

How your Application to Transfer will be Assessed



Somer Community Housing Trust is part of the Somer Housing Group

A company limited by guarantee registered under Companies Act 1985

Registered No. 3574882

Housing Corporation Registration No. LH 4209

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**The Maltings, River Place
Lower Bristol Road, Bath BA2 1EP**



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Introduction

Please read this booklet before completing the transfer form as it explains how your application to move to another Trust home will be assessed. It also gives details of other options for moving.

1 Eligibility

When we receive your application to transfer we will register your request and then assess whether or not you are eligible under the Trust's allocations policy.

For the Trust to consider you for re-housing, you must:

- Have a clear rent account
- Have no other debt owing to Somer Housing Group
- Have kept your property in good order
- Not be in breach of any other tenancy condition

NB. Where the level of debt is under £250 we may consider you for a move if you have kept to a repayment plan for a minimum of 12 weeks. However, any debt must be cleared in full before a move can take place.

2 Assessment

Your application to transfer will be assessed using the criteria listed overleaf.

As a part of this assessment we will visit you at home to check your circumstances and make sure we award you the correct level of priority.

During this visit we will also check that your property is in good order. If any repair issues for which you are responsible are identified at the time of inspection, your application will be suspended until the necessary works have been completed.

The visit will also be a good opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have about your application.

Once we have completed our assessment, we will write to you and let you know whether you have a low, high or urgent priority for a move.

If you have been awarded urgent priority for a move your application and the circumstances that led to the award of priority will be subject to a six monthly review.

If you have been awarded a low priority it is unlikely that the Trust will be able to transfer you to alternative accommodation. If this is the case then we will recommend that you pursue other options for moving, such as a mutual exchange or Homeseekers application.

If you disagree with the decision we make regarding your assessment or priority, you have the right to have the decision reviewed.

3 The Points System

All transfer applications are assessed using a points system with points awarded to reflect the level of housing need.

The maximum number of points that will be awarded to any application is 500, which represents an urgent priority for a transfer.

Points are awarded for the following categories:

Bedroom Deficiency

The following are **not** expected to share a bedroom:

- Parents and children
- Adults who are not cohabiting
- Children of opposite sexes where the eldest is seven or over
- Children of the same sex where the eldest is eight or over

For a child to be considered on an application he or she must:

- Live with the applicant the majority of the time
- Or
- Where a child spends an equal amount of time with each parent the child will be considered on the application of the parent who receives the child benefit.

Bedroom deficiency points will be awarded as follows:

Lacking One Bedroom	250 Points
Lacking Two Bedrooms	350 Points
Lacking Three or More Bedrooms	Urgent Need Status

Medical Need

Medical need will only be considered if there is a direct link between your health problems and the home you live in **and** a move to another property would alleviate or reduce the problems that you are experiencing.

Depending upon the severity of the impact that your housing has on your health, you will be awarded points as follows:

Medical Points

Low Need	100 Points
High Need	250 Points
Urgent Need	Urgent Need Status

If you have a medical condition that you would like us to take into consideration, please fill in the medical questionnaire at the back of the transfer application form.

Children in flats above the ground floor

Points will be awarded to families with dependent children living in flats above the ground floor:

Children in flats on 1st or 2nd floor	10 Points
Children in flats on 3rd floor or above	20 Points

Community and Rural Connection Points

Community points will be awarded where there is an established need to move to a particular area for work, schooling or family support and the distance from the current home is not easily commutable. These points will only apply when under consideration for properties in this area.

Before awarding these points, the Trust will need to see evidence that you have a connection to a particular area.

Rural connection points will be awarded to those people who currently live in or have spent a significant part of their lives in a rural community and wish to remain in or move back to that community. These points will only apply when under consideration for properties in this rural area.

Community and Rural Connection Points

Established Community Connection	10 Points
Established Rural Connection	10 Points

Discretionary Points

In certain circumstances applicants may qualify for additional points awarded at the discretion of the Trust.

Examples of situations where discretionary points may be awarded are:

- Domestic Violence
- Harassment
- Families Living Apart
- Under Occupation of a property for which there is high demand

Discretionary Points

High Need	250 Points
Urgent Need	Urgent Need Status

4 Areas of Choice

It is important that you choose as many areas of choice and property types as possible.

There are some areas in which we have very few homes and many areas in which we have only a small number of house-type properties.

It is therefore important that you are as realistic as possible when choosing your areas and property types.

Your Housing Services Officer will be able to give you advice on the areas in which we have a high vacancy rate of the types of property that meet your needs.

5 Offers of Accommodation

If the Trust is able to make you an offer of accommodation, we will write to you with the address and details of the type of property. We will also tell you the date we expect the tenancy to start and how much the rent is.

Before making a decision on whether or not you wish to accept the offer, you will be invited to view the property.

This will also be a good opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have.

If you refuse two reasonable offers of accommodation, your application for re-housing will be suspended for 6 months. During this time you will not be considered for any vacancies that may arise.

If you have been awarded 'Urgent Need' status, and you refuse a suitable offer of accommodation, your Urgent Need status will be removed.

6 Sheltered Housing

The Trust owns a number of sheltered housing schemes specifically designed for older people. These schemes benefit from a resident or visiting sheltered housing officer and some have a community room for social activities.

Sheltered housing is primarily designed for people over 60, however in certain circumstances we will consider disabled applicants that are under 60 and would benefit from the security of a sheltered housing scheme.

For more details on our sheltered housing schemes, please contact a member of Neighbourhood Services on 01225 366000 or call into one of our local service centres.

7 Other Housing Options

Mutual Exchange

A mutual exchange is another name for a home swap. You are able to exchange homes with another tenant of the Trust or another social landlord. You must seek permission from the Trust before the exchange can take place.

When you apply for a transfer we will automatically place you on the mutual exchange register, however, we will not include your address and contact details in the Mutual Exchange book unless you give us permission.

You can search for someone to swap with by looking in the Mutual Exchange book or by placing adverts in the local press or shop windows.

A copy of the Mutual Exchange book is kept in each of our Local Service Centres and at our Maltings office.

For more information on mutual exchanges, please contact your Housing Services Officer or call into your nearest Local Service Centre.

Homeseekers

(Bath and North East Somerset Council's Housing Register)

The Trust strongly recommends that you make an application to join the Homeseekers register if you have not already done so.

The majority of our vacant homes are let to applicants from the Homeseekers register and so being registered with the Council will significantly increase your opportunity to move.

The Council will also consider you for any vacancies that arise with other social landlords in the area.

You can contact the Council's Housing Options and Advice Team on 01225 396296, or write to them at:

Bath and North East Somerset Council
Social and Housing Services
PO Box 3343
Bath
BA1 2ZH

Shared Ownership

If you are interested in finding out about any shared ownership schemes that are available in your area, please contact the Council's Housing Options and Advice Team at the above address.