



Your Choice Your Home

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Scheme User Guide



**Your Choice
Your Home**

Contents

- Page 3** What is **Your Choice Your Home**?
- Page 4** What is Choice Based Lettings?
- Page 5** Step 1: Applying to go on the Housing Register
- Page 6** Step 2: Banding of applicants
- Page 7** Step 3: Advertising properties
- Page 9** Step 4: Bidding for properties
- Page 13** Step 5: Letting properties
- Page 14** Step 6: Feedback
- Page 15** Appeals and Complaints
- Page 15** Tell us what you think of the **Your Choice Your Home** scheme

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POWERED BY



What is Your Choice Your Home?

The **Your Choice Your Home** scheme is a Choice Based Lettings scheme delivered in partnership by North Norfolk District Council and housing associations with properties in the North Norfolk District area.

The Housing Associations with properties in North Norfolk are:

- Broadland Housing Association
- Cotman Housing Association
- English Churches Housing Group
- Guinness Trust
- Hastoe Housing Association
- Orbit East
- Peddars Way Housing Association
- Places for People
- Riverside
- Victory Housing Trust
- Wherry Housing Association

The **Your Choice Your Home** scheme has a dedicated website www.yourchoiceyourhome.org.uk.

How to contact us

If you have any questions about the **Your Choice Your Home** scheme or this Guide please contact the Housing Options Team at North Norfolk District Council:

- Tel: **01263 516375**
- Email: housing@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Or Write to us:

Housing Options Team
North Norfolk District Council
Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer
Norfolk NR27 9EN

If English is not your first language and you would prefer to speak to us in your first language, please contact us and we will make arrangements to speak to you through our translation service, INTRAN.

Making information accessible

We are committed to making our information as accessible as possible to our customers and therefore this document can be provided in a number of other formats including:

- large print
- audio disc or tape
- Braille
- another language if you cannot read English

If you want this guide in another format, please contact us.



Please keep this guide for reference – it provides all the information you need to enable you to bid for properties under the North Norfolk ‘Your Choice Your Home’ Choice Based Lettings scheme.

You need to bid if you want to be housed.



What is Choice Based Lettings?

Choice Based Lettings schemes have been promoted as best practice in how affordable homes are let because applicants for housing choose the individual properties that they want to be considered for which gives applicants a greater level of choice in their future home. All housing organisations have been encouraged to introduce Choice Based Lettings schemes. There are a number of such schemes in operation across Norfolk and across the country. You may already have had experience of how such a scheme works if you are also considering housing in other areas.

In Choice Based Lettings schemes available properties are advertised and applicants 'bid' for properties that they want to be considered for. The term 'bid' is generally used in Choice Based Lettings schemes however this does not involve any payment rather the 'bid' is an expression of interest by an applicant for a particular property.

Only those accepted onto the housing register can bid for properties. Applicants on the housing register will be assessed and placed into a band depending on their level of housing need and how quickly they need to be housed and they will be advised of the size and types of property they can bid for. Applicants can then choose which properties of this size and type they bid for and this is why schemes are called Choice Based Lettings.

The bidder with the highest level of need will be shortlisted and usually they will be offered the property. This is different to how properties were let under the old system where the housing department would ask applicants where they wanted to live and would offer a property to the applicant at the top of the list as and when a property of the size and type needed became available.

The advertising of available properties and feedback on the lettings made helps applicants to see how likely it is that they will be housed in a given area in a particular type of property. Applicants can see how often properties of the type they want are advertised. If they see that the type of property they want is never advertised or that they are not being offered to applicants with low levels of housing need they might then decide to bid for other types of property that are being advertised more often or are being let to applicants in lower levels of need. Under the old system applicants would not generally know when properties were available unless they were the one being offered the property and applicants did not have information about properties that had been let and would not therefore be able to see that they needed to change their areas of choice and the types of properties they wanted in order to increase their chances of being housed.

It is important to note that Choice Based Lettings is only a change to the way that housing is let, the scheme does not increase the availability of housing in the area and it does not increase the chances of an applicant being housed.

How the Your Choice Your Home scheme works

The **Your Choice Your Home** scheme uses the Housing Register and Choice Based Lettings policies agreed by North Norfolk District Council and partner agencies. These policies are available on the **Your Choice Your Home** website www.yourchoiceyourhome.org.uk or from the Housing Options Team at North Norfolk District Council.

This guide includes much of the information contained in the policies.

There are a number of steps in the **Your Choice Your Home** scheme:

Step 1 - Applying to go on the Housing Register

Step 2 - Banding of applications

Step 3 - Advertising properties

Step 4 - Bidding for properties

Step 5 - Letting properties

Step 6 - Feedback on properties

The guide covers each of these steps in more detail.

Step 1: Applying to go on the Housing Register

Those accepted on to the Housing Register from September 2009 will be automatically registered with the **Your Choice Your Home** scheme.

If you are not currently on the Housing Register you can apply direct online at www.yourchoiceyourhome.org.uk or complete a paper application which can be downloaded from the website or from the Housing Options Team.

If you need help to complete your application you may have a friend, family member or support worker who can help you. If not the Housing Options Team will be pleased to help.

You will not be able to bid for an advertised property unless you are on the Housing Register. Once we receive your application we will assess it as quickly as possible and in most cases would expect that this would not take more than 14 days as long as your application is complete and we do not need any supporting information. There may be a delay in assessing your application if large volumes of applications are received. Paper applications will need to be entered onto the **Your Choice Your Home** IT system by the Housing Options Team and therefore it is likely that applications completed online will be assessed more quickly as they will not require entering.

We cannot guarantee that an application will be assessed in time to enable an applicant to bid in a particular bidding cycle and therefore you should not wait until you see a property that you are interested in before applying to join the Housing Register.

If you are accepted onto the Housing Register, the Council will write to tell you what band you are in and your relevant date (see Step 2: Banding of applications). You will also be told what size property you will be able to bid for. You will be sent a Welcome Pack which contains a copy of this Guide and postal bidding coupons. You will be given a unique **Your Choice Your Home** registration number which you will need to access the **Your Choice Your Home** website and to bid for properties using the phone, text or coupons.

If you are a housing association tenant who lives in North Norfolk you will be called a Tenant Applicant and all other applicants on the Housing Register including Council tenants and Housing Association tenants living outside North Norfolk will be called Homeseekers.

You must keep the Council informed of any changes to your circumstances, for example, changes to your household size or address. This is very important, as it could result in a change to your banding or the type of property you can bid for. If you do not keep us informed you may not be considered for a property for which you have been shortlisted or there may be a delay in the offering of a property for which you have been shortlisted. In addition you may miss out on the opportunity to bid for properties for which you would be otherwise able to bid for.

Some applicants may not be accepted on to the Housing Register although this does not happen very often. If we are unable to accept you onto the Housing Register we will let you know why and you will have an opportunity to appeal against this decision (see Appeals).

There are many more applicants on the Housing Register who want to live in North Norfolk than available properties and therefore most applicants will not be successful in their bids for a property. You may want to consider other housing options and the Housing Options Team at the Council will be able to help you with this.

Step 2: Banding of applications

The Council will assess your application and you will be placed in one of the 5 bands described below or you may be issued with an Emergency Card. For more information on the banding scheme, see a copy of the North Norfolk District Council Choice Based Lettings Policy, which is available from www.yourchoiceyourhome.org.uk or from the Housing Options Team of the Council.

Emergency Card

The Emergency Card will only be issued to applicants in urgent housing need who need to move immediately or within a period of 6 weeks. Examples of when the Emergency Card could be issued are:

- An applicant is in hospital awaiting discharge but they cannot return home because their home is no longer suitable for them due to their medical and other needs
- An applicant is suffering severe harassment (which could include domestic violence) and there is an immediate risk of harm if they stay in their home
- A housing association tenant in North Norfolk needs to be moved urgently so the property can be repaired, modernised or redeveloped.

The Emergency Card will be valid for 6 weeks. If after 6 weeks the applicant has not successfully bid for a property, their use of the Emergency Card will be reviewed, the Emergency Card will then either be removed or the period it can be used for extended.

Band 1

Contains those households who are in very high housing need and who need to move as soon as possible. Applicants in Band 1 will be:

- Households accepted as homeless (full duty)
- Households meeting 2 or more of the following criteria:
 - In insanitary housing
 - In overcrowded housing

- In otherwise unsatisfactory housing
- Need to move on medical grounds
- Need to move on welfare grounds
- Need to move to a particular locality to prevent hardship occurring
- Households threatened with homelessness within 28 days and likely to be accepted (full duty)
- Households for which the Council has a duty to re-house under the Rent Agriculture Act 1976
- Housing association tenants living in North Norfolk who are under-occupying (have more bedrooms than they need) their property by 1 or more bedrooms.

Band 2

Contains those households who are in high housing need. Applicants in Band 2 will be:

- Households meeting one of the following criteria:
 - In insanitary housing
 - In overcrowded housing
 - In otherwise unsatisfactory housing
 - Need to move on medical grounds
 - Need to move on welfare grounds
 - Need to move to a particular locality to prevent hardship occurring
- Households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days but who have not been and who are unlikely to be accepted
- Households accepted as homeless but without a local connection and who have been referred to another area.

Band 3

Contains those households who are in medium housing need. Applicants in Band 3 will be:

- Households likely to become homeless within 2 months and likely to be accepted as homeless (full duty)
- Households who have 2 or more unsatisfactory housing circumstances which have an effect on the household i.e. living in overcrowded circumstances (lacking at least one bedroom), sharing facilities, living in insecure housing, lack of stability in housing history.

Band 4

Contains those households who are in low housing need. Applicants in Band 4 will be:

- Households who have one unsatisfactory housing circumstance which has an effect on the household i.e. living in overcrowded circumstances (lacking at least one bedroom), sharing facilities, living in insecure housing, lack of stability in housing history.

Band 5

Contains those households who are not eligible for the Emergency Card or Bands 1 to 4 as well as

- Households who would otherwise be included in a higher band or who have been demoted from a higher band because:
 - it is considered that they have the financial resources to meet their own housing needs
 - it is considered that they were unsuitable to be a tenant at the time of application but where it is not considered appropriate to exclude them from the register
 - it is considered that they have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances
 - they can take corrective action to improve their housing circumstances but they are unwilling to do so
 - the homelessness duty has been discharged through having made a reasonable offer of accommodation which has been refused
 - they are under 18 and are not being considered under the Norfolk Joint Protocol for Young Homeless Persons and Care Leavers
 - they are in supported housing but are not ready to move onto independent living.

If you feel that you have been placed in the wrong Band you can appeal against this decision (see Appeals).

Step 3:

Advertising properties

Properties will be advertised every 2 weeks on the **Your Choice Your Home** website www.yourchoiceyourhome.org.uk. We will also ensure that the property adverts are widely distributed and available to view at a range of locations across the North Norfolk district area to ensure that they are accessible to applicants including;

- the offices of North Norfolk District Council in Cromer
- the offices of partner housing associations
- libraries

The **Your Choice Your Home** website www.yourchoiceyourhome.org.uk will have up to date information on where adverts are available to view, alternatively contact the Housing Options Team of the Council.

You can access the **Your Choice Your Home** website via any computer with internet access, if you do not have internet access at home why don't you ask a friend or relative if you can use theirs or go along to the library or an internet café, alternatively your support worker might be able to help.

If you are vulnerable and have particular difficulty in accessing adverts the Council may send you a Personalised Property List which has details of the available properties that you are eligible to bid for. If you think you may need this help, please contact the Housing Options Team of the Council.

A Personalised Property List can also be produced and collected on request at the Council Offices in Cromer.


The adverts will give you information about each available property to enable you to decide if it is suitable to meet your needs. The adverts include:

- a photograph (where available)
- the property reference number
- symbols providing information on the property
- symbols to show which applicants are eligible
- the location of the property (the full address of the property will not be shown)
- the landlord
- the rent
- other relevant information

The Adverts

The adverts will be colour coded so each size of property has a different colour background. Please note the photograph may not be of the property that is being advertised but of a similar looking property.


1 bed sheltered

H/T AGE 50+ 1 1 

Ref No. 926

Location xxxxxxxxxxxx
Council Area North Norfolk
Landlord Victory Housing Trust
Rent £58


1 Bed Flat

H/T AGE 50+ 1 1 

Ref No. 989

Location xxxxxxxxxxxx
Council Area North Norfolk
Landlord Broadland Housing Association
Rent £65



2 bed house

H/T AGE 50+ 1 1 

Ref No. 947

Location xxxxxxxxxxxx
Council Area North Norfolk
Landlord Orbit East
Rent £68

3 bed house

H/T AGE 50+ 1 1  

Ref No. 936

Location xxxxxxxxxxxx
Council Area North Norfolk
Landlord Peddars Way Housing Association
Rent £89

Key to advert symbols

This is used for bidding to identify which property you want to bid for



Available for Tenant Applicants only



Available for homeseekers and Tenant Applicants



This shows the property has a lift



This shows the property has no lift

Number of bedrooms and property type

Sheltered housing (Defined by white background)



Property designed for people this age or above



Floor level of property, if flat or maisonette



Number of bedrooms in the property



Mobility Group 1 - Suitable for wheelchair user indoors and outdoors (defined by symbol and white bar)



Mobility Group 2 - Suitable for people who cannot manage steps or stairs and may use a wheelchair some of the day (defined by symbol and white bar)



Mobility Group 3 - Suitable for people only able to manage 1 or 2 steps or stairs (defined by symbol and white bar)



Local Connection - See section Some Properties have a Local Connection sign.

Step 4: Bidding for properties

Within each fortnight there is a 11 day period when you can place bids for the advertised properties that you are interested in - this is called the 'bidding cycle'. Each fortnightly bidding cycle opens on a **Friday at 9am and closes at midday on the Monday week**. This gives you two full weekends to think about the properties you would like to bid for, to have a look around the area in which the properties are located if you are not familiar with them, consult with family and others including support workers, make arrangements for any help you might need with bidding and make your bid.

The bidding systems are automated and bidding needs to close at midday on the Monday week to allow time for other parts of the letting process to be completed.

If you need help with bidding ask a friend, family member or support worker to help, they can bid on your behalf via the internet if they have your unique registration number and your date of birth. The Housing Options Team at the Council will be pleased to help you bid or bid on your behalf with your permission. This help can be available for as long as you need it. If in the future you need help with bidding, contact the Housing Options Team.

If you bid for a property you must ensure that you are contactable preferably by phone but otherwise by letter in case your bid is successful. If your contact details change please let the Council know as soon as possible so your application details can be updated.

Things to consider before bidding

When choosing a property you are interested in, you need to consider a number of things:

What can I bid for?

Your welcome letter will tell you what types and sizes of property you can bid for (are eligible for) based on the size and needs of your household. If you bid for a property you are not eligible for your bid will not be registered.

Before you bid for a property please check the advert carefully checking all of the symbols and other information in the advert to make sure that it is a property you can bid for and that the property will meet the needs of your household.

Is the property available to both Tenant Applicants and Homeseekers or just Tenant Applicants?

Most properties will be available for both Homeseekers and Tenant Applicants but some will be advertised as available to Tenant Applicants only. Your bid will not count if the property is advertised for a Tenant Applicant only and you are a Homeseeker.

How many properties can I bid for in each bidding cycle?

You can bid for as many properties as you want in each bidding cycle, but you can only bid for properties that you are eligible for. For example, if you are eligible for a 2 bedroom property you cannot bid for one with 3 bedrooms.

Is there an age restriction?

Some properties may have a minimum age requirement; any age restrictions will be clearly stated in the advert.

Who can bid for sheltered housing?

Sheltered housing will only be available to applicants who require the level of support offered in this type of accommodation. Sheltered housing is usually only available for people aged 60 or over. The Housing Associations will check whether the successful bidder needs the type of support that is provided.



Some properties have a mobility sign

This is intended to provide a guide to people who have a mobility need to help them identify which properties will be suitable for them. This does not restrict anyone else from bidding for these properties, but in some cases the advert may state that only an applicant with a particular mobility need will be eligible for the property.

Some properties have a Local Connection sign

Some properties will be advertised with the Local Connection sign, this means that there are special arrangements which apply to who can live in the properties." Only schemes which have been provided to meet local housing need in villages (called Exception Housing Schemes) will be advertised with the Local Connection sign. For all properties on these schemes applicants who have a local connection to the parish in which the scheme is located or the immediately adjoining civil parishes will be prioritised for the properties. A local connection is living in, working in, having a family member who lives in, previously living in or having a family member who previously lived in the parish. After the bidding deadline has closed the shortlist will place all bidders in order of their local connection with those bidders with the strongest local connection being placed at the top of the shortlist irrespective of which band they are in. This does not apply to applicants in Band 5 as they will only be considered after all other applicants. You can still bid for a property which is subject to the Local Connection sign if you do not have a local connection but you will be placed at the bottom of the shortlist. The advert will clearly show which parishes you need to have a connection to in order to qualify as having a local connection.

For new Exception Housing Schemes only one advert will be placed for all the properties that are available. If you are interested in any of the properties you only need to bid once and can be considered for all the properties.

Pets

The property advert will say if pets are allowed.

Check out the location of the property

Look for the location of the property on a map or visit the local area to make sure it really is a place you would want to move to. North Norfolk is a very rural area so think about the services you might need access to including:

- schools
- shops
- public transport
- child care facilities
- employment opportunities
- leisure opportunities
- GP/Dentist
- Bank/Post Office

If you are unsure as to what services an area has contact the Housing Options Team of the Council. This information is also available on the UpMyStreet website by clicking on the link from the advert on the **Your Choice Your Home** website.

You can bid in 5 ways:

1. Bidding by Internet

1. Open the **Your Choice Your Home** website, www.yourchoiceyourhome.org.uk
2. Click on "Log In" and enter your registration number and date of birth and click "Log In"
3. You will be able to see the properties you are eligible to bid for
4. Click on "Bid" for the property you want to bid for
5. Repeat step 4 for each property you want to bid for

If you change your mind you can delete your bid as long as the bidding cycle has not closed.

2. Bidding by Telephone

1. Call **0906 294 1820**. You will hear "Welcome to the **Your Choice Your Home** property line. Please enter the number section of your registration number." Eg 12345
2. Enter the numerical part of your registration number using the key pad. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear "Thank you. Please enter the day number of your birth date."
3. Enter the day number of your date of birth. If your date of birth is 08/01/1958 type in 08, if your date of birth is 16/04/1970 type in 16. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear: "Thank you. Please enter the property reference number for your first bid."
4. Enter the three digits of the property reference number from the advert. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear: "Thank you. If you would like to add an additional bid, press one, or press two to complete your bids."
5. If you have pressed one you will hear: "Thank you. Please enter the property reference number for your next bid, or press the star key to complete your bidding."

6. Enter the three digits of the next property reference number. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear: "Thank you. If you would like to add an additional bid, press one, or press two to complete your bids."
7. If you have pressed one you will hear: " Thank you. Please enter the property reference number for your third bid, or press the star key to complete your bidding."
8. Repeat steps 6 to 7 until you have entered all your bids. Once you have completed your bids press the star key and you will hear: " Thank you for bidding"

If you have made errors you will hear instructions as follows:

If you have made an error with your registration number, you will hear: "I'm sorry, the registration number you have entered is not recognised. Please try again." Enter your registration number again, making sure that you are only entering the number part of your registration number. If you get your registration number wrong a second time you will hear: "I'm sorry, the registration number you have entered is not found. Please check with the Council then call again."

Calls cost 25p per minute from a BT landline and you will be able to make 3 bids in one minute. Other phone providers may charge more and using a mobile phone will cost more.

3. Bidding by Text message

1. To begin making bids open a new text message
2. Enter your registration number using the keys, eg NNDC12345
3. Then follow it immediately with a hash sign: eg NNDC12345#
4. Now enter the property reference number of your first bid followed immediately by a hash sign. Eg NNDC12345#123#

If you have finished bidding then send. If not, keep following the instructions below.

6. Enter the property reference number of your next bid followed immediately by a hash sign.
Eg NNDC12345#123#456#

If you have finished bidding then send. If not, repeat step 6 until you have entered all your bids

7. Enter the property reference number of your next bid followed immediately by a hash sign.
Eg NNDC12345#123#456#491#

8. When you have entered all your bids send your text message to 07781 472 726

Most mobile phone companies charge SMS text messages at around 10p per text.

- To add numbers to your message keep pressing the keys until you get the number you want and select (make sure you do not have predicta text on).
- On most mobile phones to find the hash sign first press the star key then select the hash sign.
- You can enter your bids in both upper and lower case.
- Check your registration number and bids are correct before sending.
- **Please note that you will not receive a text message to confirm the bids that you have made.**

4. Post – coupon

We will send you blank personalised coupons as part of your Welcome Pack. Your coupons have your name and registration number printed on them, this number is unique to you so no one else can use your coupons. Please check these details are correct.

When you need more coupons, simply tick the box on the coupon when you send it in with your bids and more coupons will be posted to you. Please make sure you allow enough time for postal coupons to be returned before the bidding deadline.

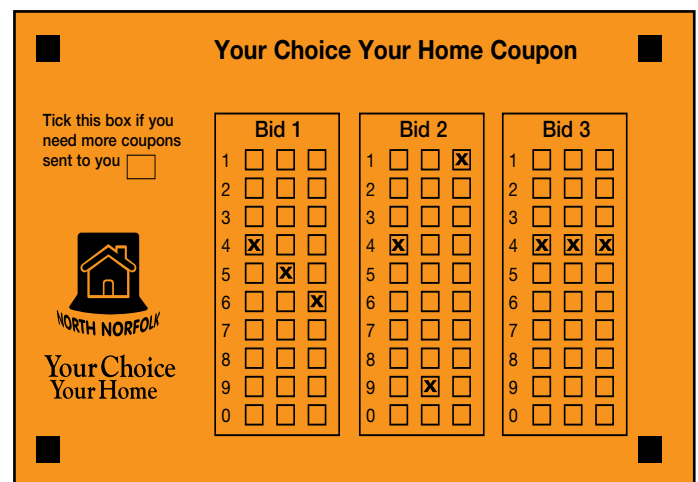
Step 1: Complete the grid to show the reference number of the properties you want to bid for. Put an X in the first column against the relevant first digit of the reference number.

Put an X in the second column against the relevant second digit of the reference number. Put an X in the third column against the relevant third digit of the reference number. For example if you want to bid for properties with the property reference numbers 456, 491 and 444 your coupon would be marked as shown in the example below.

Step 2: Repeat step 1 for each property you want to bid for. If you want to bid for more than 3 properties use another coupon.

Step 3: Post your coupon to Locata. The address is already on the coupon but you will need to put a stamp on the coupon. If sending more than one coupon use an envelope but do not forget to put the address (from the back of the coupon) and a stamp on.

Example of coupon



Your Choice Your Home Coupon

Tick this box if you need more coupons sent to you

Bid 1

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Bid 2

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Bid 3

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

NORTH NORFOLK
Your Choice Your Home

5. The Council can bid on your behalf with your permission

This service will only be available to you if you are vulnerable and are unable to bid for yourself and you do not have someone who can help. You will need to give us your permission in writing and we will only place bids for properties which you have said you want to be considered for. It is likely that we will be placing bids for a number of applicants and therefore we will not be able to contact each individual applicant when we make a bid on their behalf. The bids placed will be recorded in the applicant's bidding history and we can review the bids that were placed with an applicant when required.

Step 5: Letting properties

At the end of the bidding cycle, a shortlist of bidders is drawn up for each property. The shortlist will only include applicants who have made bids for the property and who are eligible to bid for the property.

The shortlist will place all bidders in the following order:

- Band
- Applicants with a connection to North Norfolk
- Relevant Date

The applicant in the highest band who has a connection to North Norfolk will be at the top of the shortlist. If there is more than one applicant in the same band and they all have a connection to North Norfolk the Relevant Date will be used to prioritise the applicant who has been waiting the longest. Applicants in the same band who do not have a connection to North Norfolk will be placed after those that do in the shortlist. The applicant at the top of the shortlist will be offered the property unless they are not suitable for the property.

For properties on Exception Housing Schemes sign different rules apply to who will be at the top of the shortlist, please see the section "Properties with the Local Connection Sign" for more information.

Relevant Date

The relevant date for applicants with an Emergency Card or in Bands 1 or 2 will be the date they were issued with the Emergency Card or placed in Band 1 or 2. For Bands 3, 4 and 5 the relevant date will be the date their housing application was registered.

Connection to North Norfolk

You will have a connection to North Norfolk if you or your partner have lived in the North Norfolk District Council area for 6 months out of the past 12 months or 3 years out of the past 5. You will also have a connection if you or your partner work in the district or have a close family member who has lived in the district for the past 5 years.

Viewing

The bidder at the top of each property shortlist will be contacted by the landlord of the advertised property. Applicants at the top of a shortlist will normally be contacted within a week of the bidding cycle closing. Some landlords will contact the top 3 or 5 bidders, if they do this, they will tell the shortlisted bidders their position on the shortlist. These bidders may all be given a chance to view the property.

If you are shortlisted and are invited to view a property and you have changed your mind or are unable to go along at the time given please let the landlord know.

If you successfully bid for more than one property in the same bidding cycle, you will be asked which property you would prefer.

Offers

The landlord of the property will consider the suitability of each applicant in order on the shortlist until a suitable tenant has been found and the property will then be offered to that applicant. If the applicant refuses the offer of the property the landlord will continue to use the shortlist to find a suitable tenant. If there are no suitable applicants the property may be re-advertised in a future bidding cycle. If a property is re-advertised the eligibility criteria may be changed.

If you accept the offer of a tenancy you can not be considered for any other properties in the current or future bidding cycles unless you decide to refuse the property you have accepted.

You do not have to accept an offer of a property, but if you do not we would like to know the reasons why as this will help us ensure that the adverts are easy to understand and include the right information.

If you are someone to whom the council has accepted a homelessness duty, special rules may apply and you should contact the Council if you are considering not accepting the offer of a property.

Before you are offered a property the landlord will ask you to provide proof of your identity and any other relevant information for example proof of parental responsibility for any children that live with you.

Direct Lets

The North Norfolk Choice Based Lettings Policy allows for some properties to be let without being advertised, this is called a Direct Let. Direct Lets will only be made in certain limited circumstances. For more information see the North Norfolk Choice Based Lettings Policy.

Step 6: Feedback

It will not be possible to tell you individually if your bids have been unsuccessful but you can get this information from the **Your Choice Your Home** website where you will also be able to see where in the shortlist your bids were under 'bidding history'.

Feedback will be given on properties that have previously been advertised once they are let. Feedback is provided in two ways. Firstly feedback on all properties let through the scheme will be included in the Property Lists once the property has been let. Secondly, feedback on properties you have bid for can be seen by logging onto this website. After you have logged in select "See what happened to your past bids". This will show you all the properties you have bid for and the position your bid reached in the shortlist, for example in the top 5-10.

The feedback will show you the band of the applicant who the property was let to, whether they had a connection to North Norfolk and their Relevant Date. It will also tell you the total number of bids received for that property. No personal information will be shown though.

Below is an explanation of the information that is provided in the feedback report.

Bid Cycle Date

This is the date of the Bidding Cycle that the advert appeared in.

Advert Reference

With the bidding cycle date, this gives a unique identity to any advert.

Size and Property Type

This provides a description of the property advertised.

Location

This tells you where the property is, but the full address will not be shown.

Number Of Bids

This is the total number of bids that were made for each property at the close of the bidding cycle.

Lettings Information

This shows the Band, whether an applicant has a connection to North Norfolk and the Relevant Date of the successful applicant. It also shows whether they are a Tenant Applicant or a Homeseeker.

Feedback on Direct Lets

At least once a year feedback will be provided on the number of properties that have been let as Direct Lets.

How feedback can be used

Look at the feedback for both the properties you have bid for and those that you have not bid for. The feedback will help you decide whether you need to re-consider what to bid for.

For properties that you made a bid for:

- What band was the successful applicant in?
- If they are in the same band as you did they have a connection to North Norfolk? What was their relevant date?
- How do these compare to your banding, connection to North Norfolk and relevant date?
- If they are close then you might not have to wait long before you are successful in your future bids.
- How often are the properties you want advertised?
- If they are not advertised very often then even if you were close to a successful applicant you might still have a long time to wait for another property of that type

For properties that you did not bid for:

- What band was the successful applicant in?
- If they are in the same band as you did they have a connection to North Norfolk? What was their relevant date?
- If you had bid for the property could you have been the successful applicant?
- Is it more important for you to get a property that you really want or do you need to be housed quickly?

- Would you be more likely to be the successful bidder if you bid for a different type of property?
- Would you be more likely to be the successful bidder if you bid for a property that attracts fewer bidders?

- Would you be more likely to be the successful bidder if you bid for a property in a different area?

You will be able to see in some instances that applicants in Band 3, 4 and 5 may never be offered certain property types in areas. If you are in one of these bands, you may wish to consider bidding for different property types of areas or consider other housing options.

This is an example of a Feedback Report:

Bid cycle	Advert ref.	Size	Property type	Location	Bids	Band	Lettings Information		
							Connection to North Norfolk	Relevant date	Application type
10/10/08	261	2 bed	House	The Lanes, Briston	62	EC	Yes	10/09/08	Homeseecker
10/10/08	309	1 bed	Flat	Merchants Court, Cromer	100	1	Yes	25/04/08	Homeseecker
07/11/08	593	3 bed	House	Wensum Way, Fakenham	80	3	Yes	08/03/04	Transfer
24/10/08	637	2 bed	House	Buxton Close, North Walsham	79	2	Yes	17/11/07	Homeseecker

Appeals and Complaints

You can ask us to have another look at any decision made as part of the **Your Choice Your Home** scheme. You need to let us know in writing what decision you would like us to look at again within 21 days of the decision being made. The decision will be reviewed by the Strategic Housing Manager of North Norfolk District Council. We aim to let you know the Strategic Housing Manager’s decision in writing within 28 days of receiving your request. However, this might not be possible if we receive a large number of requests. If we cannot let you know within 28 days we will let you know and tell you when we think we will be able to let you know.

If you are not happy with the outcome of your appeal you can make a complaint under the Council’s Complaints Policy. A copy of the policy and a complaints form will be provided on request.

You can use the Complaints Procedure to make a complaint about other issues too. Please discuss this with the Housing Options Team of the Council.

If you have made a complaint and you are still not happy you may be able to take the matter further through the Local Government Ombudsman or through the judicial review process. Please discuss this with the Housing Options Team of the Council or seek independent advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau, Shelter or a solicitor.

Tell us what you think of the Your Choice Your Home scheme

We are interested to know what you think about the **Your Choice Your Home** scheme. If you have any comments, views or stories about your experience of using the scheme please let us know. We will use your comments and views to help ensure that the scheme operates well and to make future improvements to the scheme. If you have any comments about the contents of this scheme user guide or any other information you have received on the scheme please let us know so we can make sure that the information we provide to applicants in the future is useful. Please send your comments, views or stories to;

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 or to housing@north-norfolk.gov.uk
 or telephone **01263 516375**.

