



London Borough
of Hounslow

March 2009

APPLYING FOR HOUSING

Information for people who would like to rent
a council or housing association property in
the London Borough of Hounslow



Applying for Housing

If you would like to rent a council or housing association property in the London Borough of Hounslow, you will need to join our housing register. If you are eligible you will be registered and be able to bid for advertised properties which you have been assessed as needing and are interested in.

In general, demand for affordable homes in the borough far exceeds the number of properties available. Social housing is not the right option for everyone. Many people face a long wait for social housing and people with lower housing need may not be re-housed at all.

What is Locata?

Locata is a lettings scheme. It allows you to apply for vacant council and social landlord properties not just in Hounslow, but also in neighbouring boroughs that are part of the Locata scheme.

How does it work?

Every two weeks, Locata produce a free magazine called Locata HOME which advertises virtually all the available council and housing association homes. You can look at the adverts and decide whether you want to be considered for any of the properties. When registered, you express your interest in properties by making a bid for them either online, by telephone, by a SMS text message or by coupon.

When the advert has closed, the person with the highest priority (greatest housing need) and earliest priority date is asked to view and then offered the property by the landlord.

Who can apply?

Local councils can only provide housing for people who are eligible. Most people who are living in the UK permanently are eligible, but there are some exceptions.

Being eligible for council housing doesn't mean that you are guaranteed to be offered a place. It means that you are entitled to be a member of the local authority housing register.

How do I apply?

To join Locata you must complete an application form, you can apply online at www.locata.org.uk.

When you are registered onto Locata you will be sent a reference number, informed of your level of assessed housing need, and placed in one of four priority bands. People in band A will be those with the highest urgent housing need and those in band D the lowest level of need. If you are band D you are unlikely to receive an offer of a property and will only be offered accommodation if no expressions of interest are received from people in bands A-C.

Your priority for housing within your band will depend on the date you joined that priority band.

What happens if I'm already a council tenant and want to move?

If you are a Hounslow Council tenant and you want to apply for a transfer you should contact the Hounslow Homes customer service centre on **0800 085 6575**.

Can I be on more than one housing register?

New legislation states that councils must operate open waiting lists, so applicants can register on any number of housing registers across the country, but it should be remembered that councils can give priority to local residents over people applying from outside their area.

If you are a tenant of one of the partner councils or housing associations you are likely to be more successful if you apply for a transfer with them. If you are a homeseeker you may be more successful if you apply to the council where you currently live, as you are prioritised as a local resident.

Where can I find the adverts?

Locata HOME is published every other Friday and is available online at www.locata.org.uk or free from a range of libraries, council and housing offices in Hounslow. A full list of where you can pick up a copy is provided in the scheme user guide you receive when you register.

For a small subscription fee of £10.00, Locata HOME can be posted directly to you for six months. Please

make your cheques/postal orders payable to 'Locata (Housing Services) Ltd' and send, together with your Locata LIN number and mailing address to:

Locata, PO Box 294, Ruislip, HA4 8WX

Please notify Locata of any change to your mailing address.

How do I bid?

You can express your interest in a property in a number of ways:

- on the internet at www.locata.org.uk
- by telephone
- by SMS text message
- by coupon

All bids must be received by the advert deadline to be considered. You will receive full details of how to bid in the scheme user guide when you register.

Each advert will clearly state whether a home is available to transfer applicants who want to move from a council home, to new applicants or to both. Some properties may also be reserved for certain other types of applicant, depending on the landlord's policies. Any restrictions will be made clear. This should help you decide whether you want to bid for the property or not and if you are eligible for that property.

There are some additional rules about bidding for elderly and sheltered accommodation, and for homes adapted for disabled people.

After the closing date, the landlord of each property will receive a list of people who have bid for their property. If your name is at the top of the priority list, you will normally be invited to view the property. If you refuse this property, the next suitable applicant on the 'short list' will be offered the property.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to notify you individually when your bids have been unsuccessful. If you have not been contacted regarding a property you have bid for you should assume that you have been unsuccessful.

What happens if I'm offered a property?

If you are offered a property we will check your eligibility to be offered social housing and all of the information you have given us on your application to make sure that your situation is still the same at the time of the offer and that you still require that type of property. We will also check with your current landlord to see if you have rent arrears or have any housing related debt.

How long will I have to wait for a property?

There are currently over 12,000 households on Hounslow's housing register, last year (2007/2008) there were only 822 properties available to rent. Most people waiting for housing will never be offered a

property because the number of people registered is much more than the number of properties we have available each year.

It is very difficult to estimate how long it may take you to be offered a property from the housing register as it will depend on your circumstances, priority banding, the type of property you need and what you bid for. Most people will never be offered a property from the housing register, so it is important that you explore other housing options if you really need to move.

Average wait for a home for Homeseekers (properties let from 01/04/2007)

Property Type / Size	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D
Studio	No Lets to Homeseekers since 01/4/07	8 months	3.5 years	5 years
1 bed	2 months	1 year	3.5 years	3 years
2 beds	4 months	1 year	6 years	No Lets to Homeseekers since 01/4/07
3 beds	2 years	2 years	No Lets to Homeseekers since 01/4/07	No Lets to Homeseekers since 01/4/07
4+beds	No Lets to Homeseekers since 01/4/07	7 years	No Lets to Homeseekers since 01/4/07	No Lets to Homeseekers since 01/4/07

These figures are given so you have information to make the right housing choices for you. Remember that these are the waiting times for the people who have been housed. There are many more people registered who have been waiting a lot longer and have not been offered a property.

When considering if the housing register is the right option for you it is useful to know how many people are also looking for the type of property you require compared to how many properties were let. The next two tables show how many properties were let, their size and what band the successful person was in and also how many people are registered on the housing register, their band and the size of property they need.

Number of properties let from April 2007 to March 2008 for all member types (Homeseeker, Transfer and Homeless).

Property Type / Size	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Total
Sheltered	31	46	10	10	97
1 bed	41	205	41	22	309
2 beds	49	172	64	1	286
3 + beds	44	59	27	0	130
Total	165	482	142	33	822

Number of people registered for housing by band and property size (05/01/2009).

Property Type / Size	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Total
Studio	15	149	758	2919	3841
1 bed	103	184	277	1160	1724
2 beds	32	266	1849	1488	3635
3 beds	20	138	1476	576	2210
4+ beds	5	49	513	129	696
Total	175	786	4873	6727	12561

Can I make an appeal against a decision?

You can ask us to review a decision we have made about:

- your eligibility to join the register;
- the priority band you have been allocated to; and
- removing your name from the register.

If you are a new applicant and you think the decision is wrong, contact the Housing Register Team on:

Telephone: 020 8583 4422

Fax: 020 8583 3825

If you have made an appeal against your homeless decision or you have an enquiry about your homeless application you should contact your Homeless Officer on **020 8583 3842**.

If you are an existing tenant and you would like to appeal a decision you can write to Hounslow Homes at:

Complaints Team

Call Centre

Ashmead Road

Feltham

Middlesex TW14 9NN

Telephone: 0208 583 3737

Fax: 020 8583 4336

Minicom: 0800 389 9821

E-mail:

complaints.team@hounslowhomes.org.uk

Further Information

Locata has its own website **www.locata.org.uk** for more information about the scheme.

This leaflet can be supplied in community languages, large print, audio tape/CD or Braille.

Contact the Communications Team:



020 8583 3535



hcscommunications@hounslow.gov.uk

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For details of all Hounslow Council services, visit our web site at:

www.hounslow.gov.uk

Housing Register Team
Community Services
Civic Centre
Lampton Road
Hounslow
TW3 4DN

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