

# Social housing and homelessness



## What is social housing?

Social housing is sometimes called 'council housing'. But it refers to homes owned/managed by housing associations too (not just councils).

Rents for social housing are lower than rents for private homes.

## Who can apply for social housing?

Social housing is for people with the highest housing need. For example, residents who are vulnerable and/or who have a low income.

However, you cannot apply for social housing if you are 'subject to immigration control'. (Other criteria are on our website.)

## What is the Housing Register?

To get social housing, you must meet our criteria and be on our Housing Register.

Our Housing Register lists residents with accepted social housing applications.

But applying to join the Housing Register does not mean you will get a council home.

- When you apply, we will check your housing requirements and confirm if you are eligible.
- If we accept your Housing Register application, you could be given 'points'.
- The more points you have, the higher your priority for being offered social housing.
- After you get enough points, you will get a user ID and a PIN. You can then 'bid' for suitable social housing.

## Will you get social housing by becoming homeless?

No. Being homeless does not mean you will automatically get social housing.

- The Localism Act 2011 changed the connection between homelessness and social housing. After 15 November 2011, councils can offer homeless residents suitable homes in the private rented sector.
- So – if we have a duty to house you – it is more likely that we will offer you a private rented home (not social housing).
- Exceptions are in our housing allocation scheme policy. One example is below.
- Do you have an open homelessness application with us? If it was made before 9 November 2012, you should already be on our Housing Register.
- If you are homeless, and eligible for social housing, your housing officer will refer you to the Register.

## How is social housing allocated?

We have a points system:

- The number of points you can get depends on your circumstances and housing needs.
- You must have enough points before you can bid for social housing.
- However, even with enough points, there is no guarantee you will get a council home.

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## How does bidding work?

When you have enough points, you can bid for social housing properties you are eligible for.

Homes are offered to the highest priority applicant on the Housing Register.

However, even if you bid often, your bid may not be successful.

## Will having a medical condition increase your priority?

You could get extra points depending on your health and wellbeing needs.

But – if you already have ‘homelessness points’ – you will not get extra points for medical issues. Instead, we could use your medical information to help match you to a suitable home.

## Does waiting a long time mean you’ll get social housing before others?

No. We offer social housing based on need – not on how long someone has been waiting.

Waiting longer – or staying in homelessness accommodation for a long time – doesn’t mean you will get social housing before other applicants. This is true even if you have been waiting for several years.

Also, you could wait a long time without getting an offer of social housing. Why? Because there is a very high demand and not enough social housing for everyone who applies.

If you are in homelessness accommodation, it is not a permanent home. You should do all you can to move on to a more settled home.

Instead of waiting for social housing, you should try other ways to live in a home you can afford.

## What can you do if you cannot get social housing?

You should not rely on getting social housing. You must explore other options. For example:

- Find a private home you can afford to rent. If you are eligible for our ‘Find your own home scheme’, we could help pay your deposit and first month’s rent.
- You might be able to buy a home as part of an affordable home ownership scheme.

## How can you get housing advice or homelessness help?

- For free anonymous housing advice, use our interactive tool. It has information on a wide range of homelessness and housing topics. Start at <https://enfield.adviceaid.uk>.
- The homelessness support we give depends on your situation and our statutory duties. To check how we could help you, please go to: [www.enfield.gov.uk/homelessness](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/homelessness).

## Web version of this factsheet

For a web version of this factsheet – and other housing and homelessness resources – please go to [www.enfield.gov.uk/homelessness-resources](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/homelessness-resources).

## References and further advice

### Our housing policies and criteria

Social housing criteria: Enfield Council Housing Allocation Scheme policy (PDF)

[www.enfield.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0030/9537/6/Enfield-housing-allocation-scheme-Housing.pdf](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/9537/6/Enfield-housing-allocation-scheme-Housing.pdf)

Applying to join the Housing Register

[www.enfield.gov.uk/services/housing/council-housing/apply-to-be-on-the-housing-register](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/services/housing/council-housing/apply-to-be-on-the-housing-register)

Enfield Council’s housing placement policy for homeless households

[www.enfield.gov.uk/homelessness-placement](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/homelessness-placement)

## The law and our statutory homelessness duties

Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities  
[www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/overview-of-the-homelessness-legislation](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/overview-of-the-homelessness-legislation)

Overview of the Localism Act 2011  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/localism-act-2011-overview](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/localism-act-2011-overview)

Check if you are 'subject to immigration control' (Turn2us) [www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support/information-for-your-situation/immigration-status-and-benefits/check-if-you-are-defined-as-a-person-subject-to-immigration-control](http://www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support/information-for-your-situation/immigration-status-and-benefits/check-if-you-are-defined-as-a-person-subject-to-immigration-control)

## Intentionally homeless

'Intentional homelessness'  
(Chapter 9, Homelessness Code of Guidance)  
[www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-9-intentional-homelessness](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-9-intentional-homelessness)

## Homelessness advice

Free anonymous advice on eviction, social housing and other housing topics <https://enfield.adviceaid.uk>

Avoiding homelessness [www.enfield.gov.uk/act-now-homelessness](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/act-now-homelessness)

Housing advice for private renters (factsheet)  
[www.enfield.gov.uk/services/housing/homelessness/homelessness-factsheets-and-other-resources/avoid-homelessness-advice-private-renters](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/services/housing/homelessness/homelessness-factsheets-and-other-resources/avoid-homelessness-advice-private-renters)

Shelter: free phone number 0808 800 4444 or  
[https://england.shelter.org.uk/get\\_help/helpline](https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help/helpline)

Enfield Voluntary Action's list of local charities  
<https://enfieldva.org.uk/newsletter-and-networks/evaluate-cost-of-living-and-homelessness-network-resources-page>

## Paying your rent

Cost-of-living support including help to pay bills and housing costs [www.enfield.gov.uk/services/your-council/cost-of-living-support](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/services/your-council/cost-of-living-support)

Get help to pay your rent (Citizens Advice)  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/paying-rent/get-help-with-renting-costs/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/paying-rent/get-help-with-renting-costs/)

## Claiming welfare benefits

Get help and advice about benefits (MoneyHelper)  
[www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/benefits/problems-with-benefits/where-to-get-help-and-advice-about-benefits](http://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/benefits/problems-with-benefits/where-to-get-help-and-advice-about-benefits)

Check what benefits you can get (Citizens Advice)  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/benefits-introduction/what-benefits-can-i-get/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/benefits-introduction/what-benefits-can-i-get/)

Benefits calculators (GOV.UK) [www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators](http://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators)

Check if you are affected by the benefit cap (Turn2us)  
[www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support/information-for-your-situation/benefit-cap/am-i-affected-by-the-benefit-cap](http://www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support/information-for-your-situation/benefit-cap/am-i-affected-by-the-benefit-cap)

## Debt and bills

Get help with debt or paying bills  
[www.enfield.gov.uk/services/your-council/cost-of-living-support/help-with-debts-and-bills](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/services/your-council/cost-of-living-support/help-with-debts-and-bills)

## Tenancies and evictions

Eviction (Shelter)  
[https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/eviction](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/eviction)

Tenants' rights (Renters' Rights Act 2025) (GOV.UK)  
<https://housinghub.campaign.gov.uk/private-renting-is-changing>

## Local family and children services in Enfield

Enfield's Early Help Directory 4 All  
<https://enfelddirectory4all.co.uk>

## Finding an affordable home to rent or buy

Enfield Council's 'Find your own home scheme'  
[www.enfield.gov.uk/find-your-own-home](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/find-your-own-home)

How to find a property to rent  
[www.enfield.gov.uk/services/housing/how-to-find-a-property-to-rent](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/services/housing/how-to-find-a-property-to-rent)

Affordable home ownership schemes (GOV.UK)  
[www.gov.uk/affordable-home-ownership-schemes](http://www.gov.uk/affordable-home-ownership-schemes)

*Credit: the icon on page 1 is 'House keys' by Muhammad Fadli Rusady from Noun Project (CC BY 3.0).*

Note: the information in this document is correct at the time of publication (10 July 2026).