



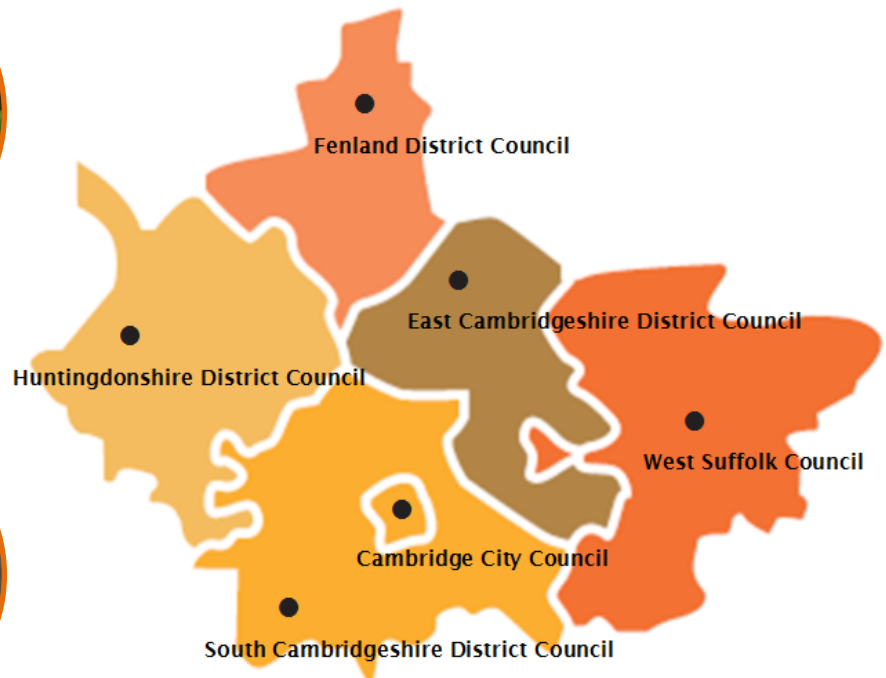
**Home-Link**  
your choice - your home

# User Guide



The Home-Link scheme is the choice based lettings scheme for Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk.




















Every week Home-Link advertises the available council and housing association properties across the area.



[www.home-link.org.uk](http://www.home-link.org.uk)



## What the symbols mean on adverts

	Homeseekers and Transfers		Social rented property
	Homeseekers only		Affordable rent
	Transfers only		Minimum and maximum number of bedspace available
	Number of bedrooms in the property		The floor the property is on
	Age restriction/s for the property		Shared/communal garden
	Private garden		No garden
	Pets allowed		NO pets allowed
	Suitable for wheelchair users inside and outdoors		Suitable for people who cannot manage steps or stairs & may use a wheelchair for some of the day
	Suitable for people only able to manage 1 or 2 steps or stairs		Property has a lift
	Property does NOT have a lift		



## Welcome to Home-Link

The Home-Link scheme is the choice based lettings scheme for Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk. Every week Home-Link advertises the available council and housing association properties across the area.

To be considered for any properties, you first need to make an application and have your level of housing need and priority assessed (we call this a housing needs band). The quickest way to make an application is online through the [Home-Link website](http://www.home-link.org.uk).

If you are accepted onto the housing register, you can look at the adverts and decide whether you are interested in any of the properties. You express your interest in the properties by making a bid for them. Only people who have bid for an advertised property can be considered. You will be able to get assistance with bidding if you need it, please contact your local council or housing association for more information.

## How we assess housing need

When you register for housing your application will be assessed. If you are accepted on to the register you will be placed in one of the four housing needs bands described below.

Certain people will not be accepted onto the housing register. These include those who are not eligible for social housing due to their immigration status, people who have an eligible immigration status but are not habitually resident in the UK and people who are guilty of unacceptable behaviour that makes them unsuitable to be a tenant.

If you do not think that all the relevant information has been considered when placing you in a band, you can ask the council or housing association, which holds your application details to review the decision.

When bids are considered for advertised properties, the successful bidder will usually be the person who has been in the highest band for the longest period of time.





## Below is a summary of the housing need bands

For more information, see a copy of your local council or housing association's lettings policy.

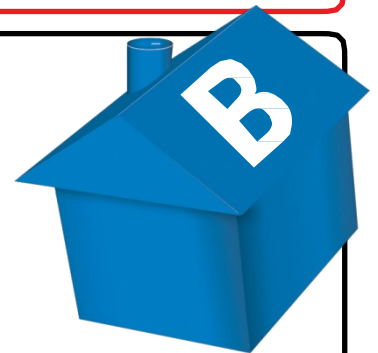
### **BAND A - (Urgent Need)**

- You are a council or housing association tenant who needs to move urgently, for example because your property is about to be demolished or redeveloped.
- You are leaving Social Services care or are a current resident of supported housing and you have been assessed as being ready to move into independent accommodation.
- You are occupying a property which has been assessed as posing an urgent health and safety risk to you and your family.
- You have an urgent medical condition, and your current housing is having a major adverse effect on the medical condition.
- You have been assessed as needing two more bedrooms than you currently have.
- You are a council or housing association tenant with two or more bedrooms than you need and are willing to move to a smaller property. Or, you live in an adapted property and the adaptations are no longer required, for example, if the person requiring the adaptations has moved out or passed away.
- You are homeless and one of the partner councils owes you a main homelessness duty.
- You have two or more needs from Band B.



### **BAND B - (High Need)**

- You are occupying a property which has been assessed as posing a high health and safety risk to you and your family.
- You have a high need to move because of a medical condition, and your current housing is having a significant adverse effect on the medical condition.
- You have been assessed as needing one more bedroom than you currently have.
- You are a council or housing association tenant and are living in a property with one bedroom more than you require and you are willing to move to a smaller property.
- You have a high need to move because of harassment or threat of violence or abuse.
- You are threatened with homelessness and are working with the homelessness prevention service to try and prevent your homelessness.
- You are sleeping rough and have no other accommodation available to you. The council will verify this before awarding this priority.
- You have three or more needs from Band C.





### **BAND C - (Medium Need)**

- You have a medium need to move because of a medical condition, and your current housing is having a minimal effect on the medical condition.
- You have a need to move for social reasons, for example to give or receive support to a family member, or for employment reasons, are more than 24 weeks pregnant or you have a child under 10 years and live above the ground floor.
- You are lacking or sharing facilities within your home with people who are not family members. Facilities may include a living room, kitchen or bathroom.
- You are homeless or threatened with homelessness and are either intentionally homeless, not in priority need or are owed a main homeless duty by a local authority that are not a partner organisation in the sub-region.



### **BAND D**

- Any applicant who does not meet any of the criteria in Bands A, B or C will be assessed as having a low level of housing need and placed in Band D.
- Any applicant assessed as having sufficient financial resources to resolve their own housing need will be placed in Band D. These applicants will only be considered for an offer of a property once all other bidding applicants who do not have sufficient financial resources to resolve their own housing need have been considered.



### **How to bid**

To be considered for an advertised property, you need to express an interest in it, known as making a bid. You can bid for 3 properties every week. You can bid for homes on our website. You can also have assistance from the council or housing association you have registered with if you need it.

### **Bidding on the website**

The quickest and easiest way to bid is through the [Home-Link website](https://www.home-link.org.uk). (You will need to have your email address and password to log in. You will have set these up when you made your application).

Once you are logged in you will see all the properties you are eligible for. If you see a property that you are interested in and meet any extra requirements on it, you can place a bid. If you have made a bid but then change your mind you can remove the bid on the website as long as the bidding cycle is still open. You can also view your bidding history while you are logged in.



## Feedback

The feedback on all lettings will be provided on the website. The feedback contains information on lettings that have taken place since the previous bidding cycle.

### How can this information help you?

You may wish to use this information to decide how you make bids in the future.

- You could bid for different types of properties that have fewer bids or people in a lower band have been successful for.
- You could bid for properties in areas close to your preferred areas if it is in high demand. If you do not have a preferred area, look for properties in areas that have less bids to help increase your chances of being successful.
- If an applicant has been offered the property and was in the same Band as you, look at their priority date, this may give some indication of the length of time you may be waiting for a property of this type in a similar location.
- You will be able to see that Band C and D applicants receive very few offers. If you are in one of these bands, it is much more likely that you can solve your housing need by looking at other housing options, such as private rented properties, or mutual exchange if you are already a council or housing association tenant.

## What can I bid for?

Your welcome letter/email will tell you how many bedrooms you have been assessed as needing for your household size. The number of bedrooms you are assessed as needing is based on local housing allowance assessments, e.g. the number of bedrooms that can be covered by housing benefit for your household.

### In what areas can I bid for properties?

- You can bid for properties in the council area that you are registered in.
- You can also bid for properties in any other local authority areas so long as you have a recorded local connection. This could be if you work, have relatives or have lived in the area before. Please contact the council or housing association that manages your application if you think you should have a local connection to other areas.
- You can bid for properties advertised as cross-partner. Each council or housing association advertises 10% of its available properties as cross partner.

### When you bid for properties advertised cross-partner, you can bid for any property as long as:

- Your household size fits the number of bedrooms.
- You have read the advert description and match any extra requirements.





## Is the property available to homeseekers/transfers or both?

Most properties will be available for both homeseekers and transferring social housing tenants, but a proportion will be advertised as available to transferring tenants only. Your bid will not count if, for example, the property is advertised for a transferring tenant only and you are a homeseeker.

## How many properties can I bid for each bidding cycle?

You can bid for up to three properties each cycle. If you try to place over three bids, the system will tell you that you need to remove a bid before you can place another one.

## Is there an age restriction?

Some properties have a minimum or maximum age requirement and any age restrictions will be clearly stated in the advert.



### Who can bid for housing for older people?

Properties for older people (usually called sheltered housing) will only be available to people over a certain age, which need the level of support offered in this type of property. Sheltered housing is usually available for people aged 60 or over. Sometimes younger people who need the support available will be able to bid too. This will be decided when your application is assessed.



### Some properties have a mobility symbol

This symbol provides a guide to people who have various levels of mobility needs. This does not restrict anyone else from bidding for these properties but the advert will often say that priority will be given to applicants with mobility needs, so they will be considered first even if they are in a lower band. This is because they will make best use of the facilities in the property.



### Pets

Most landlords will not allow you to keep a dog or a cat unless the property has its own garden. The property advert will say if pets are allowed. You are likely to need written permission before you get a pet. Also, some landlords do allow pets but will set a limit of how many.

## Before you bid for a property

Check out the location of the property on a map to make sure it's really a place you would consider moving to and make sure you meet the requirements stated on the advert.

Remember that the number of people waiting to be housed is significantly greater than the number of properties advertised, so some people will never make a successful bid.

## Circumstances where you may not be invited to view a property

- You are in rent arrears
- You have been involved in anti-social behaviour
- You have enough money or income to afford a property in the private sector

You can ask your local council or housing association if any of these circumstances apply to you. Full details of each council Lettings Policy is on the website or you can contact the relevant council for more information.



## Useful contacts

### Cambridge City Council

Mandela House  
4 Regent Street  
Cambridge  
CB2 1BY

[www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01223 457917

E-mail: [cbl@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:cbl@cambridge.gov.uk)



### Clarion Housing

Reed House  
Peachman Way  
Broadland Business Park  
Norwich  
NR7 0WF

[www.myclarionhousing.com](http://www.myclarionhousing.com)

Telephone: 0300 500 8000 (from a landline)

Telephone: 0300 333 6557 (from a mobile)

E-mail: [March-Home-Link@myclarionhousing.com](mailto:March-Home-Link@myclarionhousing.com)



### East Cambridgeshire District Council

The Grange  
Nutholt Lane  
Ely  
CB7 4EE

[www.eastcambs.gov.uk](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01353 665555

E-mail: [customerservices@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@eastcambs.gov.uk)



### Huntingdonshire District Council

Pathfinder House  
St Marys Street  
Huntingdon  
Cambridgeshire  
PE29 3TN

[www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01480 388388

E-mail: [housingservices@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:housingservices@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)



### Fenland District Council

Fenland Hall  
County Road  
March  
PE15 8NQ

[www.fenland.gov.uk](http://www.fenland.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01354 654321

E-mail: [info@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:info@fenland.gov.uk)

The housing register in Fenland DC is managed by Clarion Housing.



### South Cambridgeshire District Council

South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge  
CB23 6EA

[www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01954 713000

E-mail: [cbl@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cbl@scambs.gov.uk)



### West Suffolk Council

West Suffolk House  
Western Way  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP33 3YU

[www.westsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01284 757178

E-mail: [customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

