



Guide to the Boston Choice Based Lettings Scheme

**It helps you understand how to find
your future home to rent**

**Boston Homechoice is a partnership between
Boston Borough Council, Boston Mayflower Ltd,
Lincs Rural Housing Association, Longhurst and
Havelok Homes, Accent Nene,
Waterloo Housing.**

What is Boston Homechoice?

The Boston Homechoice Scheme is a way to enable you to access affordable rented housing within the Borough of Boston. In the past the Local Authority or Registered Social Landlords decided where and when you would be offered a home. This scheme gives you the choice of applying for the property you wish to live in.

Who can register?

Almost anyone can register, but you will not be accepted if:

- ◆ You are a person who is subject to Immigration control within the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 or a person from abroad who fails the “Habitual Residence” test
- ◆ The behaviour of an applicant or member of the applicant’s family would make them unsuitable as a tenant.



How to apply

Complete a registration form – available from any of the partners.

To enable us to deal with your request as quickly as possible, please complete all the sections and return with all documents required. If you fail to fully complete your application or fail to provide the required proofs your application will be returned to you.

What happens when you apply?

Your registration will be prioritised using the Choice Based Lettings Policy. You will be sent a letter notifying you of the band you are in, your registration date together with your membership number. You will also be sent a membership card. This number is needed in order to bid for a property. You need to quote this number when you contact these offices.

When you join the register your registration will be placed in date order within the appropriate band. If your application is not accepted you will be sent a letter advising you of this and the reason(s) for refusal and you will be given the opportunity to appeal.

Change of circumstances

If your circumstances change, you will need to fill in a “change of circumstances” form. If you change address, you **must** complete a new registration form in full:

- ◆ If your change in circumstances moves you to a higher band, your “registration date” will be amended to the date satisfactory evidence is provided.
- ◆ If your change in circumstances moves you to a lower band, then your original “registration date” will be used.



Your membership will be affected if you do not notify us of changes in your circumstances.

Local connection

A Local Connection is defined as:

- ◆ Having been permanently resident in the borough of Boston for at least the last twelve months
- ◆ Having adult children/adult brothers/sisters/parents living within the borough of Boston who have lived here continuously for the last five years
- ◆ Having previously lived in the borough of Boston for a continuous period of twelve months (whilst aged 18 or over) in the last five years
- ◆ Have worked for 32 hours or more per week for a continuous period of twelve months within the borough
- ◆ You are serving or have served in the regular forces in the last 5 years

Proof of this will be required.

Where to find details of properties

Details of available properties will be advertised in the following ways:

- ◆ Property Magazine
- ◆ Partners' offices
- ◆ Website www.bostonhomechoice.co.uk
- ◆ Hotline phone number 01205 318628



What sort of property can I apply for?

Adverts will give information on who will be eligible to apply for the property, for example, three-bed house – couple or single parent with two or more children; one-bed bungalow – couple or single person over pension credit age or over 50 with an assessed medical need.

Bidding for a home

If you fit the criteria stated in the advert, you can bid for the property before the advertised closing date, in any of the following ways:

- ◆ Via the hotline phone number
- ◆ Through all the partners websites
- ◆ In person at any of the partners' reception areas
- ◆ Through the Assisted Persons List
- ◆ By coupon
- ◆ Email – bid@bostonhomechoice.co.uk
- ◆ Text 07624 819020

It is important that you provide us with a current daytime contact telephone number because if you are successful for a bid and we are unable to contact you we will move onto the next person on the list.

Assisted Persons List

If you find it difficult to understand the Choice Based Lettings Scheme and how to bid for properties, Boston Borough Council may provide you with additional help through the Assisted Persons List. Please ask for more details.

Selection and offers of accommodation

The primary aim of the Partnership is to maintain balanced and stable communities. In order to achieve this there may be occasions when the Member who has the greatest priority within the scheme may not be offered a particular property.

If your bid is selected, your membership details, including any current and former rent arrears, family and employment status will be checked before a formal offer is made.

If successful you will be contacted by phone and invited to view the property, when bids close. If you refuse an offer, your registration will be re-dated to the date when the offer was made. If you refuse two offers, your registration will be suspended for 12 months and you will not be eligible to place bids during this suspension.

Properties are subject to withdrawal from the Homechoice scheme if an existing tenant withdraws their notice.



Feedback



Our property magazine will provide you with feedback on let properties. This will help you with your future bids. Feedback will include:

- ◆ Property size, type and location
- ◆ Banding of selected bidder
- ◆ Number of bids received for each property
- ◆ Registration date of the selected bidder

Banding Scheme

Gold band

- ◆ You have been accepted as statutorily homeless
- ◆ You are a member of armed forces being discharged within the next two months
- ◆ You have recently ceased or will cease to be entitled to remain in accommodation provided by the MoD following death of a spouse or are being discharged from the forces due to serious injury, illness or disability
- ◆ Your household is assessed as being statutorily overcrowded
- ◆ You have been awarded High Priority from the Medical Assessor
- ◆ Your home is subject to a demolition or compulsory purchase order or a prohibition notice/order making it uninhabitable
- ◆ You are a retiring agricultural worker as determined by ADHAC
- ◆ You are threatened with homelessness through no fault of your own within the next two months
- ◆ You are suffering harassment or domestic abuse and it is considered that your accommodation is unreasonable to occupy as defined by homelessness legislation
- ◆ You are an HP tenant within the Boston Homechoice area who is releasing two or more bedrooms
- ◆ You are an HP tenant within the Boston Homechoice area who is affected by the Housing Benefit Cap which is causing severe financial hardship

Silver band

- ◆ You are accommodated as homeless on behalf of Boston Borough Council.
- ◆ You have been determined by the council to be Street Homeless, that is to say no access to accommodation at all
- ◆ You have been awarded Medium Priority from the Medical Assessor
- ◆ Your household is assessed as needing 1 more bedroom under the Welfare Reform Act 2012 size criteria
- ◆ Your home is lacking basic essential facilities through no fault of your own
- ◆ You are an HP tenant within the Boston Homechoice area who is releasing one bedroom
- ◆ You are a household with dependent children who are lodging with friends or family
- ◆ You and your partner have dependent children and are unable to live together as a family
- ◆ Your home is assessed as unsuitable for children
- ◆ You are experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of current housing circumstances
- ◆ You have a housing need which you cannot meet yourself and have formerly served in the regular forces in the last 5 years

Bronze band

- ◆ You have been deemed intentionally homeless and have not had a settled home in the last 6 months
- ◆ You are a household without dependent children lodging with friends or family
- ◆ You are a HP tenant within the Boston Homechoice area and been assessed as requiring sheltered housing
- ◆ You need to live in a particular area for welfare reasons
- ◆ Your relationship has broken down and you do not have the financial means to secure alternative accommodation
- ◆ You have been awarded Low Priority from the Medical Assessor
- ◆ Your existing tenancy is insecure, that is to say an assured shorthold tenancy
- ◆ You are an HP tenant wanting to move to older persons accommodation and are occupying accommodation suitable for families
- ◆ You are a qualifying tenant and need to move to the Boston Homechoice area to avoid hardship and need to move for work or to take up work

Copper band

- ◆ You do not fall into any other category and have no housing need
- ◆ You have the financial capability to resolve your own housing needs
- ◆ You have been deemed to have deliberately worsened your housing circumstances
- ◆ You have a housing debt over £500
- ◆ You are an owner and are not experiencing undue financial hardship
- ◆ You have no local connection