

Bidding for your new home

This leaflet is for clients of the Homeless Service. It tells you how the bidding system works and how to bid successfully for your new home.

Contact details

Tower Hamlets Homeless & Housing Advice Services
Albert Jacob House, 62 Roman Road, Bethnal Green,
London E2 0PG

Telephone: 020 7364 7474

Email: homeless@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Online information is available at:

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

How the bidding system works

Homeless clients and the Common Housing List

Clients of the Homeless Service who have been accepted for rehousing are placed on the Common Housing List. When properties become available they are advertised and everyone on the list is able to bid for them.

Homeless clients are allowed one offer only.

The Common Housing List is divided into 4 Community Groups, Group 1 being the most urgent. Clients of the Homeless Service are in Community Group 2.

How are available properties allocated?

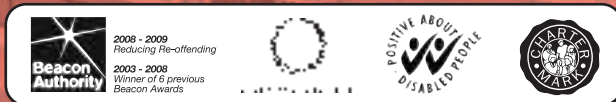
Properties are offered to the household that is in the highest Community Group with the oldest date of registration. Your date of registration will be the date you made your homeless application.

The rules governing this system can be found in the Lettings Policy, available at www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

The Rent Deposit Scheme

For a speedy route to your own home consider the Rent Deposit Scheme. They can find you affordable property in the private sector and provide all the help and support you need to settle in. Call 020 7364 7474 for details.

Don't forget: ONE OFFER ONLY



One offer only

Make sure you want the property you bid for

Before you bid always check the following:

Area – Look at a map, check the area, transport and schools.

Floor level – Is the floor level acceptable, are there lifts?

Parking – Make sure the parking arrangements are suitable for you.

Who is the landlord? – The landlord may be a Housing Association, is this relevant to you?

Also, remember the following:

Condition – The internal condition of the properties can vary widely. All properties are habitable, and decorating allowances are available where necessary, giving you choice in the decoration. The condition of a property is highly unlikely to be accepted as a reason for refusing an offer. It may be too late to raise these issues after the offer has been made to you.

What happens if I reject the offer made to me?

You will need to give us the reasons in writing why you have changed your mind. We will consider your reasons but it is unlikely you will be allowed to have another offer.

If you refuse an offer the following can happen:

- You will have to leave your temporary accommodation and find your own accommodation.
- Your homeless application will be closed.
- You will not be allowed to bid from Community Group 2 and your Common Housing List application will be placed in Group 3 for any future bids.

Rent arrears and bidding

How do rent arrears affect your bid?

If you are in rent arrears and bid successfully it is possible you will not be offered the property.

If you owe over 10 weeks in rent and have not kept to an arrangement to reduce the debt by installments you will not be allocated the property you bid for.

To sort out your rent arrears you need to contact your Arrears Team. This will be the Arrears Team at the Homeless Service or the the Rent Team working for your Housing Association.

You need to make an arrangement to repay the debt and stick to the deal. If you do this consistently you will be able to receive offers on any successful bid you make.

Don't let rent arrears stop you from getting the property you are bidding for.

How to make a bid

For any bidding enquiries call 020 7364 7474

Your reference number

To bid you need your homeless reference number. This is on any correspondence we have sent you. If you can't find your reference number call us to check.

How often can you bid?

New properties are advertised every week that you can bid for.

How many properties can you bid for?

You can bid for as many properties as you wish.

There are 3 ways to bid

Phone: Call the bidding line on: **0845 270 2400**

Internet: Bid online at: www.thhs.org.uk

Coupon: The coupon can be found in East End Life or in the Homeseekers Booklet. Post coupons to the Homeless Service, see inside front cover for contact details.

Always make your own bid

If you allow someone to bid for you, you are fully responsible for that bid. You cannot refuse any offer on the grounds that the bid was made on your behalf.

Where the available properties are advertised

The available properties are advertised in the following places:

- East End Life – weekly newspaper delivered to all homes in Tower Hamlets
- On the Homeseekers website: www.thhs.org.uk
- Homeseekers Booklet – sent to applicants living outside Tower Hamlets. If you don't receive it call and tell us.
- One Stop Shops – hold copies of the Homeseekers Booklet

Please do not visit the properties as it may cause nuisance to neighbours.

How long will I wait?

How long will I wait to bid successfully?

There are a large number of households waiting on the Common Housing List, and a limited supply of properties. It can take years for you to bid successfully and the situation is changing all the time.

Your success can depend on the sort of properties you are bidding for. For example some areas are more popular than others, and the higher the floor level the more chance you will have of success.

There is always a lot of competition for ground floor properties in particular, so the wait for these can be extremely long. Ground floor properties are allocated to those who have a severe and debilitating medical problem, for example wheelchair users.

Bidding for a smaller home

Preference will be given to households who bid for properties that are smaller than they need. For example if you require 4 bedrooms and bid for 3 bedrooms your waiting time will be much shorter. See page 8 for the size of property you require.

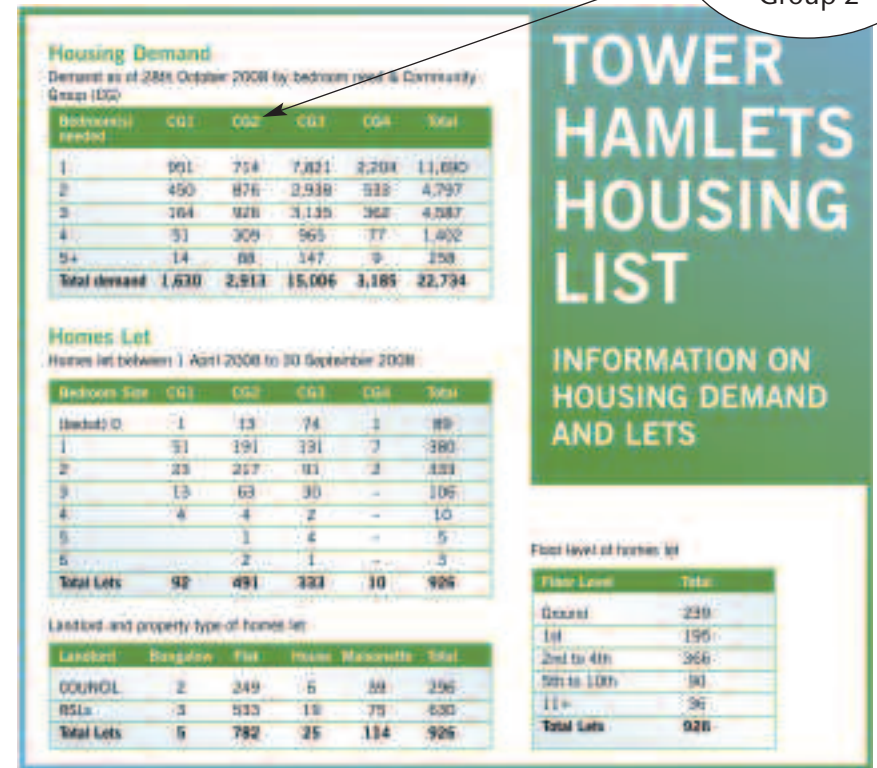
We are not allowed to make a household statutorily overcrowded so you cannot be considered for a property that is a lot smaller than you need.

For full details on how the bidding system works see Tower Hamlets Lettings Policy on www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

How many other households are waiting?

You can find useful information about how many people are waiting on the Homeseekers website at www.thhs.org.uk (click on "Results" at the top of the page). You will find tables on housing demand and homes let, see below:

Homeless clients are registered in Community Group 2



If you would like this information but are unable to access the internet call your Client Liaison Officer who will send you a copy of the up to date information. Call **020 7364 7474**.

What size home can you have?

You can bid for any size property but preference will be given to households that best match the property size. The chart below shows the size of property that will normally be considered for your household size. No allowance is made for the ages of the children.

1 or 2 adults	Studio or 1 bedroom
Family with 1 child	2 bedrooms
Family with 2 children of the same sex	3 bedrooms
Family with 2 children of opposite sex	
Family with 3 children	
Family with 3 children of the same sex	4 bedrooms
Family with 4 children of opposite sex	
Family with 5 children	
Family with 6 children of the same sex	5 bedrooms
Family with 6 children of opposite sex	
Family with 7 children	
Family with 8 children of the same sex	6 bedrooms
Family with 8 children of opposite sex	
Family with 9 children	
Family with 10 children of the same sex	7 bedrooms
Family with 10 children of opposite sex	
Family with 11 children	
Family with 12 children of the same sex	

Changes to your household size

Please notify us of any changes in the size of your household, for example if someone becomes pregnant or if a household member moves out.

Our Customer Promise

When you meet us we will:

- Be polite, helpful, honest and treat you fairly
- Keep the matter confidential

When you visit our offices we will:

- Aim to start dealing with your enquiry within 15 minutes
- Provide you with translation and interpretation if required

When you phone us we will:

- Aim to answer your call within 5 rings
- Greet you and give you our name and the name of the service

When you write to us by letter, email or fax we will:

- Reply within 10 working days
- Always try to use plain language

When we visit you in your home we will:

- Offer you a choice of morning or afternoon visits
- Always show identity cards and treat your home with respect

We want your feedback ... including any complaints

To improve our service we need your feedback, whether it is a comment, compliment or complaint. If you make a complaint we will carry out independent and fair enquiries as quickly as possible

To give us your feedback you can:

- Speak to a member of staff
- Call us on 020 7364 7431
- Write to us at Quality Team, Albert Jacob House, 62 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 0PG
- Email us at quality@towerhamlets.gov.uk