



OXFORD  
REGISTER FOR  
AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING

# Applying for Housing



### Translations available

অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা আছে  
提供有翻譯本  
तरजमे उपलब्ध हैं  
उवजमे भिल सक्ते वन  
ترجمہ دستیاب ہے

**If you need a translation, a larger  
print version or a copy of this  
publication in another format  
please contact us: ☎ 01865 252858**

# Applying for Housing

## Introduction



This leaflet is for applicants applying for social rented housing for the first time. People who already have a secure or assured tenancy with either Oxford City Council or a Housing Association should read the leaflet *Wanting to Move*.

## What is the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing?



Oxford City Council has formed a partnership with Housing Associations who have properties in Oxford so that all rented properties are let through one single application process. The partner Associations are listed on the back of this leaflet. The allocation policy takes into account the scarcity of affordable housing in Oxford and the need to allocate vacant properties in a fair and efficient way.

The full allocation policy can be found on the Council's web site ([www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk)) or can be viewed at one of the local offices listed on the back of this leaflet. Alternatively it can be purchased for a reasonable price from the Housing Needs Service.

## How do I apply for Housing?



The first step is to read the Housing Options leaflet. This gives advice about housing in Oxford and may help you to find accommodation more quickly than waiting for a Council or Housing Association tenancy. Unfortunately there is not enough Council or Housing Association housing for everyone who wants it. If you do want to apply on the register you should ask for an application form.



Application forms are available from any of the offices listed in this leaflet. We will be pleased to help you if you need any help in completing the form. It is important that the form is completed as fully as possible as this may affect the priority you are given. Applications are assessed using a banding system. Being on the register does not guarantee you will be housed especially if you are in a low priority band. You can return your application form to any of the offices listed but you will need to make an appointment by contacting the Housing Needs Team.

### I am over 55 – is there any special accommodation I can apply for?



If you are 55, or older and interested in housing for older people either with or without a support service you should ask for the information pack ***Applying for Older People's Housing*** available from the offices listed in this leaflet. This type of accommodation is generally easier to find. We will normally ask you about your support needs if you are applying for this type of housing.

### What information will I need to provide with my applications form?



In order to ensure your eligibility for housing and your housing needs are assessed correctly, you will need to supply documentary evidence to support your housing application. The information you will need to supply is indicated next to each question on the General Register housing application form.

The information required will include:

(1) Proof of identity for everyone you are requesting to be rehoused with you (for example a birth certificate or passport).

(2) Proof of your current address (for example a tenancy agreement or letter from your landlord/landlady).

(3) Proof of parental responsibility for any dependent children you are requesting included on your housing application form (for example up to date proof of child benefit - note more information may be required depending on your circumstances).

(4) Proof of your current income (for example a recent wage slip, benefit award letter and/or bank statement).

Please read the form carefully to see if you need to supply any further information to support your application or contact the Housing Needs Team on Oxford 252858." **You must provide all the required information (original documents) with your application or it will not be accepted.** All information will be treated as confidential, although information may be shared if we need to check against fraud or follow up information about your housing needs. Action will be taken against applicants found to have been fraudulently applying for accommodation or not giving full details as to their circumstances. **If your circumstances change whilst you are waiting on the register you must notify the Housing Needs Service at the Council within 28 days, by contacting the Housing Needs Team, a form is available for you to do this.** A change of circumstance includes a change of address or a change in your household.

## What happens once I have completed my application form?



Once you have returned your form and all your documents the office will send it to Oxford City Council's Housing Needs team. They will decide if you need a home visit. Home visits are generally carried out for:



- People with a support need. This is so we can check that the accommodation and support offered are right for your needs. This includes people aged 55, or older, who are applying for Older People's Housing.
- Applications where the information given on the form is particularly complicated or unclear and needs further investigation.

Otherwise we will visit every applicant to ensure their circumstances have not changed before an offer of accommodation is made.

Whether you are visited or not, your application will be placed in a priority band based on your housing need. Within the band applications are ordered by waiting time.

Information about the banding system can be found on the website [www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk) and in the **Choice Based Lettings User Guide**. You will then be sent a letter telling you which band you are in and what size of property you are eligible to bid for. If you think the band you have been placed in does not adequately reflect your housing need the Council does look at exceptional circumstances through the Exceptional Circumstances Panel. This comprises of senior officers from Oxford City Council who have delegated authority to award a band. This only applies in very exceptional circumstances where someone is assessed as having exceptional social and welfare needs not already considered to have been covered by the Allocations Scheme. You should contact the Housing Needs Team if you want more information about this process.



### Do I need to do anything whilst I am waiting?

**Yes.** To be considered for accommodation, you must express an interest in a property by making 'bids' through the Choice

Based Lettings Scheme. You will be given more information on this when your application is added to the Housing register.

You will be required to re-registered annually. A form will be sent out to enable you to do this. You must notify us if your circumstances change at any point.

You can contact any of the local offices listed for information about your application.

### What type of housing can I be considered for?

The following table gives an indication of the property you will be eligible to bid for depending on your family make-up.

| Size of Household                | Size of Property   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Single applicant                 | Studio or 1 bedroom  |
| Couples                          | 1 bedroom  |
| Applicant(s) with one child      | 2 bedrooms   |
| Applicant(s) with two children   | 2 or 3 bedrooms.   |
| Applicant(s) with three children | 3 or 4 bedrooms  |
| Applicant(s) with four children  | 3 or 4 bedrooms. A three bedroom property can be offered dependent on the age and gender of the children |
| Applicant(s) with five children  | 4 or 5 bedrooms or 3 bedroom 'parlour' type property (Parlour types have two reception rooms)            |

### How does Choice Based Lettings work?



Choice Based Lettings is an advert based scheme used to allocate council and housing association homes. Properties available to let are advertised and you can express an interest in properties you are interested in (make a bid). Choice Based Lettings will not solve the shortage of social housing in Oxford but it will give applicants more choice. Properties available to let in Oxford (and some properties from neighbouring Districts in the Oxfordshire Sub-Region) are advertised every two weeks for housing applicants to bid on. To see the adverts you can pick up a free newsletter called *Direction Home* or visit the website [www.oxfordshirehomechoice.org.uk](http://www.oxfordshirehomechoice.org.uk). You can pick up a ***Direction Home*** newsletter from the offices listed on page 9 and other outlets across the city. For a full list of where you can pick up a newsletter or more information on Choice-Based Lettings contact the Housing Needs Team.

When bidding closes all bids are put in priority order based on the Allocations Policy. You can find more information about Choice Based Lettings in the ***Choice Based Lettings User Guide***.

### What happens if my bid is successful?



If your name is at the top of the priority list you will normally be offered the property. The landlord may carry out eligibility checks first (e.g. rent checks, household circumstance checks). A viewing will be arranged soon after the bidding round so make sure you are available.

### And if I am not successful?



To improve your chances of finding the right home look at the feedback from previous advert cycles. We publish information about homes that have been successfully let. We tell you the

number of applicants that bid for a property, the band and registration date of the successful applicants. This will help you decide whether to look for other types of property or areas where you may not have to wait as long, or to consider other housing options.

### List of local housing offices



- ***Housing Needs Team***  
Oxford City Council, St Aldate's Chambers,  
St Aldate's Oxford OX1 1DS  
**T** 01865 252858  
**E** [housingneeds@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:housingneeds@oxford.gov.uk)
- ***Oxford Citizens Housing Association***  
244 Barns Road, Oxford OX4 3RW  
**T** 01865 773000
- ***Catalyst Communities Housing Association***  
The Farmhouse, Nightingale Avenue,  
Blackbird Leys, Oxford OX4 7BU  
**T** 01865 712244
- ***Dominion Housing Group***  
Godstow Court, 5 West Way, Oxford OX2 0GE  
**T** 0800 4320077

### Oxford City Council Customer Service Centres



Please phone **01865 252849** to book an appointment

- ***Templars Square Customer Service Centre***  
2–3 Bank Court, Templars Square Shopping Centre,  
Cowley, Oxford OX4 3UZ
- ***St Aldate's Customer Service Centre***  
109–113 St Aldate's Oxford OX1 1DS

### Useful contacts



- **Agnes Smith Advice Centre**  
**T** 01865 770206
- **Barton Information Centre**  
**T** 01865 744152
- **Citizens Advice Bureau**  
95 St Aldate's, Oxford  
**T** 0870 220 0608  
**E** [oxfordcab@cabnet.org.uk](mailto:oxfordcab@cabnet.org.uk)  
**W** [www.oxfordcab.org](http://www.oxfordcab.org)
- **Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre**  
**T** 01865 438634
- **Shelter**  
**T** 0808 800 4444  
**W** [www.england.shelter.org.uk/get\\_advice](http://www.england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice)

A full list of advice services can be found in the **Housing Options** leaflet



### Notes

The Oxford Register for Affordable Housing is a partnership between Oxford City Council and the Housing Associations listed below



OXFORD  
REGISTER FOR  
AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING

## List of partner agencies

Oxford City Council

Bromford Housing Group

Catalyst Communities Housing Association

A2Dominion Housing Group

Home Group

Jephson Homes Housing Association

Oxford Citizens Housing Association

Paradigm Housing Group

Soha Housing

Thames Valley Housing Association