Frequently asked questions

I’m on Chesterfield’s housing register, why do I have to reregister my application for rehousing?
Chesterfield Borough Council has joined the Home Options Partnership and the Allocations Policy has been reviewed following extensive consultation with our customers and stakeholders last year. All applications need to be reassessed under the new policy so that they can be placed in the correct priority band. Your existing application may not have all of the information that we need. The new system is ‘online’. We need up-to-date contact details such as an email address to enable us to contact you quickly. Wherever possible we will phone or email you rather than sending letters.

What information do I need to be able to register with Home-Options?
As part of the application process we will ask you to provide information about you and your household’s circumstances and where you have lived. It is a good idea to have the following information to hand before you start your application:
- full names, dates of birth and national insurance numbers (where relevant) for everyone included on your application
- your addresses over the past five years, including the dates you moved in and out, full address and contact details for your landlord or mortgage company
- proof of clear rent account for any former private, council or housing association tenancies
- employment details for you and your joint applicant (if you have one), including job title, employer name and address, start date and monthly income
- details of any property you own, including its current value and any outstanding mortgages
- details your savings, equity and investments
- if you are moving to be closer to a relative to give or receive support, their full name, address, dates of residence and contact details
- details of convictions or cautions that are not considered ‘spent’ under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- details of any evictions or rent arrears from any former tenancies

How do I get access to the internet?
You can access the internet for free at libraries. If you are not a member of the library, just take something with your name and address on to the library. You can drop-in or book to use a computer by phoning the Library Information Service on 01629 533444. You can also take your own device, such as a laptop, tablet or smartphone, and use the library’s free wifi.

Computers are also available at On the Move, 73 Low Pavement, Chesterfield, S40 1PB or at the Customer Service Centre, 85 New Square, Chesterfield, S40 1SN.
How do I register for Home-Options?
Go to www.home-options.org, click the blue 'Register' button at the top right of the screen, that will take you to our online pre-assessment and housing application form. If you are eligible to apply, don't forget to send us any supporting information we ask for so that your application can be properly assessed.

Why do I have to register?
The properties we advertise are mainly from councils and housing associations so, by law, we have to check that you are eligible to apply for housing. We also have to make sure we allocate tenancies fairly. By registering, we have the information we need to make sure that those who have the greatest need are given priority for housing.

I applied a few weeks ago and I've not heard anything. What should I do next?
If you haven't already sent your supporting information (proof of address, identity, etc) then please send it as soon as possible. Your application will not be processed until it is received. If you have already sent your supporting information and you have not heard anything with 10 working days, then contact the Home-Options team by email on home.options@chesterfield.gov.uk or phone on 01246 345700. Please be aware that, due to the number of applicants who need to re-register during July and August 2019, it may take a bit longer than the normal 10 working days for us to process your application.

Will I lose the waiting time I have built up on my existing application?
We will give your new application the same date as your old application so that you keep the waiting time you have already built up.

How will I know when to start bidding on the new system?
We will continue to advertise properties at www.onthemove-cbc.org.uk When we are ready to start advertising properties on the new system we will email you and put information on the website to tell you that our adverts are now on www.home-options.org We need to use both systems for a short time to allow applicants to register on the new system before we close the old system down.

Will a letter from my doctor make a difference to my application?
Please include details of your medical condition in your application. If we need any further information, we will get in touch with your GP or specialist directly.

Why has my priority decreased since I completed my application?
The online application form can only give you an indication of your likely priority band. Your application will be verified by a member of staff who will check your application against the Home-Options allocation policy. There may be circumstances
that we have taken into account which could result in your priority being decreased. If you have completed a change of circumstances form and your priority band has decreased, this is because your priority is being assessed at your new address where your situation is different.

**What do I do if I’m not happy with my priority band?**
Read the allocation policy first to see what we take into account when we assess your priority. If you still think your priority band is incorrect, then contact the Home-Options team to discuss your application further.

**How do I let you know if my circumstances have changed?**
If you click that, you'll be able to update your application. Don't forget that you'll need to send proof of address if you've moved to a new address, or proof of identity for any new members of your household.

**How do I bid on a property?**
You need to sign in first (you will need your Home-Options reference number). Once you have logged in, you should click 'View Homes' to see what properties you are eligible for. Click on the advert of any properties you want to bid on, check the details on the advert and make sure it's a property you're interested in, and click the 'Place Bid' button.

**When will the bidding cycle for properties start?**
We do not use a weekly 'bidding cycle'. We advertise properties as they become available which can be any day of the week. Properties are advertised for a minimum of five days and bids must be placed by 11.59pm on the day that bidding closes. You may want to set up a property alert email to make sure that you do not miss the new home you are looking for.

**When will I find out if my bid has been successful?**
Once the bidding closes, staff will start to process the shortlist. If you're at the top of the list, then they will contact you to discuss an offer. This will normally happen within a few days of the shortlist closing.

**How long will I have to wait before I'm rehoused?**
That depends upon the type of property you need and where you would like to live. See the feedback section on the website for more information. Two bedroom bungalows, four bedroom houses and properties that are adapted for people with a disability, tend to be in short supply.

**Can I get help with my rent?**
Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to get help with your rent. You may qualify for housing benefit or in exceptional circumstances, a discretionary
housing payment. You can find more information about benefits and help with your rent on our Financial Help page. You can also contact the Customer Service Centre on 01246 345345 and ask about budgeting and benefits advice.

What is the Home-Options Partnership?
The Home-Options Partnership delivers the choice-based lettings housing service. Partners include Chesterfield Borough Council, Amber Valley Borough Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, emh Homes, Erewash Borough Council, Futures Housing Group, High Peak Borough Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Waterloo Housing Group and Your Housing Limited.

What are the main changes to the policy?
The main changes to the policy are:
- Introduction of an online application
- Introduction of a simplified priority band system
- Medical information assessed using category groups
- Introduction of an equity assessment
- Introduction of a time restriction on reapplying to the housing register after being rehoused
- Revision of property size (number of bedrooms) eligibility criteria
- Introduction of a pre-allocation financial assessment of affordability
- Revision of housing register exclusion times and financial levels

Where can I view the Home-Options choice-based lettings scheme policy?
You can view the policy online at www.home-options.org or www.chesterfield.gov.uk/allocations A copy of the policy is also available to view at On the Move, 73 Low Pavement, Chesterfield, S40 1PB.

Who do I contact if I want more information?
For more help and advice:
Visit:  www.home-options.org/choice/help.aspx where help guides and answers to frequently asked questions are available
Email:  home.options@chesterfield.gov.uk
Phone:  01246 345700
You can also visit the Home-Options Team at On the Move, 73 Low Pavement, Chesterfield, S40 1PB