housing		18	12	3		33	6%
Places For People				1		1	0%
Sanctuary HA	1	4	6			11	2%
Selwood Housing		3	2			5	1%
SHAL		1	3	2		6	1%
Somerset West & Taunton	2	28	22	6		58	11%
Southwestern HS		1	4		1	6	1%
Stonewater		11	17	3	2	33	6%
Tamar Housing			2	1		3	1%
White Horse Housing			3			3	1%
Total	10	200	216	79	6	511	100%

² These homes were set to Offer Accepted. This figure includes homes let by direct match.

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Tables 11 and 12 show that 45% of homes were let to households in the Gold band, up from 41% in the last quarter. The proportion of homes let to households in the Gold Band varied from 33% of homes in Mendip to 55% of homes in South Somerset. 42% of homes were let in the last quarter were let to households in the Silver band. This ranged from 33% of homes in South Somerset to 60% in Mendip.

Table 11: Homes let between 1 October and 31 December 2020 by property local authority and Band

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	1	1%	25	33%	45	60%	4	5%	75
Sedgemoor	6	5%	53	45%	45	38%	15	13%	119
Somerset West & Taunton	1	1%	58	40%	67	46%	19	13%	145
South Somerset	2	1%	94	55%	56	33%	20	12%	172
Total	10	2%	230	45%	213	42%	58	11%	511

The proportion of homes let to applicants in Gold Band amongst the 5 landlords who let the most homes in the last quarter also varied by landlord (Table 12), from 30% for Aster to 56% for Abri.

Table 12: Homes let between 1 October and 31 December 2020 by landlord and Band

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Abri	2	1%	75	56%	44	33%	14	10%	135
Aster	1	1%	22	30%	43	59%	7	10%	73
Bridgeman Letting					1	50%	1	50%	2
Flower & Hayes Devt			1	50%	1	50%			2
Guinness Hermitage					2	100%			2
Hastoe HA					1	100%			1
Homes in Sedgemoor	4	5%	34	41%	30	37%	14	17%	82
LiveWest	1	2%	24	44%	24	44%	6	11%	55
Magna Housing	1	3%	13	39%	16	48%	3	9%	33
Places For People			1	100%					1
Sanctuary HA			4	36%	7	64%			11
Selwood Housing			3	60%	2	40%			5
SHAL			3	50%	3	50%			6
Somerset West & Taunton	1	2%	26	45%	24	41%	7	12%	58
Southwestern HS			3	50%	3	50%			6
Stonewater			19	58%	10	30%	4	12%	33
Tamar Housing			1	33%			2	67%	3
White Horse Housing			1	33%	2	67%			3
Total	10	2%	230	45%	213	42%	58	11%	511

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121 homes were let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief in the last quarter, representing nearly a quarter (24%) of all homes let. The proportion of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief ranged from 33% in Somerset West & Taunton to 13% in Mendip – see Table 13.

Table 13: Homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief between 1 October and 31 December 2020 by property local authority

	No. of homes let	No. of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief	% of all homes let
Mendip	75	10	13%
Sedgemoor	119	29	24%
Somerset West & Taunton	145	26	18%
South Somerset	172	56	33%
Total	511	121	24%

Amongst the 7 largest landlords in the last quarter the proportion of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief varied from 31% of homes let by Abri to 14% of homes let by Aster – see Table 14.

Table 14: Homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief between 1 October and 31 December 2020 by landlord

	No. of homes let	No. of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief	% of all homes let
Abri	135	42	31%
Aster	73	10	14%
Bridgeman Letting	2	0	0%
Flower & Hayes Development	2	0	0%
Guinness Hermitage	2	0	0%
Hastoe HA	1	0	0%
Homes in Sedgemoor	82	16	20%
LiveWest	55	10	18%
Magna Housing	33	10	30%
Places For People	1	0	0%
Sanctuary HA	11	4	36%
Selwood Housing	5	2	40%
SHAL	6	3	50%
Somerset West & Taunton	58	13	22%
Southwestern HS	6	1	17%
Stonewater	33	8	24%
Tamar Housing	3	1	33%
White Horse Housing	3	1	33%
Total	511	121	24%

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Over 31,100 homes have been let through Homefinder Somerset since 2009. The total number of lets per year by size is shown in Table 15.

Table 15: 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
2020	33	795	872	376	27	3	0	2,106
Total	500	10,910	13,180	6,041	495	42	5	31,173

For more information please contact Rupert Warren (r.warren@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)