

# Housing Choices

BIDDING FOR YOUR HOME

BANDING

PRIORITY HOUSING

ALLOCATIONS

## LETTING HARROW'S SOCIAL HOUSING

A SUMMARY OF HARROW'S HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME





# APPLYING FOR A COUNCIL OR HOUSING ASSOCIATION HOME IN HARROW

## Harrow's Allocation Scheme

Social housing (properties offered by a council or a housing association) is in short supply in Harrow, but high demand. This guide sets out how Harrow Council will prioritise applications for social housing to make sure that lettings are fair and transparent, and that those with the greatest housing need wait the shortest time for housing.

Harrow Council is a member of Locata, and works with councils and housing associations across West London. Locata offers you more choice about where you want to live. You can find out more about Locata, including how to search for and bid for council or housing association properties, by reading the Locata Scheme User Guide at [www.locata.org.uk/Harrow](http://www.locata.org.uk/Harrow).

**This guide is only a summary of Harrow's allocation scheme. You can find more full details about how we let our homes by reading our full scheme here [www.harrow.gov.uk/housing-property/housing-strategies-policies](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/housing-property/housing-strategies-policies) .**

**Eligibility** If you have a right to reside in the UK (or are legally allowed to apply for social housing) and aged 18 or over, you can register for housing in Harrow. You\* must also be in one or more of the following categories:

- ▶ You live in Harrow
- ▶ The Council has accepted a prevention or relief duty or have accepted a full homelessness duty
- ▶ You were formerly homeless and took an offer of a privately rented property outside Harrow
- ▶ You are a young person who has recently left care and have been referred for housing by Harrow children's services
- ▶ You are due to be discharged from hospital or prison within a month, and your last settled address was in Harrow
- ▶ You are a serving member of the armed forces or reserved forces, or have served in the last 5 years

**However, you will not qualify as a priority for a council or housing association home if:**

- ▶ Your need to move does not qualify you for priority under the scheme
- ▶ You have enough money to house yourself
- ▶ You (or anyone who wants to move with you) are guilty of serious anti-social behaviour, or physical or verbal abuse of council staff, contractors or housing association partners
- ▶ You give us false or misleading information, or withhold information we request, or you pay money to obtain a social tenancy



## Priority Banding

When you register for housing in Harrow, we will assess your application. If you are eligible you will be told of your priority band (A+, A, B, C, or C-) and the maximum number of bedrooms you are entitled to bid for. Any children in your household aged over 21 will not count towards the number of bedrooms we calculate that you need, unless they live with you either to give or to receive care.

If we find that you have no priority for social housing, you will be able to log on to Locata, [www.locata.org.uk/Harrow](http://www.locata.org.uk/Harrow) to find out about alternative housing options.

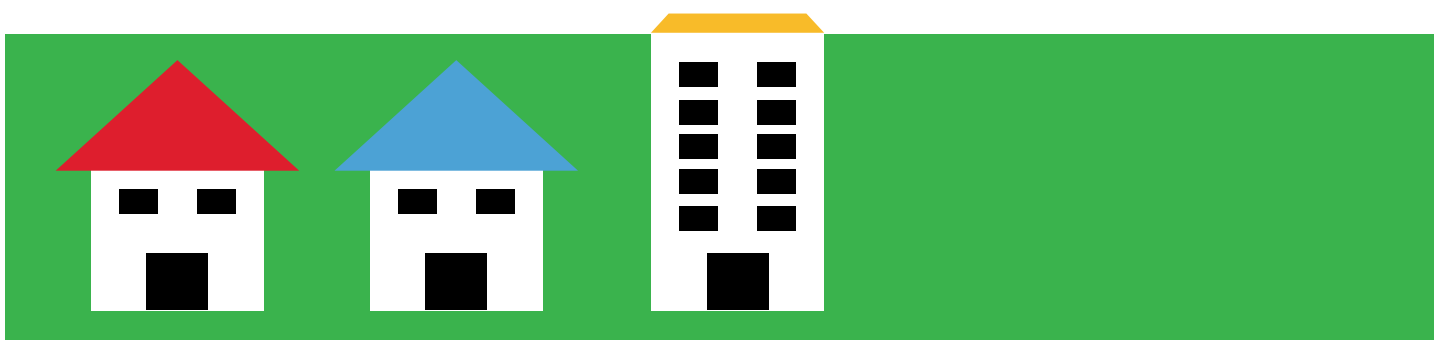
If you disagree with our assessment decision, you can ask us to review it. If your circumstances change at any time (e.g. you have another child or you move house) you should complete a "Change of Circumstances" form and we will reassess your application. You can access this by logging on to your Locata account.

When you bid for a property, it is placed alongside other people's bids in band and date order. The person with the highest band and earliest priority date within that band is considered first.

Below is a general guide to the priority bands. You can find out more by reading the full scheme at [www/harrow.gov.uk/housing-property/housing-strategies-policies](http://www/harrow.gov.uk/housing-property/housing-strategies-policies) or by asking a housing options advisor or you can call **020 8424 1093** or email [locatahelp@harrowgov.uk](mailto:locatahelp@harrowgov.uk)

### Band A+ Emergencies and Under-occupiers

- ▶ Emergency need to move (e.g. a life-threatening medical condition which is seriously affected by the applicant's current housing)
- ▶ Ex-armed service personnel with urgent housing needs
- ▶ Social housing tenants with an emergency transfer need (e.g. because of threats of violence in the current home)
- ▶ Housing have agreed to a Social Services' recommendation to provide permanent accommodation to enable fostering or adoption
- ▶ Council and housing association tenants downsizing to another social home with fewer bedrooms



## Band A Urgent and High Priority

- ▶ Urgent need to move for medical or welfare reasons, where current housing conditions are having a major adverse effect
- ▶ Severe overcrowding – i.e. lacking at least 2 bedrooms<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Private tenants living in conditions that pose a serious risk to health and safety which cannot be resolved by the landlord within 6 months
- ▶ Accepted by the council as a homeless working family experiencing financial hardship where at least one child is at primary school<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Formerly homeless working families who took an offer of private sector housing
- ▶ Council and housing association tenants in adapted properties they no longer need
- ▶ Council and housing association tenants who need to move because of the redevelopment or are disabled and need adaptations to the property
- ▶ Successors and tenants with a flexible tenancy approved by the council for a move to more appropriate accommodation
- ▶ Older people moving to sheltered housing who have an urgent need to move
- ▶ Ex-service tenants where there is a contractual re-housing obligation
- ▶ Special quota schemes for young care leavers and people who need to move on from supported housing
- ▶ People who need to move out of residential care into independent living

## Time Limits



If you are in urgent housing need and qualify under band A+ or band A of the scheme, there will generally be a time limit on how long you are entitled to remain in that band. This is to ensure that only genuine emergency and urgent cases are given high priority.

You will be informed if there is a time limit on your housing and what this means for you.





### Band B Standard Priority

- ▶ Older people moving to sheltered housing (this is generally for people aged 60 or over)

### Band C Non-urgent

- ▶ Applicants to whom we have accepted a prevention or a relief duty to
- ▶ Accepted homeless living in suitable temporary accommodation
- ▶ Formerly homeless who accepted a qualifying offer of a privately-rented home
- ▶ Homeless applicants since 8th November 2012 for 1 year following discharge of duty into a private rented sector home
- ▶ Homeless but the council has not accepted a duty to re-house because there is no priority need or because the applicant is found intentionally homeless
- ▶ Households with a recognised housing need who either owe money to the council or a partner housing association or have deliberately damaged their previous home
- ▶ Households with a recognised housing need who have refused reasonable offers of accommodation
- ▶ Sheltered applicants who are currently living outside of Harrow Borough

### Band C- initial preference

- ▶ Applicants who would ordinarily qualify for a priority banding but have NOT lived in Harrow Borough continuously for the last 5 years

### No priority for Housing

If you register for social housing in Harrow, but do not qualify for band A+, A, B, C or C- you will not be able to bid for properties through Locata. See "Further help" below for more information.

### Further help

We want to help you find the right home. This might be advice that will enable you to stay where you are, or help you to move within the private sector or to another part of the country. To make it simpler for you, we have put lots of useful information on [www.locata.org.uk/harrow](http://www.locata.org.uk/harrow) (click the "housing options" section of the Locata website).

### Contact us

You can use your Locata "LIN" number to find personalised housing options and advice.

Talk to us about your housing options or make an appointment for housing advice:

 [www.locatahelp@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:www.locatahelp@harrow.gov.uk)

 020 8424 1093

<sup>1</sup> Any children in your household aged over 21 will not count towards the number of bedrooms we calculate that you need, unless they live with you either to give or to receive care.



## Guideline Waiting Times

Social housing in Harrow is in high demand. The table below sets out how long you should expect to wait before one of your bids for a council or housing association home in Harrow is successful. The table is only a guide. The time you have to wait may be much longer depending on what sort of properties become available, and which other applicants bid for the same properties.

Your band	Table showing the average waiting times for properties				
	Sheltered/Studio	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed or more
A+	3 months	6 months	8 months	18 months	6 years
A	6 months	6 months	18 months	18 months	2-3 years
B	15 months	6 months	9 years	10 years	13 years
C and C-	There are no guideline waiting times for these bands. Applicants in these bands will always be considered after applicants in bands A+, A and B.				

In order to move as quickly as possible, it is always preferable to bid for properties that have less competition (e.g. flats rather than houses, upper-storey flats rather than those on the ground floor or studio flats rather than 1-bedroom flats).

**Please note that you will only be considered for a property if you place a bid for it.**

**You can find out more about bidding for properties in the Locata Scheme User Guide [www.locata.org.uk/harrow](http://www.locata.org.uk/harrow).**

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