

Homefinder Somerset Quarterly Monitoring Report April 2023

Introduction

This report provides the latest key information from Homefinder Somerset and covers the year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2023.

Please note that on 1 April 2023 the 4 district councils (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West & Taunton, and South Somerset) and Somerset County Council were replaced by a single council called Somerset Council. As this report covers the period to 31 March the information relates to the 4 former district council areas.

Households registered with Homefinder Somerset

The number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset increased by 2,325 (24%) to 11,903 between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. This includes households with a Live application and those who are being considered for a property (with the status of 'Offered').

The proportion of households in Gold Band varied from 7% in Mendip and Sedgemoor to 10% in South Somerset. The proportion of households in the Silver Band ranged from 32% in Somerset West & Taunton to 53% in Mendip. The proportion of households in Bronze Band ranged from 40% in Mendip to 60% in Somerset West & Taunton.

Table 1: Number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset by local authority and Band as at 31 March 2023

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mendip	1	0%	153	7%	1,200	53%	889	40%	2,243	19%
Sedgemoor	8	0%	193	7%	1,095	39%	1,505	54%	2,801	24%
Somerset West & Taunton	4	0%	303	8%	1,253	32%	2,299	60%	3,859	32%
South Somerset	9	0%	306	10%	1,047	35%	1,638	55%	3,000	25%
Total	22	0%	955	8%	4,595	39%	6,331	53%	11,903	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., 24% of households are registered with Sedgemoor DC).

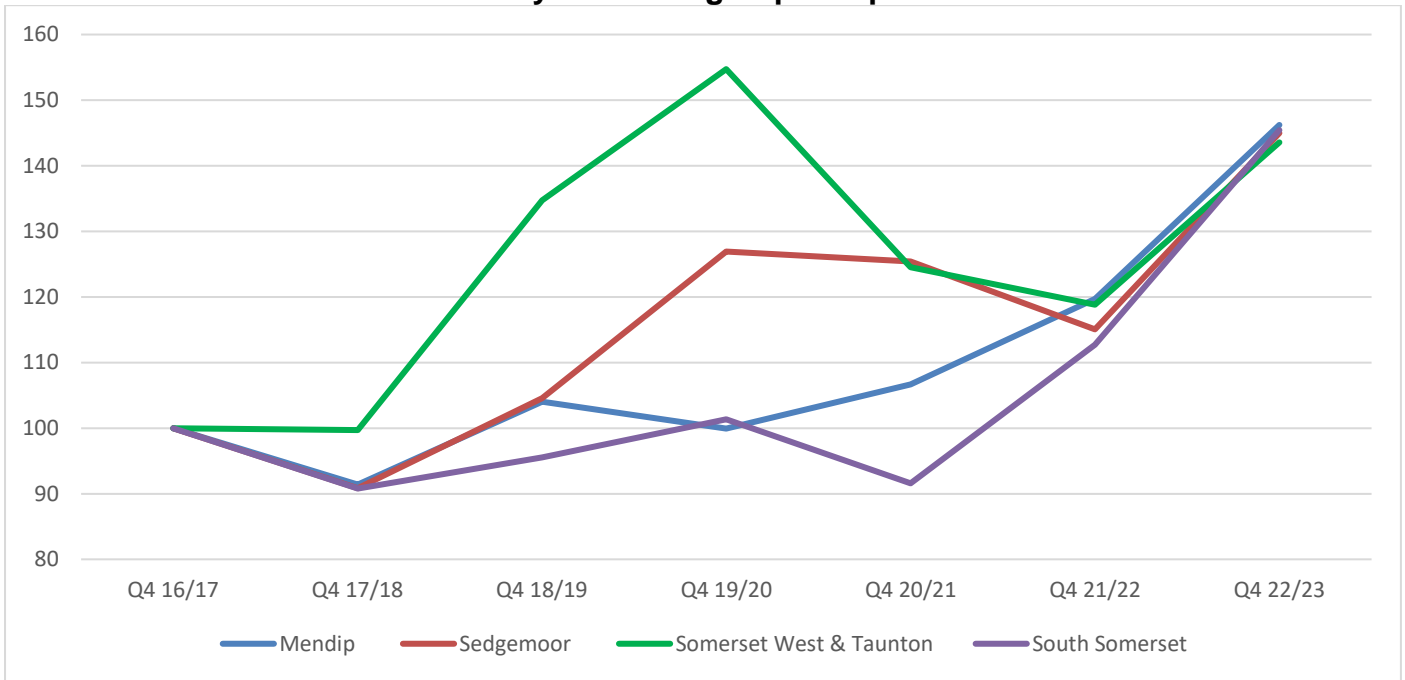
Table 2 and Chart 1 show that the number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset increased by 45% since Q4 2016/17. Except for Somerset West & Taunton, which saw its highest number of households in 2019/20, this increase has been particularly marked in the last year. This is likely to be due to a combination of factors, including the cost-of-living crisis and because the normal renewal process only kicked in from February following the transfer to the current IT system in August 2021.

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

	Q4 16/17	Q4 17/18	Q4 18/19	Q4 19/20	Q4 20/21	Q4 21/22	Q4 22/23
Mendip	1,534	1,402	1,596	1,533	1,636	1,836	2,243
Sedgemoor	1,932	1,755	2,020	2,452	2,423	2,223	2,801
Somerset West & Taunton	2,688	2,680	3,622	4,159	3,347	3,194	3,859
South Somerset	2,063	1,873	1,971	2,091	1,889	2,325	3,000
Total	8,217	7,710	9,209	10,235	9,295	9,578	11,903

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

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Just over half (52%) of all households registered with Homefinder Somerset need a 1 bed home, whilst 28% need a 2 bed home.

Table 3: Size of home needed. Households registered as at 1 April 2023

	1 Bed		2 Beds		3 Beds		4+ Beds		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	1,179	53%	630	28%	336	15%	98	4%	2,243
Sedgemoor	1,348	48%	802	29%	493	18%	158	6%	2,801
Somerset West & Taunton	2,173	56%	994	26%	498	13%	194	5%	3,859
South Somerset	1,473	49%	873	29%	480	16%	174	6%	3,000
Total	6,173	52%	3,299	28%	1,807	15%	624	5%	11,903

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Bidding Analysis

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, a total of 231,175 bids were placed on homes across Somerset. This was an increase of 35% from the previous year. Chart 2 shows the number of bids placed each month has been on an upward trend (shown by the blue dotted trendline), even taking into the big falls in the number of bids due to the 2 national lockdowns and the IT transfer.

Chart 2: Number of bids 1 January 2019 – 31 March 2023

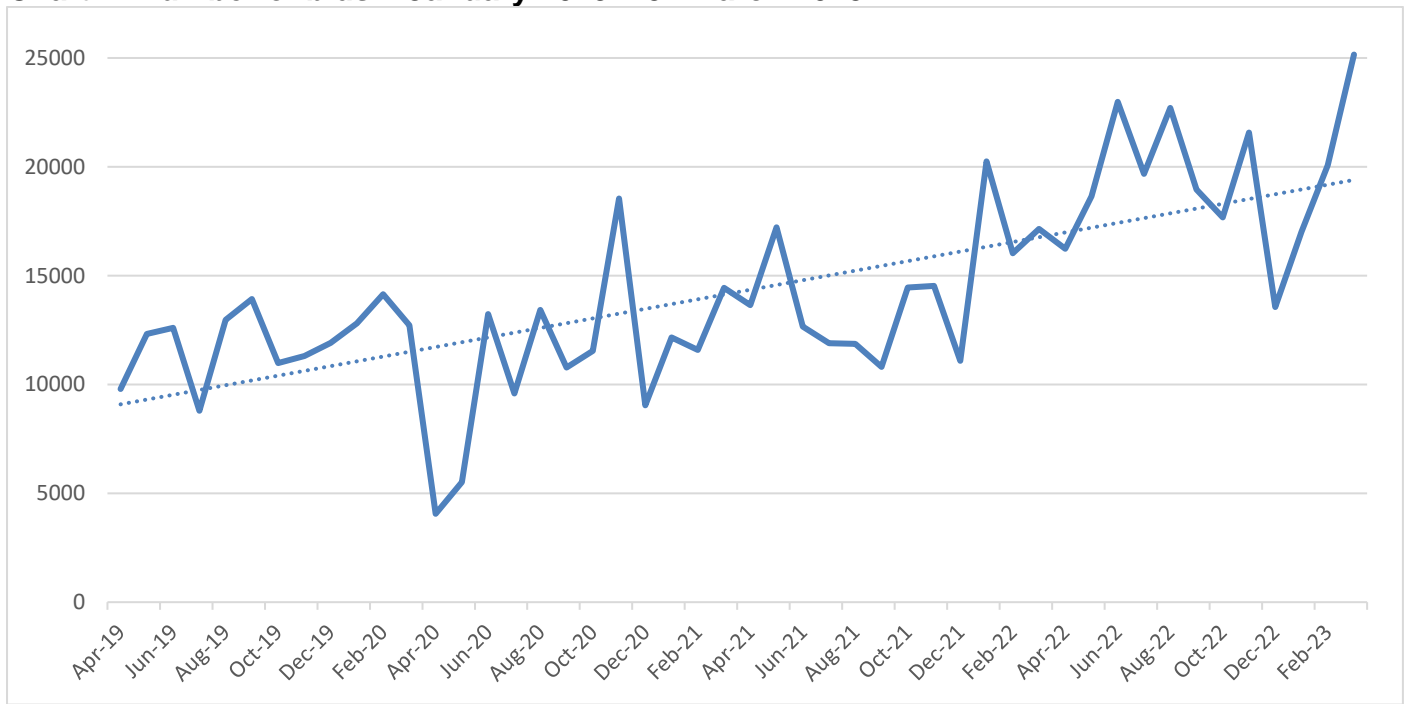


Table 4 below shows the proportion of households by local authority and Band who can be considered as inactive (e.g. they have not bid or logged onto the Homefinder Somerset website in the last 6 months).

The table reveals that 22% of households registered with Homefinder Somerset have not bid or logged into the Homefinder Somerset website in the last 6 months. As would be expected, the proportion of inactive households increases as their Band reduces (e.g., 14% of households in Gold Band were inactive compared to 26% in Bronze Band).

Table 4: Percentage of households with Live applications who have not bid or logged into the Homefinder Somerset website during the last 6 months as at 31 March 2023

	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Mendip	0%	20%	18%	28%	22%
Sedgemoor	0%	15%	16%	24%	20%
Somerset West & Taunton	0%	14%	21%	29%	25%
South Somerset	0%	9%	15%	24%	19%
Total	0%	14%	17%	26%	22%

Table 5 reveals that an average of 109 bids were placed for the 2,116 homes advertised between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. This is an increase from an average of 73 bids in the previous year, and an average of 64 bids in the year before that. This is perhaps unsurprising given the evidence above which reveals that there has been an increase in the number of bids placed over the last 4 years.

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The average number of bids varied considerably between local authority areas, property type and size. The average number of bids for houses (150) was again much higher than that for flats (83). This difference can be even more marked. For example, in Somerset West & Taunton there was an average of 203 bids for the 116 x 2 bed houses that were advertised compared to an average of only 49 bids for the 102 x 2 bed flats.

The average number of bids for homes advertised during the year ranged from 86 bids in South Somerset (635 homes advertised) to 127 in Somerset West & Taunton (613 homes advertised).

Table 5: Number of homes and average number of bids by type, size and local authority (letting cycles ending between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023)

	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	82	89	56	103	106	114	136	66	380	90
1 Bedroom	61	96	45	109	56	109	75	67	237	92
2 Bedroom	21	70	11	80	50	120	60	64	142	86
4 Bedroom							1	110	1	110
Flat	163	86	199	81	261	98	285	70	908	83
1 Bedroom	94	119	133	95	158	129	190	89	575	106
2 Bedroom	69	40	65	54	102	49	95	34	331	44
3 Bedroom			1	10	1	60			2	35
House	125	149	212	162	238	166	205	121	780	150
1 Bedroom	5	233	4	279	1	245	8	249	18	251
2 Bedroom	70	160	76	180	116	203	92	131	354	171
3 Bedroom	42	133	119	149	113	133	98	104	372	131
4 Bedroom	7	93	13	137	6	96	7	86	33	109
5 Bedroom	1	15			1	23			2	19
6 Bedroom					1	7			1	7
Maisonette	7	120	24	70	8	99	9	85	48	85
1 Bedroom	3	240	8	160	3	192	8	92	22	151
2 Bedroom	4	29	12	27	4	49	1	32	21	32
3 Bedroom			4	19	1	18			5	19
Total	377	108	491	118	613	127	635	86	2,116	109

Note: This data excludes homes set up for direct match

933 homes (44%) advertised during the year received 100 bids or more. The highest number of bids received was 489, for a 2 bed house in Yeovil.

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Homes Let

2,185 homes across Somerset were set to let¹ between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. Tables 6 and 7 set out the profile of the homes let over the year by size, local authority, and landlord. 40% of homes let were 1 bed and 41% were 2 bed homes. South Somerset accounted for the highest number of homes let (739).

Table 6: Homes let between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 by property local authority

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	Total	%
Mendip	159	174	44	7	1		385	18%
Sedgemoor	182	152	115	11	1		461	21%
Somerset West & Taunton	210	271	111	6	1	1	600	27%
South Somerset	315	289	126	8	1		739	34%
Total	866	886	396	32	4	1	2,185	
% of total	40%	41%	18%	1%	0%	0%		

Abri (27%), LiveWest (12%), Somerset West & Taunton (12%), Aster (11%), Homes in Sedgemoor (10%), Stonewater (9%) and Magna (8%) together accounted for 89% of homes let over the year.

Table 7: Homes let between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 by landlord

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	Total	%
Abri	256	218	112	9			595	27%
Alliance Homes	9	2	1	1			13	1%
Aster	110	91	28	1	1		231	11%
Clarion Housing	2						2	0%
Curo	2	1	2				5	0%
Falcon Rural		4	5				9	0%
Flower & Hayes	1						1	0%
Guinness	4	1	2				7	0%
Habinteg		4					4	0%
Hastoe		7	1				8	0%
Homes in Sedgemoor	123	61	42	1	1		228	10%
LiveWest	92	121	50	2	1		266	12%
Magna	55	84	34	3			176	8%
Places For People			7	3			10	0%
Sanctuary	20	31	6	1		1	59	3%
Selwood Housing	16	20	6	3			45	2%
SHAL Housing	12	16	11	2			41	2%
Somerset Council	123	93	42	1	1		260	12%
Southwestern HS	1	11	3				15	1%
Sovereign HA	2	3	4	1			10	0%
Stonewater	35	115	37	4			191	9%
Tamar Housing		3	1				4	0%
White Horse Housing	3		2				5	0%
Total	866	886	396	32	4	1	2,185	

¹ This figure includes homes let by direct match.

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Tables 8 & 9 show that 45% of homes were let to households in the Gold band, a very proportion seen in the last 2 years (44%). This proportion varied from 41% of homes let in Somerset West & Taunton to 50% of homes in Sedgemoor. 43% of homes were let to households in the Silver band. This ranged from 39% of homes in Sedgemoor to 48% in Mendip. The Band is not recorded for 26 homes let by direct match.

Table 8: Homes let between 1 April 22 & 31 March 23 by property local authority & Band

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Not known		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	10	3%	170	44%	186	48%	17	4%	2	1%	385
Sedgemoor	15	3%	230	50%	179	39%	36	8%	1	0%	461
Somerset West & Taunton	14	2%	245	41%	265	44%	74	12%	2	0%	600
South Somerset	17	2%	347	47%	317	43%	37	5%	21	3%	739
Total	56	3%	992	45%	947	43%	164	8%	26	1%	2,185

The proportion of homes let to applicants in Gold Band amongst the 7 landlords who let the most homes also varied, from 40% for Magna to 48% for Abri (Table 9). Magna also let 6% of homes to households in Emergency Band.

Table 9: Homes let between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 by landlord and Band

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Not known		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Abri	19	3%	287	48%	242	41%	26	4%	21	4%	595
Alliance Homes			7	54%	6	46%					13
Aster	5	2%	107	46%	110	48%	8	3%	1	0%	231
Clarion Housing			1	50%	1	50%					2
Curo			2	40%	3	60%					5
Falcon Rural			1	11%	4	44%	4	44%			9
Flower & Hayes					1	100%					1
Guinness			1	14%	6	86%					7
Habinteg			3	75%	1	25%					4
Hastoe			2	25%	5	63%	1	13%			8
Homes in Sedgemoor	5	2%	100	44%	102	45%	20	9%	1	0%	228
LiveWest	5	2%	119	45%	118	44%	23	9%	1	0%	266
Magna	10	6%	71	40%	79	45%	16	9%			176
Places For People	2	20%	8	80%							10
Sanctuary	1	2%	25	42%	26	44%	7	12%			59
Selwood Housing	2	4%	19	42%	19	42%	5	11%			45
SHAL Housing	1	2%	16	39%	15	37%	9	22%			41
Somerset Council	2	1%	120	46%	104	40%	32	12%	2	1%	260
Southwestern HS	2	13%	10	67%	3	20%					15
Sovereign HA			6	60%	3	30%	1	10%			10
Stonewater	2	1%	84	44%	95	50%	10	5%			191
Tamar Housing			1	25%	2	50%	1	25%			4
White Horse Housing			2	40%	2	40%	1	20%			5
Total	56	3%	992	45%	947	43%	164	8%	26	1%	2,185

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Just over 36,000 homes have been let through Homefinder Somerset since 2009. The total number of lets per year and by size is shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Number of properties let

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	Total
2009	968	1,063	477	42	2	0	2,552
2010	967	1,078	576	52	4	1	2,678
2011	981	1,381	635	56	6	0	3,059
2012	990	1,358	717	55	3	1	3,124
2013	1,019	1,264	588	49	8	0	2,928
2014	989	1,148	547	48	4	0	2,736
2015	1,071	1,294	605	36	4	2	3,012
2016	875	1,065	446	31	3	0	2,420
2017	884	953	365	27	2	0	2,231
2018	901	791	333	34	1	0	2,060
2019	937	913	376	38	2	1	2,267
2020	828	872	376	27	3	0	2,106
2021	910	840	309	51	2	0	2,112
2022	856	954	416	39	4	0	2,269
2023 to date	210	175	78	10	0	1	474
Total	13,386	15,149	6,844	595	48	6	36,028

For more information, please contact Rupert Warren (rupert.warren@somerset.gov.uk)