



Northumberland
Homefinder

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Northumberland Homefinder?

Quite simply, this is a system used by Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords to let their vacant properties.

This will be a new approach to the way we allocate our vacant social housing, and replaces the complicated “points system” currently in operation. The idea is to offer people who want to rent affordable housing more choice over which property and area they would like to live in, Northumberland Homefinder allows applicants to have this choice.

The Northumberland Homefinder system

This system is designed to offer more choice and involves applicants in selecting a new home. The process for assessing and prioritising applications is easier to understand as most schemes use a system for banding applicants to reflect their housing need i.e. applicants with more pressing needs than others are placed in a higher band, whilst those with less urgent needs are placed in a lower band.

Northumberland Homefinder is web based to enable applicants to participate in the scheme by accessing the Internet without having to contact the housing office.



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Why change to a new scheme?

The Government requires all Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords who currently let properties through a point-based system, to introduce the new scheme by 2010. The system is designed to give customers more choice about where they want to live.

How will I apply for the new Northumberland Homefinder Scheme?

If you are already on the housing waiting list, you will automatically be contacted to let you know your priority under Northumberland Homefinder. If you are a new applicant you will need to fill out an application form to join the Housing waiting list. We will work out your housing need and place you in one of a number of “bands”

What are the priority bands and how will I know which one applies to me?

Under the new system applications are assessed according to the level of housing need and placed in a band. You will be assessed based upon the information you provide in your application form and we will write to you to let you know what band you are in.

Will all properties be advertised?

All properties will be advertised unless the Landlord or one of its partners needs to move a tenant urgently, for example whilst major



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Where will properties be advertised?

Properties that are due to become vacant will be advertised regularly

What information will the adverts contain?

The adverts will aim to tell you the location, size, rent and special features of the property. It will also tell you which band of customers can express interest and whether there is any age or other restrictions. We will also try to include a photograph of the property and some information about the local areas and facilities.

What will I need to do if I am interested in a property?

If you are interested in an advertised property and you meet the eligibility criteria, you will need to apply for the property by the closing date on the advert. This is commonly known as “expression of interest”. You will be able to do this via a website, by telephone or by visiting one of the offices. However support and advice is still available for applicants who do not have access to the Internet or for those who are vulnerable and have difficulties in using the schemes

How will you decide who is offered a property?

Once the closing date has passed, all the expressions of interest will be put on a list. The list will be ordered by eligibility, band and application date – so whoever is eligible for the property, in the highest band and the longest application date will be offered the property first.

What if I am unsuccessful?

Once the letting process has been completed we will provide statistics on the type of household the property was let to and their banding. However, no personal details will be released.



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What are priority Bands?

Your application will be assessed according to your level of housing need and placed in one of 4 bands. Within each band applications are placed in date order.

Can you refuse to accept me onto the Housing Register?

There are some people who are not eligible to be included on the Housing Register. These are:

- Certain people who are subject to Immigration Control under the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act.
- Certain people from abroad who are not subject to immigration control but who are not habitually resident in the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland.
- People (including members of their household) who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour that makes them unsuitable to be a tenant.

Who will be able to apply for properties through Northumberland Homefinder?

You must have been accepted onto Northumberland Homefinder Housing Register to be able to apply for rented properties through Homefinder.