

## **Guide to the North Hertfordshire Common Housing Register**

The housing register is a long term option – if you are homeless or likely to become homeless within 56 days, please contact North Hertfordshire District Council Housing Options team through the Council's portal at [www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/housing/housing-advice-and-homelessness-support/homelessness](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/housing/housing-advice-and-homelessness-support/homelessness), or if you need immediate help, 01462 474000 for advice.

### **1. Should I apply to join the housing register?**

There is a very high demand for social housing in North Hertfordshire. There is no Council housing, the social housing is all owned and managed by housing associations.

To apply for social housing, you need to complete the online housing register application form and send in photocopied documents as evidence of your circumstances.

However, **if you don't have a 'local connection' to North Hertfordshire, or you don't have a 'housing need', you are very unlikely ever to be offered social housing.** The only exception to this is people looking for 'retirement living'.

Local connection means living in the North Hertfordshire District Council area for 6 of the past 12 months, or for 3 of the past 5 years, or in permanent employment here, or your immediate family (parents, adult siblings or adult children) living here for over 5 years. In exceptional circumstances, there may be some other special reason for needing to live in the NHDC area.

Housing need means not being able to buy a suitable sized property, or not having suitable social housing already. If you are eg privately renting a property, or living with family, or living in a property which is too small (or in a socially rented property which is too big), having problems in your home because of a medical condition, then you have a 'housing need'.

Retirement living (sheltered housing) means a property for people aged 55 years and over, with a support need. The properties are almost all one bedroom, with a support service on call but not on site. You do not always need to have a local connection or a housing need, to obtain this type of social housing.

Flexi Care (extra care). There is also a more supported type of retirement living, flexi care housing, where there is onsite support available 24 hours a day. Applicants must have a local connection and a housing need (usually based on their medical problems). Applicants should apply to settle or First Garden Cities Homes who own and manage flexi-care housing in North Hertfordshire.

**If you are unlikely to obtain social housing, it may not be worth completing the housing register application process.** North Hertfordshire District Council can offer housing advice and assistance with other housing options. Make an appointment through to see a Housing Options Adviser on the Council's [Housing Assistance Referral Portal](#), or call 01462 474000 to discuss your housing situation.

## **If I do want to apply for social housing, how long will I have to wait for a property?**

This varies, according to the type of property you want, and the area you want to live in. However, here is some general information on approximate timescales:

1 bedroom properties; 2 years if you have high priority, otherwise 4 years

2 bedroom properties; 18 months - 2.5 years high priority, otherwise very unlikely to be successful

3 bedroom properties; 18 months - 2 years for high and medium priority

4 bedroom properties; 2+ years for high priority, otherwise unlikely to be successful.

**Remember;** If you have no local connection to the NHDC area, or no housing need, you will probably never be successful in obtaining social housing (but this does not apply to retirement living). You should look at other housing options on the Home4U website.

## **2. If I do want to apply for social housing, what do I have to do?**

You need to complete the online housing registration form. It will take you about 30 minutes. You will first need to complete a pre-assessment form that reviews your housing options.

Before you start, make sure you have all the information you are likely to be asked about. You will need

- Your National Insurance number
- Dates of birth of people to be housed with you
- Full address details over the past 5 years, and details of past landlords' names and addresses, with dates of when you moved
- Information on your rent account, and any arrears or money owed to previous landlords
- Full details of your current landlord
- Full details of your income, benefits, pensions etc
- Full details of your savings accounts
- Full details of any medical issues which are affected by your housing, including doctors' and consultants' details, details of medication etc

Secondly, you will need to send in evidence of your circumstances. You should hear back within 28 days of your online application on what you need to provide.

If you are already a tenant of settle, they will deal with your online application. They will already have a lot of information on file. You will be asked for any additional information, and you should upload it through the 'add supporting documentation' link on your Home4U homepage or take it/post it to your local housing office.

If you are not a tenant of settle, your online application will be dealt with by the Council. You will have to provide evidence of all your circumstances. You should upload it through the 'add supporting documentation' link on your Home4U homepage

Or sent them to;  
North Herts District Council  
Housing  
PO Box 10613  
Nottingham  
NG6 6DW

**(PHOTOCOPIES ONLY, as the documents that you send will be scanned electronically then destroyed, they will not be returned to you),**

### **What you may need to provide**

Proof of identity - Passport (or other photographic ID), birth certificate plus evidence of any name changes

Proof of responsibility for children who will be housed with you - Full birth certificate or passport and child benefit or tax credit award letter showing address and children's name/s

Proof of pregnancy (if applicable)

Proof of eligibility if you are not a British citizen

Proof of residence for all adult members of the household. We require one proof dated at least 12 months ago, and another dated within the last month, and must be from 2 different sources. Eg: Utility bills (gas, electric, water), mobile phone bill, Council Tax bill, official letters (from GP/hospital/bank/DWP/ employer, etc)

Proof of local connection to North Herts (if proof of residence does not evidence this)

*Not required if you are an existing tenant of settle*

Proof of private rent or tenancy eg tenancy agreement

Proof of all income / savings (eg wage slips, tax return if self employed, all benefits received, pensions, statements of savings) plus last 3 months bank statements.

Medical evidence (if your current accommodation impacts on your health condition, and/or a move to more suitable accommodation will improve it). Eg prescriptions, OT reports, healthcare professional letters. You do not need to obtain a GP letter.

Evidence of current or previous home ownership within last 5 years

Evidence you are repaying housing debt relating to a previous landlord

Armed forces – evidence of your current or former service

We will contact you (usually by email, if you have an email address), if you need to send any other documents, or if any original documents need to be produced.

Please note that it is your responsibility to send in everything required, if you want to complete your housing registration. **If you do not send all outstanding copy documents within 14 days of request, the application will fail.** We will not contact you again if you have not sent all the copy documents required.

If you have any queries about the documents required, please contact the Council on 01462 474000, or settle on 0330 343 0016 to enquire about the progress of your housing application.

Once all the necessary information has been received and checked, you will be contacted (again, by email wherever possible) to confirm registration.

### **3.What happens once I have been accepted onto the housing register?**

You will be notified (by email where possible), that your registration was successful.

You will be given information on

- what your housing priority is,
- how you can see what properties are available each week, and
- how you can place bids on them.

You will be able to see the priority levels on which properties are being allocated, so this will give you an idea of how long you are likely to have to wait for the property you want.

If you want to be housed quickly, you should bid on flats and maisonettes, which usually go to applicants with slightly lower priority. If you want to have a house, you are likely to wait longer for a property.

**If, at any time (during or after registration), your circumstances change** eg you change address, you have a baby, your partner moves in with you, **it is your responsibility** to notify settle if you are one of their tenants, otherwise notify the Council's Housing Register and Accommodation Team completing a change of circumstances form on your Home4U homepage. If you do not do so, your **housing registration will be cancelled** with effect from the date of the change of circumstance.