



Your guide

Applying for housing with Homes in Sedgemoor



Homes in Sedgemoor works in partnership with other local authorities and housing associations making the process of finding a home simple and transparent for applicants. This information booklet follows the guidance issued by Homefinder Somerset.

www.homefindersomerset.co.uk



Step 1 - Your initial application on Homefinder Somerset

All applicants are required to fill out the same application form giving details of your household members who are to be housed with you.

To complete an application, you need to prove:

- (i) You are eligible to join the Housing Register
- (ii) You have a connection (or, in certain circumstances, treated as having a local connection) to Somerset
- (iii) You can provide evidence of your identity

You must be resident in the United Kingdom at the date of your application.

Certain people from abroad, including some who are subject to immigration control, are not eligible to join the register or be allocated affordable housing.

British Citizens returning from a period living or working abroad wishing to join the Homefinder Somerset register must pass the 'habitual residence' test. The purpose of the test is to show whether an individual has the right to live in the UK (known as the right to reside) and whether they intend to settle in the UK.

Your eligibility will be assessed at the time of application and again at the time where an offer of accommodation is to be made.

Once your application is complete, it is assessed against a clear set of banding criteria. Applicants are placed into a band that reflects their household circumstances and awarded a bedroom eligibility that determines the size of the property that you can place an expression of interest for.

It is important you inform Homefinder Somerset of any change to the information supplied on your initial application as this could result in a change of banding and/or bedroom eligibility.

Once registered for housing it is your responsibility to report any change of circumstance to the local authority in writing or by completing an online change of circumstance. Examples of changes in circumstances that an applicant must report are:

- **Change in household members**
- **Change in medical or welfare condition of any household member**
- **Changes/alterations to the condition of the property they live in**
- **Changes in income of any household member (see Financial Resource Assessments section)**
- **Changes in capital including the inheritance of any capital or property of any household member**
- **The inclusion or exclusion of domestic pets**
- **You no longer wish to remain on the housing register**
- **Where a landlord has carried out improvements to remove previously identified hazards**



Step 2 - Finding a home and making a bid

Once you have been accepted on the housing register and notified of your banding, bedroom eligibility and reference number, you can start to look for a property of your choice.

We advertise available properties on Homefinder Somerset.

Properties are advertised on a weekly basis; the cycle opens on a Wednesday at one minute past midnight and closes the following Sunday at one minute to midnight. All adverts carry a deadline by which time expressions of interest for properties must be placed. This is normally the end of the advertising cycle.

To help make best use of our available homes, we often apply an eligibility criteria to a property so only suitable applicants are considered for the property. The criteria may include a medical need for an adapted property or having certain age requirements for household members.



In our Independent Living Schemes (Sheltered Housing), in addition to the banding criteria, we ask for a housing related support need and to be over 65 years of age, in exceptional cases 55 years of age with a support need and in receipt of PIP/ DLA.

Transfer applications

We are keen to ensure we make best use of our homes and to achieve this, a certain proportion advertised will be labelled giving preference to transfer applicants. This means preference will be given to someone already living in one of our homes but have a need to move due to their change in circumstances.

Step 3 - Homes in Sedgemoor will complete your verification

If you make a successful bid, Homes in Sedgemoor is responsible for the verification of your application. Any discrepancies will be referred back to the relevant local authority. This may result in a change in banding and/or bedroom eligibility and you could be refused as no longer eligible for that home.

Once the deadline has passed for expressions of interest to be made in each advertising cycle, the successful applicant is usually the person in the highest band with the earliest effective date, unless a preference has been applied to the advert. Homes in Sedgemoor will verify the details of the application before making a property offer. Incorrect information may result in a property offer being withdrawn and the band and bedroom award being re-assessed.

Financial Resource assessments

Our homes provided through Homefinder Somerset are for people who are considered to have insufficient financial resources to

meet their housing need. Each household will be assessed to determine whether they are sufficient to meet their housing need.

- Single applicants earning over £35,000 gross income (before deduction) will not be entitled to an offer of accommodation, including any adult member of the household.
- Joint applicants including couples earning over £60,000 gross income (before deductions) will not be entitled to an offer of accommodation, including any adult member of the household.
- Single applicants with £16,000 or more of accessible savings will not be entitled to an offer of accommodation, including any adult member of the household.
- Joint applicants including couples with accessible savings of £16,000 or more will not be entitled to an offer of accommodation, including any adult member of the household.

Exceptions may be allowed.



APPLICATION



Conduct that Homes in Sedgemoor deems would make you an unsuitable tenant

Assessment is made at verification of the seriousness and duration of any unsuitable conduct and time expired since the last incident occurred. Each case is to be determined on its merits.

- Being subject to a court order (including an interim order) for breach of tenancy conditions.
- Causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or visitors.
- Being violent towards a partner or members of the family.
- Obtaining a tenancy by deception, for example giving untrue information.
- Paying money illegally to obtain a tenancy for example a corrupt payment.

- Acts of violence and aggression to employees will not be tolerated by Homes in Sedgemoor and/or Sedgemoor District Council and any applicant who threatens or uses violence towards any employee, a partner organisation employee (such as another housing association), or a contractor of Homes in Sedgemoor will be refused an offer.
- Allowing the condition of a Homes in Sedgemoor property to deteriorate into a state of disrepair.
- Having lost accommodation provided in connection with employment due to conduct making it inappropriate for the person to reside there.

Any such decision is subject to a right of review.

Review

If you are unhappy with our decision you can request a review of that decision in writing within 21 days of being notified. Homes in Sedgemoor will determine the review within 28 days of the applicant's request unless extended if further information is needed or a longer period is agreed with the applicant.

Homes in Sedgemoor will notify you in writing of the outcome of the review including the reasons if the original decision is confirmed. Homes in Sedgemoor's decision about a review is final. The review will be completed by a manager employed by Homes in Sedgemoor, who has not previously been involved in the original decision.

Any challenge to that decision can only be made through judicial review proceedings.

Complaint

Making a complaint about the way Homes in Sedgemoor has implemented

the Homefinder Somerset Policy or its associated procedures should be made using Homes in Sedgemoor's Complaints Procedure. If you remain dissatisfied after going through Homes in Sedgemoor's complaints process, you can then take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

To make a complaint, you can:

- Email customer.services@homesinsedgemoor.org
- Call **0800 585 360** or **01278 552400**
- Send a private message on Facebook
- Visit our reception at Bridgwater House
- Write to us at:

Homes in Sedgemoor,
Bridgwater House,
King Square,
Bridgwater,
Somerset,
TA6 3AR





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