

MCDF Presentation 24th September 2009.

Housing Options

Housing and Advice Services

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Housing application process

Complete application either hard copy or on line



Eligibility Check



Verify application (currently on hold)



Award Priority



- Notify applicant of Band and Needs
- How to use Derby Homefinder
- Chances of getting housed
- Derby Homefinder Bands leaflet
- Your Guide to Derby Homefinder Leaflet.

Applicant bids for property



Successful
Housed



Unsuccessful
Consider other
Housing Options

How is Priority Awarded

Applications are categorised into one of four bands.

The bands are:

Emergency Band	A Band	B Band	C Band
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- There are a limited number of properties available each year.
- We aim to allocate a percentage of available properties to applicants from each band
- The bands aim to deal with individual and multiple needs.

Quota to each Band

E Band – 30%

A Band – 30%

B Band – 35%

C Band – 5% only advertise difficult to let properties to the C band.

These will be reviewed end of this year /beginning of next year

Emergency band

- Derby City Council has accepted you are 'statutorily homeless'
- Housing Standards have assessed your property and:
 - found it to be 'statutorily overcrowded' and
 - you have not intentionally caused overcrowding, as defined in the Housing Act 1985.

Homeless offers

- three-months unlimited choice
-
- Final offer
-
- Right of review on final offers

When reviewing a final offer, the Council will check that:

- the property is of the right size and type
- the property is safe to live in – that it is not in a dangerous condition
- it takes account of any special needs
- taken into account any other relevant circumstances.

A band

- non-statutorily homeless
- the Council prohibits the use of the property under the terms of the Housing Act 2004 and considers that it is not reasonable for the property to be brought back into use
- essential need to move on medical or mobility grounds.
- urgent need to move on welfare grounds. This is defined as:
 - discharge from hospital is prevented by your housing situation
 - likelihood of admission to residential care or hospital if re-housing is not made
 - likelihood of a child being accommodated by the local authority if re-housing is not made
 - serious risk of harm in present accommodation. This can include but is not limited to:
 - victims of domestic violence
 - serious racial harassment
 - homophobic attacks
 - witnesses of crime
 - victims of crime
 - serious anti-social behaviour.
- urgent need to move to a particular locality where failure to do so would cause hardship
This is defined as:
 - unreasonable for you to stay at your current accommodation due to exceptional financial hardship
 - need to move to either give or receive essential care and support
 - need to move to access specialised medical treatment
 - need to move to take up particular employment or training opportunities
- living in a hostel or supported housing and are ready for independent living
- living in a house owned by a Derby Homefinder Landlord that is too big for needs
- tenant of a Derby Homefinder Landlord and no longer need the adaptations made to your property

B band

- need to move on medical or mobility grounds
- live in an upper floor flat and with children under 12 years of age
- need more bed spaces i.e. cramped conditions
- sharing facilities
- relationship breakdown, and are living in the same property as partner and a move would allow the partner and family to remain in the property
- tenant of a Derby Homefinder Landlord and have received a Compulsory Purchase Order or your property is due for demolition
- anti-social behaviour or harassment
- non-urgent housing need to move. This can include but is not limited to a move nearer to:
 - a child's school
 - a place of worship
 - family/friends for non-essential support
 - shops and other local amenities.

C band

- adequately housed
- can afford to get own housing or improve current accommodation to be more suitable to needs.

Housing Facts and Figures

- 9782 active applicants on the housing register
- Ever increasing demand for social housing
- Council lost half its stock since RTB introduced
- Generally need 3 or more needs to be offered a house
- Generally need 3 or more needs for under 60's single persons accommodation
- High demand for family and younger single persons accommodation

Average number of bids

1 bed general needs flat – 112

2 bed house – 108

3 bed house – 76

Properties Let

- 2008/9 – 1282 properties – 15% to older applicants
- Always disappointment for the majority of applicants
- Applicants feel that they have higher priority than other people
- They often feel that applicants with less priority get housed above them

Homelessness Trends

Aim is prevention

429 approaches as homeless in the last 3 months

55% homeless applications prevented.

Increase in Black African, refugees, mainly from Zimbabwe, approach at short notice and our only option is Bed and breakfast temporary accommodation

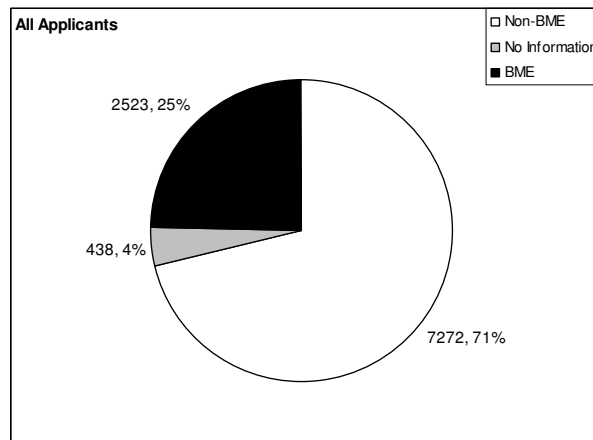
Accessing Derby Homefinder Services

Properties available

- Available properties advertised on the Internet i.e. Derby Homefinder website, in the Housing Options Centre, Derby Homes Local Housing Offices.
- Property lists sent to Community Centres, Advice agencies, Stat and Non-stat Agencies. Also sent to some vulnerable applicants.

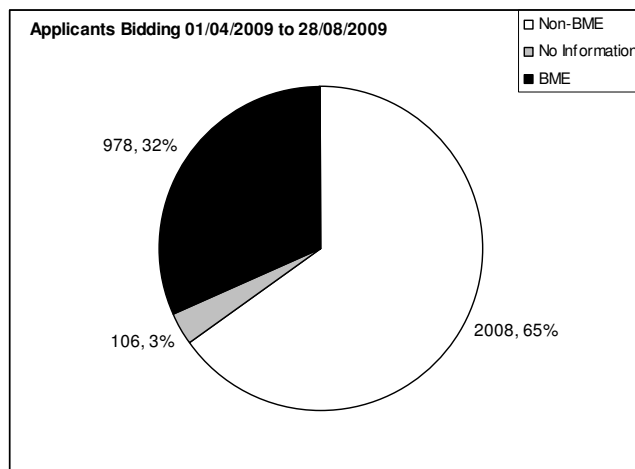
Applicants can bid for up to six properties per week.

Applicants on the Joint Housing Register



BME bids

Applicants actually bidding April to date



Our stats show:

- the different BME group's bids are evenly distributed.
- BME applicants are more active bidders than white applicants.

Bidding Methods

Applicants can bid for properties via:

- Website
 - Telephone – Derby Direct
 - 24 hour automated bid hotline
 - Kiosks
 - In person – At the Housing Options Centre or any Derby Homes LHO.
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- Approximately 90% of all applicants bid for properties via the website.
 - The most popular way of bidding throughout all the BME Groups is via the website.
 - 93% of BME Group bids are via the website

Bidding Activity

Snapshot as at 1 September 2009

BME Summary:

Full JHR	24.7%	(2523 of 10233 applicants)
Currently bidding	31.7%	(1050 of 3310 applicants)
No of bids made	40.7%	(19398 of 47704 bids)
Bids skipped	32.4%	(1135 of 3506 bids)
Offers refused by applicants	31.7%	(101 of 319 rejected offers)
Offers accepted	28.1%	(150 of 534 lettings)

Breakdown by BME/Nationality

	All Apps	Bidding Apps	Accepted Offer
White British	71.1%	65.1%	69.3%
Unavailable	4.3%	3.2%	2.6%
Asian	5.7%	5.3%	3.9%
African/Caribbean	6.0%	7.3%	8.8%
European (inc Eastern European)	3.1%	6.8%	4.5%
Middle Eastern	0.1%	0.1%	None
Dual Heritage	2.8%	3.1%	3.4%
Other	6.9%	9.2%	7.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Asian = All "Asian" groups

African = Other: Algerian, Black: African, Black: Caribbean, Black: Other

European = Other: Bulgaria, Other: Czech Republic, Other: Estonia, Other: Hungary, Other: Latvia, Other: Lithuania, Other: Polish, Other: Portuguese, Other: Slovakia, Other: Spanish **Middle Eastern** = Other: Afghan, Other: Iranian, Other: Iraqi

Dual Heritage = All "Mixed" groups

Other = All remaining "Other" groups.

- For example African/Caribbean people make up 6.0% of all applications on the housing register with 8.8% are at 'Accepted Offer' and are signed up to a property.
- No particular community is under represented in lets to properties.

Asylum seekers in Derby, Refugees and Homelessness - September 2009

Asylum Seeker activity in Derby

- New dispersals of asylum seekers continue at a steady pace, re-occupying properties vacated via the first stage of the Case Resolution exercise (CRD) where 92 families (with very old asylum claims who were given leave to remain prior to May '08) had been living.
- Most of the latter have now been housed, in a mixture of council or other social housing via the housing register, and the private rented sector.
- Asylum decision-making processes have considerably speeded up, especially for the remaining older, CRD cases: we now have greatly increased 'churn' or 'through-put' in properties, with several families occupying the same property in only a few months. So although the overall number of asylum seekers occupying Home Office accommodation in Derby at any one time has not increased (July '08 – 168, July '09 -176), the occupants are constantly changing, generating more refugees.
- Only a few single people are dispersed to Derby as asylum seekers; all the remainder are in family households.

Refugees and homelessness

- Up until recently the Home Office's decision-making rate was so slow that we only had an average of 5 refugee families approaching us for housing in a whole year.
- The Housing Options Centre now has one or two homeless refugee families a week needing re-housing. Families only have a local connection for homelessness in the city to which they were last dispersed. If their last dispersal address before being granted leave to remain in the UK was Derby, Derby City Council will then have a duty to house them.
- Milestone House has also seen an increase in single homeless refugees approaching for help. Not all are people actually dispersed to Derby, but as single people generally do not have priority need as homeless they can seek advice and assistance from any Local Authority.
- The Home Office has stated that it intends to further accelerate its decision-making rate so we anticipate a corresponding increase in approaches for homelessness assistance from refugee families in the coming months.

Rehousing of refugee families

- Almost all people with a priority need for housing (for whom Housing Options accept a homelessness duty) take up temporary accommodation (TA) pending an offer of permanent housing.
- There have been up to 20 refugee families in B&B and other TA awaiting move-on housing at any one time, but at the moment on average we are accommodating about 6-9. Families can wait in TA for several months before achieving settled accommodation.
- After being placed in TA, refugee families are therefore being re-housed into more permanent accommodation (usually social housing) more rapidly and more frequently than we have previously experienced.
- Most of the refugee families we currently assist are Zimbabwean or originally from other African countries.

Where do we go from here?

Promote Private rented sector

Bond assurance scheme

Milestone House – emergency accommodation and specialist advice and support to single homeless people, includes assistance with life skills

Extra Care Schemes – specialist housing for older people

Launch of on line Mutual Exchange Scheme – Mid October 2010, will assist existing RSL and Derby Homes tenants to swap properties and alleviate pressure on the housing register.

Auto Bidding for vulnerable applicants – before the end of the year

Effective monitoring of allocations – before the end of the year

Introduction of Housing Options software

Review Allocations Policy

- Consultation with customers and stakeholders
- Questionnaires and focus groups
- Starting now
- Implement next year