

North Hertfordshire Housing Partnership



Home4U

Information for users

Choice Based Lettings

www.home4u.org.uk

Home4U is the method of allocating properties in North Herts. You now have to choose the properties you are interested in. **You won't be offered a property if you don't bid!**

We hope that you find the Home4U scheme easy to use. If you need assistance in understanding or using the scheme, please contact the office where you made your application, whose details are at the end of this information guide.

You are now on the Home4U housing register of the North Hertfordshire Housing Partnership. You have been given your unique reference number on your registration letter, which you need to keep safe for future reference.

Almost all offers of accommodation are made through the Home4U scheme. The scheme requires applicants to tell us what property they want to be considered for, so please read this guide carefully to find out what you need to do next.

Asking to be considered for one of the advertised properties is called '*bidding*'. Social housing will now be allocated in this way so if you want to be re-housed you will need to take part.

Please remember that there is not enough social housing in our towns and villages to meet the demand. The demand for social housing is much greater than the supply of new or empty homes. Unfortunately, most of the applicants on the Home4U scheme will probably not be housed or re-housed through the scheme, and most of the applicants who are successful may have to wait several years before they are successful in winning a bid.

Other housing options

- Although in North Hertfordshire the costs of buying a home, renting a home or renting a room are high, we recommend to all applicants on the Home4U scheme that you should explore all your other housing options as well as joining this scheme
- Existing tenants in social housing should explore mutual exchanges (*i.e. swapping homes with each other*), as it is often easier, quicker and cheaper to find a suitable home this way, and in many cases the rules for exchange may allow tenants to gain or to keep spare rooms, which the Home4U scheme does not allow.
- Homebuy is a government led initiative to help people buy an affordable home through shared ownership. Households with incomes of up to £60,000 may qualify. Details of the scheme are available at www.bpha.org.uk/buying-a-home or by phone **03301 000272**.

Home4U

In the past you may have waited on the Housing Register until a property was selected a property for you. Now you can decide which properties you would like to be considered for. Asking to be considered for one of the advertised properties is called '*bidding*'.

How can I find out what properties are available?

- All available social housing in North Hertfordshire is advertised each week on the website **www.Home4u.org.uk**
- If you do not have a computer or internet at home, you can use public computers in libraries, in NHDC or settle reception areas (where staff can help you) to look at the properties on the website.
- The advertisement will show a photo of the type of property available, and give a brief description. It will say what the rent is, who the landlord is and how many bedrooms the property has.

Symbols used in the property adverts

1 bed sheltered flat



Ref No. 467

Location Lime Tree House, Whitwell

Landlord settle

Rent £85.15 pw

Service Charge £8.90 pw

Support Charge £17.14 pw

Features

1 bedroom 1st floor flat in a lovely scheme, suitable for a single or couple aged 55+ with a support need. Village location with bus routes to Stevenage, Luton, Hitchin and Welham Green.



Minimum and maximum number of people who can live in this property



Floor level of property, if flat or maisonette



Wheelchair symbol - Suitable for wheelchair users for full time indoor and outdoor mobility



Open to tenants and applicants who are not housing association tenants



Number of bedrooms in the property



There is a lift in the block



There is no lift in the block



Age restriction



How can I bid on a property?

- If you see a property which you are eligible for, you need to register your interest in the property (*'bid'*) to be considered for the property. You can do this on the website www.Home4U.org.uk. You will need your Home4U reference number to bid.
- Properties will be advertised on the website from 2.00pm every Thursday to the following Wednesday at 2.00pm. Your bids must reach Home4U by 2.00pm on the Wednesday. Any later bids cannot be considered.
- You can place bids on up to three properties each week.
- You can only place bids on properties for which you are eligible. If you place a bid and do not fulfil the advertised criteria you will not be considered.

Web bidding

Properties will be advertised on the website www.Home4U.org.uk. Instructions are given on screen but you will need to know your unique Home4U number in order to log on. On the website there is an online copy of the North Herts Home4U magazine. Read adverts carefully, and place a bid on the properties you are eligible for and interested in. If you made a bid but then change your mind, you can remove the bid (as long as the bidding cycle is still open). You can also view your bidding history once you have logged in.

What happens after I have placed my bids?

The bids for each property are collected when bidding closes, and sorted according to the housing priority band and points level of the person bidding. The top three eligible applicants for a property are contacted by phone, email or letter and invited to view (**please tell us if any of these contact details change**).

There will be feedback on the Home4U online magazine about the number of bids received on properties, and the priority (band and points) of the successful bidder once the property has been let. This will give you an idea of the priority levels of the successful bids.

What happens if I am homeless?

North Hertfordshire District Council supports homeless applicants and can in some situations arrange emergency and/or temporary accommodation. If we accept a homeless duty, you will be expected to use the Home4U scheme to look for an appropriate property as your permanent home. If you are unable to participate in the Home4U scheme or if you choose not to, we may find and offer a property to you. If you refuse this offer you may not be given another one and the Council may not assist you further. You will have to leave your temporary accommodation and find your own home.

Need further help or information?

If you have any questions about Home4U, there is a user's scheme guide available to read or download at www.Home4U.org.uk. For further advice or information, you can contact the office to which you applied to join the housing register:

North Hertfordshire District Council on **01462 474000**

or get more information about housing at www.north-herts.gov.uk

settle on **0330 343 0016** or settlegroup.org.uk

Please remember that it is your responsibility to keep the information we hold about you up to date.

Please notify us immediately of changes of circumstances, employment, household members, change of phone numbers or email address etc.

Applications are often cancelled because people move and fail to inform us of their change of address or circumstances.

