

Lettings Service Standard

Our promise to you

We are committed to providing excellent customer service, so that every time you contact us you have a good experience. Our lettings standard sets out what you can expect from us when you apply for a home from Homes Plus in South Staffordshire and Shropshire.

We will:

- ♦ Aim to process your housing application within five working days, which is the maximum time it will take from you making an application and hearing back from us*.
- ♦ Offer a tailored service to customers who need extra support to make a housing application*. Further details can be found in our Access to Services policy, which is available in the customer documents area of our website – **www.homesplus.co.uk**
- ♦ Allocate homes in line with our lettings policies.
- ♦ Give you the chance to look around the home we offer to you and tell you what you need to know to decide if the home is right for you.
- ♦ Complete reference and affordability checks with you to make sure that the property is right for you.
- ♦ Arrange a sign-up appointment with all customers named on the tenancy agreement at the home to explain the tenancy conditions and conduct a final viewing before giving you the keys to your new home.
- ♦ Make sure that your new home is ready to move into and that all required safety checks have been completed.

**Please note: These points do not relate to customers applying for homes in Shropshire, as housing applications are made through Shropshire HomePoint.*

Step by step guide to applying for housing

1. Carefully read the Lettings policy to ensure you understand how and to who we are able to allocate our homes to. If you consider yourself to be homeless, please contact your local authority, in the first instance, as they provide urgent support.
2. Apply on-line:
Shropshire - **www.shropshirehomepoint.co.uk**
South Staffs - **www.myhomefinder.org.uk**
3. Answer all the questions to the best of your knowledge and send all relevant information required to support your housing application to **CBLTeamstaffordshire@homesplus.co.uk**
4. Once we have received your application, we will assess all information provided, along with any evidence received. We will then let you know what your housing application reference numbers is, what size of property you are able to express interest on and what priority you have been awarded, based on your circumstances.

5. Once you have this information, you will be able to express an interest on any homes that you are eligible for. The number of eligible homes you can bid for is three in South Staffs and Stafford and one in Shropshire.

Priority banding

We will award applicants one of four priority bands based on the information provided to us at the time of application, including information provided within the application form and supporting evidence. All applications are assessed on housing and medical need and the four priority bands are outlined in the table below:

Gold Priority	- Applicants who have been accepted by the Local Authority as unintentionally homeless and are owed a Main Housing Duty under Homeless Legislation e.g., applicants who the council has confirmed are homeless through no fault of their own and in need of priority to secure a home. - Where an existing Homes Plus customer is occupying specialist, adapted accommodation and it is no longer required. - Where an applicant is awarded urgent medical need, are waiting to be discharged from hospital and their current home is no longer suitable for them to return to. - Serving members of the British Armed Forces who will be discharged within three months or ex members who have been discharged within the previous 5 years. - The bereaved spouse or civil partner of those serving in the regular forces has recently ceased or will cease to be entitled to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their spouse or civil partner, and the death was partly or wholly attributable to their service. - Existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service and have a medical need.
Gold – The applicant needs to move urgently and can no longer live in their current home	- Where the property is subject to a Prohibition Order from the Local Authority Environmental Health department. - Where an applicant has been awarded high medical priority, defined as: - Extreme physical disability requiring care assistance which restricts the customers independence or impedes their ability to live safely making their current property not suitable for their needs. - Instances of mobility support within the customers current home making facilities above ground floor inaccessible. - Where the Local Authority has determined statutory overcrowding in the applicant's current home. - Applicants who need to move due to the threat of domestic abuse as determined by an appropriate agency such as the Police, New Era or Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference. - Victims of crime, in fear or experiencing harassment or threats of violence from outside the home which prevents the individual(s) from remaining in their current property. Supporting evidence will be required.

	♦ Applicants who are considered vulnerable by Social Services or any other appropriate support agency supporting a move due to the customers current housing circumstances being unsuitable which is having a detrimental effect on their way of life. Supporting evidence will be required. ♦ Customers who already live in a Homes Plus property who are over-crowded by one or more bedrooms (details of this can be found in the eligibility section of this policy). ♦ Customers who already live in a Homes Plus property who are under-occupying their current property by one or more bedrooms.
Silver – The applicant's current home is not suitable for their needs, but they are able to stay there whilst they find another home	♦ Homeless households who have no priority need. ♦ Medium medical priority awarded where the applicant suffers from incapacity or mobility problems, chronic illness or long-term health condition which either prevents them accessing all facilities within the home, or only reaching them with severe difficulty. For example, but not limited to, disabling arthritis, severe asthma or angina preventing them from climbing the stairs inside the home, or steps outside the home. ♦ Where the applicant has to share a kitchen, living room, WC and bathroom with other occupants who are not family members. ♦ Applicants who are not existing Homes Plus customers, who live in properties where there is evidence of overcrowding (details of this can be found in the eligibility section of this policy). ♦ Customers who already live in a Homes Plus property who currently reside in a 2-bed flat above ground floor with no lift access and two children occupying the second bedroom. ♦ Where the applicant needs to receive support from or give support to a close family member. Supporting evidence will be required.
Bronze – The applicants current home meets their needs, but they want to move	♦ No need to move – None of the priorities above have been identified within the applicant's housing application. ♦ The Local Authority has found the applicant Intentionally homeless and are not owed a full homeless duty, further details can be found in the relevant Local Authority Allocations Policy.

Rent in advance

Applicants will be asked to pay two weeks rent in advance before the tenancy starts.

We will offer support and advice to customers with regards to this payment of rent in advance on an individual basis as part of our verification process.

Frequently asked questions

We have put together a useful frequently asked questions and answers guide for applying for housing which can be found in the documents area of the Homes Plus website – www.homesplus.co.uk/documents or you can request a copy by calling our customer services team on **0800 048 8955**.

Urgent support

If you consider yourself homeless or at risk of homelessness, you can contact your local authority (24/7) for further advice and guidance:

Shropshire Council

Tel: 0345 678 9000
www.shropshire.gov.uk

Cannock Chase District Council

Tel: 01543 462621
www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk

South Staffs District Council

Tel: 01902 696000
www.sstaffs.gov.uk

Telford and Wrekin Council

Tel: 01952 380000
www.telford.gov.uk

Stafford Borough Council

Tel: 01785 619000
www.staffordbc.gov.uk

Contact us

You can contact the lettings team for further advice and support about your housing application and any questions you may have about our lettings policy.

Tel: 0800 048 8955

Email: CBLteamstaffordshire@homesplus.co.uk

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