The Housing Register

HomeChoice

Tandridge

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The Housing Register

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How do I join Tandridge District Council’s Housing Register?

The Council has a single list for people in need of affordable housing. This is called the Housing Register and is used to allocate the housing available to the Council.

To join the Housing Register you need to complete our standard application form. If you need help completing the form, please contact Customer Services on 01883 722000.

Who is eligible to join the Housing Register?

Anyone aged 16 years or over is eligible for the Housing Register unless they are:

- Ineligible persons from abroad (e.g. those subject to immigration control or not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area).
- A member of a household guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant of the Council.

How does the Council decide who has priority for housing?

The Register is divided into bands A-E, which separate applicants into different levels of housing need and financial resources. Applicants in Band A have the highest priority for housing and those in Band E the lowest.

When a property becomes available the Council advertises it using Tandridge Home Choice, the Council’s choice based lettings system. If you are on the housing register you can bid for any properties being advertised for which you are eligible.

All bids received are put in priority order to produce a list of applicants for each property advertised. For further information about Tandridge Home Choice and how the bidding process works please contact Customer Services on 01883 722000.

Vacant properties are allocated to applicants in band order, starting with applicants in Band A. If there is no one in Band A eligible for the property, those in Band B are considered and so on through the bands. If more than one household within a band meets the criteria for the property, the application registered the longest will have the highest priority.

The few exceptions to this procedure are explained in our Allocations Policy. Details on how to get a copy of this are given later.
**How does the Council decide which band to place my application in?**

If you are eligible for the Housing Register your application for housing will be assessed using the following factors:

- Your housing need and how urgently you need to move
- Whether you have a local connection with the district of Tandridge
- Your income and assets

We will take the information needed to make these assessments from your application form and if necessary, your medical assessment form. It is very important you complete the forms fully. If any information is missing your application will be processed, but you will unable to place a bid on any properties advertised through **Tandridge Home Choice** until this information is provided.

**Which applications are placed in Band A?**

Band A is for low income households who need to move due to an emergency, usually on health or welfare grounds. Very few applications are likely to be eligible for this band.

You fall into this band if one or more of the following applies:

- You cannot occupy your property because of a medical problem or disability and the property cannot be adapted (eg you are a wheelchair user who lives in a first floor flat with no lift).

- Your life would be in immediate danger if you continued to live in your current home and we have evidence to prove this.

- You are an existing tenant of the Council or a housing association in the district and you need to move immediately because of serious violence or harassment, where this has been proved and action against the perpetrator(s) will not resolve the situation.

- Your case is recognised as an emergency, but does not fit into the above categories, at the discretion of the Head of Housing Needs and Strategy.

- Low income households who need an urgent transfer.

This band also only includes people the Council needs to move quickly to create urgent vacancies in the housing stock.
You fall into this group if you are an existing Council or housing association tenant in the district and one or more of the following applies:

- You live in a property with two or more bedrooms and are willing to move to a one-bedroom home.
- You need to be moved so your current property can be redeveloped.
- You are in housing where someone is available to help support you and you no longer need this support.
- You have to leave accommodation leased by the Council or a housing association from a private landlord because the lease is due to end.
- We have agreed to re-house you through a reciprocal arrangement with another council or housing association.
- You are a key worker or Council employee with at least 10 years service and your employer needs your property to house another such employee.

**Which applications are placed in Band B?**

Band B is for low income households in high housing need with a local connection with Tandridge.

If you are in one of the following situations you are considered to be in high need.

- You have been accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness and you are in priority need within the meaning of the Housing Act 1996.
- Your accommodation lacks basic facilities (ie a kitchen, bathroom or inside toilet) which cannot be provided by the owner at reasonable cost.
- Your accommodation has been assessed as being in severe disrepair by a Private Sector Housing Officer and cannot be repaired at reasonable cost.
- You have dependant children and share facilities with others who are not members of your household and you have no rights to occupy the property or to apply for an occupation order to grant this.
- You live in a property that does not have enough bedrooms for your household.
- You have an urgent need to move on medical or welfare grounds.
**Which applications are placed in Band C?**

Band C is for low income households in moderate housing need with a local connection with Tandridge

If you are in one of these situations you are considered to be in moderate need:

- You are renting accommodation with limited security of tenure.
- You are accepted as homeless, but you are not in priority need within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
- Households with no fixed abode who have made a statutory declaration witnessed by a solicitor, that they have no accommodation in which they can reside, even temporarily.
- Your household includes at least one child under five and/or a pregnant woman and you are living in accommodation above the ground floor.
- Your accommodation has been assessed as being in disrepair by a Private Sector Housing Officer and cannot be repaired at reasonable cost.
- You are sharing facilities with others who are not members of your household but where either:
  - You have rights to occupy the property or to apply for an occupation order to grant this, or
  - Your household does not include any dependent children.
- You have no living room or are sharing a living room with another household.
- You are a Tandridge key worker.
- You have a need for alternative accommodation on medical or welfare grounds.

**Which applications are placed in Band D?**

Band D is for applicants who have any of the housing needs detailed in Bands A-C, but who either:

- Have a high/moderate income.
- Do not have a local connection with Tandridge.
Which applications are placed in Band E?

- Band E is for Households with low housing need.

If you do not have any of the housing needs included in Bands A-C, you are considered to have low housing need.

What is a local connection?

You are considered to have a local connection with Tandridge if you:

- Live in the district of Tandridge and have done so for at least one year.
- Have previously lived in the district for three out of the five years immediately preceding your application.
- Are a Tandridge key worker.
- Have immediate family (ie mother, father, son, daughter) who have lived in the district for five or more years and who need to receive support from, or give support to you.
- Have another special reason why you need to live in Tandridge.

What happens when the Council receives my application form?

Unless you are considered to be ineligible, your application will be registered on the Housing Register within 10 working days of being received. You will be sent a letter confirming:

- Your Tandridge Home Choice reference number.
- Which band your application has been placed in.
- A booklet detailing how to access Tandridge Home Choice and begin placing bids on available properties.
- Your registration date and annual re-registration card.

If it has not been possible to fully assess your application because some information was missing, you will be advised and told what information we still need.

If you are assessed as having a high enough income to be eligible for shared ownership, you will also be sent details of low cost home ownership schemes.

If you are considered to be ineligible for the Housing Register, you will be sent a letter confirming this and the reason for this decision.
What can I do if I am unhappy with my assessment?

If you think we have made an error in assessing your application, you should contact us immediately. You should advise us of any mistakes we have made and/or provide us with any further information relevant to your application. You are entitled to ask us to provide details of any information the Council has used to assess your application.

In addition, you may also have the right to request a formal review of certain decisions the Council may make when considering your application. You will be advised of these rights in writing should they apply to you.

Why do you need to assess my income and how will you do this?

There is limited social housing in the district and the Council cannot provide rented accommodation for everyone. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, lower priority for rented housing will be given to your application if one or more of the following applies to you:

- Have sufficient income, funds or assets to purchase alternative accommodation suitable to your needs privately, or by using the Council’s Low Cost Home Ownership Schemes,
- Have within five years of the date of your application, disposed of an asset you could reasonably have been expected to use to resolve your own housing difficulties.
- Are an owner-occupier and you have an asset which could be used to get accommodation suitable for your needs.

How does the Council assess any medical and welfare issues?

If you have any medical problems you would like taken into consideration you should mention this on your application form. If appropriate, you will then be sent a self-assessment medical form. Your application will be discussed with the Council’s Medical Advisor to assess whether you should be given one of the following:

- Emergency medical priority.
- Urgent medical priority.
- Lower medical priority.
- No medical priority.

Additional priority may be awarded to an application where there is a particular welfare or social factor, or exceptional circumstances not covered elsewhere. These will usually need to be supported by other agencies such as the police or social services.
The award of these points is rare and is made by the Assistant Director of Community Services (Housing) following a detailed review of the case. If there are any such issues you would like to be taken into consideration you should also mention these on your application form.

What choices can I make about where I want to live and the type of property I want?

The Council has divided the district into 23 different housing areas. These are shown on the application form in Section 10. When you begin bidding through Tandridge Home Choice you are free to decide which areas of the district you would like to live in and you can choose as many (or as few) as you like.

You can also choose whether you want to be considered for housing association tenancies, as well as the type, floor level and location of property you require. However, priority for vacant houses will be given to households with dependant children.

The more you restrict your choices, the longer you will have to wait for an offer of accommodation.

In particular, if you only choose more popular areas or property types you may have to wait for a very long time. You may wish to discuss this with one of the Council’s Housing Needs Officers before making your final choices.

You will only be eligible for properties we believe are the right size for your household. The rules the Council uses to decide how many bedrooms your household needs are shown in the full Allocations Policy. Details on how to get a copy of this are given later.

Do I have the same amount of choice if I need to move because of an emergency or if I have been accepted as statutorily homeless?

In very exceptional circumstances you may be assessed as requiring an emergency move on health or welfare grounds. If so, your application will be placed in Band A and you will be made one suitable offer of accommodation within the district. In determining the suitability, consideration will be given to:

- Location of employment.
- Schooling.
- Support networks your household has.
- Mobility and transport issues.
- Any issues of violence or harassment where these have been substantiated.
If you refuse a suitable offer of accommodation, your emergency priority will be withdrawn. Your application will be re-assessed in accordance with the normal procedure and you will be entitled to free choice. As long as the first offer did not fully meet your expressed preferences, you will be entitled to two more offers.

The Council wants to give homeless applicants as much choice as possible about where they live. However if applicants were able to remain in temporary accommodation until their ideal property was available, this would lead to problems with the supply of temporary accommodation for other homeless people.

If you have been accepted as homeless and placed in Band B you will be allowed to choose your preferred landlord, property type and area by bidding for a period of 12 months only.

If your preferred property does not become available within this time, you will then be made suitable offers of property anywhere in the district.

**How can I reduce the length of time I will have to wait until I am offered a property?**

Unless your circumstances change and you become eligible for a different band, the only way to make sure you are re-housed as quickly as possible is by making your choices as broad as you can. If your situation is very urgent you should make sure your choices reflect this and be as flexible as you can.

**How many offers can I refuse before my application will be affected?**

Apart from the exceptions regarding emergency cases and statutorily homeless households described above, every effort will be made to ensure all offers of accommodation match your choices of landlord, area and property type.

If you refuse two offers of accommodation that fully meet your expressed choices (bids), you will be entitled to remain on the Housing Register, but will have your priority reduced. Your application will remain in the same band, but your date of registration will be amended to be the date you refused the second offer, reducing your priority within the band.

**What should I do if my circumstances change?**

If your circumstances change (if for instance, you move home or someone joins or leaves your household) you should tell us immediately because this may affect your banding. You will need to complete a change of circumstances form so your application can be re-assessed.
**What happens if I owe the Council money or have caused nuisance?**

You will not normally be offered a new tenancy if you are a current tenant of a council or a registered social landlord and have outstanding rent arrears or if you have recently been served with a Notice seeking possession because of nuisance.

If you have rent arrears from a previous tenancy, you will not normally be offered a new tenancy unless you are keeping to a satisfactory arrangement to repay these arrears. In exceptional circumstances these rules may be waived.

**What if I am less than 18 years old?**

If you are aged 16 or 17 years old, your application will need to be jointly assessed by Housing and Social Services before an offer of accommodation is made. A suitable guarantor for the tenancy, until your 18th birthday, will also need to be identified. If you are under 16 years of age you are not eligible for the Register.

**Where can I find more information about the Council’s Allocation Policy?**

This booklet is only intended to provide a summary of the Council’s policy for the allocation of social housing. If you would like any further information about this, please contact us on the numbers below or e-mail customerservices@tandridge.gov.uk. Alternatively a copy of the full policy, which includes definitions of most of the terms used here, can be found on the Council’s website at:

www.tandridge.gov.uk/housing

Copies are also available from Housing Needs at the Council Offices.

Tel: 01883 722000.

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Website: www.tandridge.gov.uk
Tandridge District Council’s website is a comprehensive source of information about council services and the community.

You can find information about businesses, councillors, council tax and benefits, housing, jobs, planning, leisure, recycling and waste collections and much more.

www.tandridge.gov.uk

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