

If you would like a copy of this leaflet on audiotape or translated into another language, please contact our Customer Service Team on the telephone number below.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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Atlantic
HOUSING LIMITED

Allocations & Lettings



Introduction

Atlantic Housing Limited (AHL) is committed to providing a high quality allocations and lettings service to its customers.

AHL has a duty to assist local councils in meeting its statutory housing obligations. In Portsmouth, Southampton, Winchester, Fareham and Test Valley this is achieved through a nominations system. This means that up to 75% of properties to be re-let are offered to applicants on the council's waiting lists. This results in 25% being available for transfer tenants of AHL. 100% of new build properties are usually allocated to applicants on the council's register.

In Eastleigh, a choice-based allocations system has been adopted (Eastleigh HOMECHOICE). Each year a Lettings Plan is agreed which all participants of the scheme work to. This dictates what percentage of properties should be let to existing tenants wishing to transfer and applicants on the council waiting list. It also specifies the percentage of re-housings between bands. Details of the lettings plan is published on www.eastleighhomechoice.co.uk.

AHL has very few tenants outside of Eastleigh. If you are looking for re-housing outside the Eastleigh Borough, much of this leaflet will not be relevant to you. Please therefore contact the Homefinder team on 023 8068 4308 for individual advice.

Eligibility

To be eligible for housing with AHL you must meet the conditions of our allocations policy. If you are offered a property via the council you will also need to meet their policies on allocation.

Existing tenants of AHL must have held their tenancy at their current address for at least 12 months. Any breach of tenancy may hinder their ability to move. Rent accounts must have been clear for the 3-months preceding an offer of accommodation. At the time of transfer the property must be in good order, free from rubbish and damage.

Eastleigh Homechoice

How do the bandings work?

The Homechoice scheme is a register of council applicants and Housing Association tenants who need housing. All applications are registered in 1 of 3 bands – Urgent, Needing and Wanting. Urgent is the highest band and wanting the lowest. Most applicants are registered in the needing band.

Urgent Band applicants include:

- Homeless applicants who have been waiting in the needing band for at least 3 months, where there is a statutory duty to provide housing

- Those awaiting housing before they can be discharged from hospital
- Those who have become housebound due to unsuitable housing
- Those with a demolition order on their property
- Housing Association tenants with urgent transfer needs (eg: Domestic Violence)
- Those proven to be have 'no fixed abode'
- Vulnerable applicants given priority by the Housing Support Panel.

Needing Band Applicants include:

- Those sharing accommodation with another household
- Those who are overcrowded
- Those who do not have access to kitchen & bathroom facilities
- Those with a medical need to move
- Housing Association tenants wishing to move within the Borough
- Those accepted as being Homeless under the 1996 Housing Act
- Those with a Notice to Quit their accommodation
- Assured Shorthold tenants living in the Borough.

Wanting Band applicants include:

- Those who do not have any of the above needs
- Those who are homeowners under 60 years of age
- Homeowners over the age of 60 living outside the Borough
- Council of Housing Association tenants in other Boroughs
- Those currently living abroad
- Current serving prisoners.

How do I get selected for a property?

Every property that becomes available for permanent re-letting in Eastleigh is advertised. The advert contains details of those who would be eligible to apply, specifying any special conditions.

Properties are advertised for a minimum of 1 week and anyone interested must submit a voucher. These are sent to you when you are first registered on the scheme. The voucher must be completed specifying the reference number of the property being bid for, the closing date and the first line of the address. The voucher must be returned to Eastleigh Borough Council in Leigh Road, Eastleigh to be received before the closing date. If you have access to the Internet you can bid on-line (www.eastleighhomechoice.co.uk).

If you do not meet the criteria specified in the advert, or your voucher is received after the closing date, it will be discarded.

Properties are then offered to the highest priority case. Urgent band applicants will have a higher priority than needing band applicants (unless the property is specifically advertised for needing band cases). AHL tenants in the needing and wanting bands are prioritised by tenancy start date.

All offers made are subject to verification by AHL. This is a process in which applicants must provide proof that they qualify for the property and that the facts stated on their application form are still correct. Any false information, or change not advised, which results in a household obtaining a property they would not have been entitled to, may result in possession action under the 1996 Housing Act.

If an applicant accepts an offer, the tenancy may be expected to start very quickly.

AHL reviews its cases on the register every year and will send you a review form. If you fail to complete and return this, you may find your application is removed. If this happens, you will not be considered for a move. YOU MUST THEREFORE complete this.

I am an existing AHL tenant.

What size property can I apply for?

When your application form is registered you will be sent a confirmation letter informing you of your registration date, the band you fall into and the bed need you are entitled to.

When assessing bed need, AHL takes into account only those family members originally housed or stated on the application form, plus any dependent children that have been born to the household (or formally adopted or fostered) since the original re-housing. As such we do not automatically take responsibility for the re-housing of other family members or friends. Where other family members are included on an application for re-housing, there must be a proven link and need for the person to join the household. AHL reserves the right to refuse applications for additional members to join the household where it would create difficulties in providing the ideal property type.

A guideline to matching family types to sizes of home

1 bed property	A single person or couple
2 bed property (3 person)	1 or 2 adults with 1 child
2 bed property (4 person)	1 or 2 adults with 2 children expected to share
3 bed property (4 person)	1 or 2 adults with children not expected to share
3 bed property (5 person) or	1 or 2 adults with 3 or more children
3 bed property (6 person) or *	1 or 2 adults with 3 or more children
4 bed property (6 person)*	1 or 2 adults with 3 or more children

* where available

Properties with 4 bedrooms for affordable letting are extremely rare in Eastleigh and as such, AHL let 3 bedroom parlour houses to families requiring 4 bedrooms. This enables the 2nd reception room to be used as a bedroom. These properties will usually (but not exclusively) be let to families with a four-bed (or larger) need.

Which children are expected to share?

Where children are of the same sex they will be expected to share a bedroom. AHL seeks to meet a higher standard than some councils and note that it is preferable for children of the same sex to have separate bedrooms where the eldest child is 11.

Where children are of different sexes, AHL allow families to register for separate bedrooms when the eldest child reaches the age of 5.

I have a medical condition.

How can I apply for increased priority?

All existing AHL tenants in Eastleigh are placed in the needing band, including those with a medical need to move. It is therefore not usual for those with a medical condition to obtain a higher priority than other tenants who need to move for other reasons (for example overcrowding).

Urgent priority can only be awarded by the Housing Support Panel, which is held monthly at Eastleigh Borough Council's offices. To be awarded urgent banding status by the Panel, you must demonstrate that you have become permanently house-bound as a result of operation or deterioration of health, or that you cannot be discharged from hospital or another institution because your existing home is now unsuitable and cannot be adapted.

Proof must be provided by the relevant health care officials and if they levy a charge, you will be expected to pay the bill. The supporting letter should be given to AHL who will take the case to the panel.

Can I get priority on any other ground – my situation is very serious?

The Housing Support Panel can give urgent band status to tenants who are at serious risk because of domestic violence and / or harassment.

However, there must be documented involvement from the relevant agencies, making reference to fact. You will need to liaise with your Local Estate Manager about this.

If I get offered a property, do I have to take it?

Under the Homechoice scheme there is no restriction on the number of bids or refusals AHL tenants make. However, if you are in the urgent band and you refuse suitable accommodation, you may have your priority reviewed.

If you are an applicant registered via the council, you will need to check what the consequences may be if you refuse accommodation. Many councils have a 1-offer only policy and if you are in temporary accommodation provided by them, you could find that they discharge their duty to provide this facility and ask you to leave.

Useful Addresses & Numbers

Eastleigh Borough Council

Civic offices, Leigh Road,
Eastleigh SO50 9YN. **023 8068 8000**

Southampton City Council

Civic Centre, Southampton
SO14 7LY. **023 8022 3855**

Portsmouth City Council

Civic Offices, Guildhall Square,
Portsmouth, PO1 2AL. **023 92822251**

Fareham Borough Council

Civic Offices, Civic Way, Fareham,
Hampshire PO16 7PU. **01329 236100**

Bournemouth Borough Council

Town Hall, Bourne Avenue,
Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6DY. **01202 451451**

New Forest District Council

Appletree Court,
Lyndhurst, SO43 7PA. **023 8028 5000**

Winchester City Council

City Offices, Colebrook Street,
Winchester, SO23 9LJ. **01962 840222**

Gosport Borough Council

Town Hall, High Street,
Gosport, PO12 1EB. **023 9258 4242**

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Eastleigh Homechoice

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