

News & information for applicants of Walsall Housing Group



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Contact us

choose & move is the way people can find a home to rent from Walsall Housing Group (whg). There are a number of ways you can get in touch to access the service.

Visit our website: chooseandmove.co.uk

Email: chooseandmove.enquiries@whgrp.co.uk

Call: 0300 555 6666

You can visit us at our property shop or any of our housing offices:

choose & move property shop,
10-12 Bridge Street , Walsall WS1 1EW

Aldridge & Brownhills Housing Office,
13 Silver Court, High Street, Brownhills WS8 6HA

Blakenall Housing Office,
Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall WS3 1LZ

Bloxwich Housing Office,
Bloxwich Hall, Elmore Court, Elmore Green Road, Walsall WS3 2QW

Darlaston Housing Office,
45 King Street, Darlaston WS10 8DE

Willenhall Housing Office,
Beechwood House, 22 New Road, Willenhall WV13 2BG



Photo shows colleagues at work in the choose & move property shop.

A foot on the ladder

A new page has been added to the choose & move website which explains HomeBuy.



HomeBuy is the name given to low cost home ownership aimed at helping social tenants, key workers and first time buyers get a foot on the property ladder.

In the West Midlands the scheme is co-ordinated by Orbit Housing Group, a registered social landlord like Walsall Housing Group.

Visit www.chooseandmove.co.uk and follow the HomeBuy link to find out more.

The business of bidding

Registered choose & move applicants can bid for whg properties to rent across Walsall.

Bids can be placed online, over the phone, by email or in person in any of our offices.

All applicants are limited to three bids a week so choose wisely to give yourself the best chance of success.

In some cases people bid for a property they are not eligible for, such as a single person bidding for a three bedroom house. This is a wasted bid.

There are several examples of who can bid for what on the website at www.chooseandmove.co.uk Follow the link 'what can I bid for?' to view.

Vital statistics

Latest lettings

The bar graph below shows the number of homes we let during the six months from April to September.

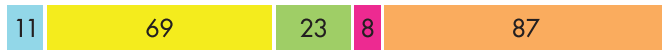
The columns show how many properties were let by area and the key shows the types of property. If you require any further explanation of our service please do not hesitate to contact us.

Number of homes let from 1st April 2009 to 30th September 2009

Aldridge & Brownhills – total homes let 169



Bloxwich – total homes let 198



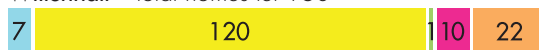
Central Walsall – total homes let 172



Darlaston – total homes let 139



Willenhall – total homes let 160



KEY	■ Bungalows
	■ Low rise flats
	■ Multi-storey flats
	■ 2 bedroom house/maisonette
	■ 3+ bedroom house/maisonette

About the band

Everyone who registers for choose & move is put into either the gold, silver or bronze band, based on housing, medical or social need.

As at 30th September there were:

Gold band – 189 applicants

Silver band – 5,239 applicants

Bronze band – 11,038 applicants



20% of whg properties are allocated to the bronze band, 30% to silver and 50% to gold



Matching people to properties

Q What do tenant inspectors and internet bingo have in common?

A HomeSwapper!

HomeSwapper, the mutual exchange service for UK tenants, has helped long distance bingo pals Dawn Bennett and Jayne Lewis move closer.

Jayne registered with HomeSwapper after visiting Dawn in Walsall and moved from the Isle of Wight to a flat just 400 yards from her friend.

"I realised I'd never felt as happy being anywhere as while I was in Walsall," said Jayne.

Meanwhile, a group of whg customers, keen to help develop and improve services, recently volunteered to be trained to inspect choose & move.

The tenant inspectors first task was to focus on HomeSwapper. They found that 80% of customers thought it was an excellent service and most like using the website to find a mutual exchange because:

- they could look at properties all over the UK
- the site was easy to use and understand
- it offers a good choice of properties
- the layout and pictures are clear.

Visit any whg office, call **0300 555 6666** or follow the HomeSwapper link on our website - **www.chooseandmove.co.uk** - to find out more about HomeSwapper.

Photo shows Dawn Bennett and Jayne Lewis.

All change in Bentley

A sneak preview



Building work is full steam ahead in Bentley where four sites are being redeveloped by whg to create new homes.

These images give choose & move applicants a preview of how the completed developments will look.

Appleyard Close, formerly Cunningham Road, has been completed and each of the 12 properties is occupied.

Work is continuing in nearby Western Avenue and on two pieces of land off Churchill Road.

65 homes will be exclusively for customers aged over 55 and there will be 53 general needs' properties.

Completion will be staggered but all are scheduled to be available next year.

Photo shows an artist's impression of the development.

New start?

Contact us on 0300 555 6666 if you are aged over 55 and living in a two or three bedroom house and would like to move to a new home in Bentley.

The development will be fully secure and accessible and residents will have use of a roof top garden and community room.



Cover story

Home sweet home

Ken and Amy Garner, pictured with whg colleague Sue Pollard, were among the first new residents to move into Appleyard Close, Bentley.

The development, of eight bungalows and four apartments for people aged over 60 and 55 respectively, replaced a row of derelict garages.

Mrs Garner said: "We made the right choice coming here, 100 times over. It's perfect, everybody in the cul-de-sac is such good friends, we all speak and have a laugh. We are really happy in our new bungalow."

Like most of their new neighbours the Garners were living in a family house that had become too big for them.

These family homes will be made available to applicants on the waiting list.

Bringing homes back into use



Empty flats in Walsall have been given a new lease of life by young people honing a trade.

The students gave five one bedroom properties in Goscote Place a complete overhaul, leaving them fit to welcome new residents.

Mark Partoon, whg Property Services Manager, said: "They did an absolutely fantastic job and did everything from rewiring and fitting central heating to installing new kitchens and bathrooms."

The supervised project proved such a success that it may be repeated with future trainees. A potential scheme has already been identified.

Photo shows apprentice electrician Thomas Raybould, aged 17, working in one of the empty flats.

Built with you in mind



People with a disability in search of a home already adapted to meet their needs should read on.

Walsall Adapted Housing Service (WAHS) matches vacant, adapted properties to individuals with appropriate disabilities.

Social landlords in Walsall, including whg, can refer a case to WAHS, as can occupational therapists, NHS Walsall and Walsall Council.

Sue Cripps, choose & move Service Manager, said: "We refer any home with existing disabled adaptations that becomes available to the service.

"The system ensures homes already tailored continue to help potentially countless customers live comfortably and independently."

For further details about WAHS follow the 'finding suitable homes for disabled people' link on our website - www.chooseandmove.co.uk - or call **0300 555 6666**.



Good housekeeping

An up-to-date waiting list is important to ensure the choose & move service is effective and efficient.

We recently wrote to more than 9,000 applicants who had not bid in a 12 month period to find out why and ask if they wanted to stay on the register.

We wanted to make sure these individuals understood how the system worked, such as having to check weekly what properties are available and actively bidding for homes they liked.

Lots of letters were returned because the applicant had moved house so we took them off the register.

We intend to regularly review the waiting list so let us know immediately if you change address or any other contact information.

If we cancel your application because we cannot contact you, you will automatically lose any waiting time you have built up.

Visit the choose & move property shop or any one of our housing offices to confirm your personal information or inform us of any changes. Our contact details can be found on p2 of this newsletter.

You said... We did...

Applicants surveyed on the choose & move website told us they would like to know if an online bid had been accepted.

Regular users will know that we now tell you if your bid has not been accepted.

The reason for a failed bid could be that you have already placed three bids that week or the property in question is too big/small for your family.

As these bids are being rejected via the computer system we realise things can go wrong so check the eligibility criteria and let us know if you think your bid should have been accepted.



Building in Brownhills

whg recently secured planning permission from Walsall Council to build scores of new homes in Brownhills.

61 two bedroom flats and 12 three, four and five bedroom houses will be built at the junction of High Street and Ogley Road. Completion is scheduled for late 2010 – watch this space!

Photo shows an artist's impression of the view along Ogley Road.

Your questions answered

Q: I see properties advertised as available to a couple or single person aged 40+ and to all bands with gold preference. What does this mean?

A: We have a number of properties that are available to applicants over a specific age. If the age restriction is 40+ we will only consider applicants aged at least 40. We will give priority to gold banded applicants over 40 first, followed by silver and then bronze. When there is more than one applicant in the same band, priority will be given to the applicant who has waited the longest.

Q: I see houses with three bedrooms advertised as available to a family with two or more children. My son is aged 21 and my daughter is 22 and I have been told that I cannot bid - why is this?

A: Due to the limited number of houses that become available we only offer houses to applicants with dependant children. Dependant children are those you can claim child benefit for.

We will also consider families with a child over the age of entitlement to child benefit if the parents are responsible for caring for the child because of special needs.

Q: I want to move closer to my new job but I am a starter tenant. Will I be allowed to move?

A: No – starter tenants have limited rights during the first 12 months which means that you cannot register for a transfer or a mutual exchange until your starter tenancy has been converted to an assured tenancy.

Q: I am registered with choose & move and have just had a baby. Do I have to let you know?

A: Yes – you should let us know about any change in your circumstances. In your case you should bring in the birth certificate so we can take a copy and, depending on your other circumstances, this might mean a change to your band. If you change address or telephone numbers you should also let us know straight away because if we try to contact you and can not get in touch you could, for example, miss out on an offer or we may even cancel your application.

English

For interpretation, translation, large print, Braille or audio formats, ask an English speaking friend to help you contact your local housing trust.

Bengali

আসহায, অনুবাদ, বড় হরফ, ব্ৰেইল কিংবা অডিও ফরম্যাটের জন্য, ইংরেজী বলতে পারেন আপনার এমন কোন কাঙ্ক্ষকে আপনার স্থানীয় হাউজিং ট্রাস্টের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য সাহায্য করতে বলুন।

Punjabi

ਵਿਆਖਿਆ, ਅਨੁਵਾਦ, ਵੱਡੇ ਖਿੱਟੇ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਜਾਂ ਆਡੀਓ ਡਾਕੂਮੈਂਟਾਂ ਲਈ, ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਨੂੰ ਕਹੋ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਹਾਊਸਿੰਗ ਟ੍ਰਸਟ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰੇ।

Gujarati

અર્થઘટન, ભાષાંતર, મોટી પ્રિન્ટ, બ્રેઈલ અથવા ઓડિયો ફોર્મેટ માટે, તમારા ઈંગ્લીશ બોલતા મિત્રને તમારા સ્થાનિક હાઉસિંગ ટ્રસ્ટનો સંપર્ક કરવા મદદ માટે કહો.

Hindi

व्याख्यान, अनुवाद, बड़े प्रिंट, ब्रेल अथवा ऑडियो प्रारूपों के लिए, अंग्रेजी बोलने वाले किसी दोस्त से कहें कि वह आपकी स्थानीय हाउसिंग ट्रस्ट से सम्पर्क करने में आपकी मदद करें।

Urdu

اشرح، ترجمہ، بڑے چھاپے، بریل یا آڈیو فارمیٹ کے لیے انگریزی بولنے والے کسی دوست سے ذرا محبت کریں کہ وہ آپ کے مقامی ہاؤسنگ ٹرسٹ سے رابطہ کرنے میں آپ کی مدد کرے۔

French

Pour tout demande d'interprétariat, de traduction, de document en gros caractères, en braille ou en format audio : veuillez demander à une de vos relations parlant anglais de contacter le bureau local de l'association de gestion de votre logement.

Turkish

Sözü ya da yazılı tercümesini, ya da büyük puntuyla, körler alfabesiyle ya da sesli kayıt halinde edinmek için İngilizce bilen bir tanıdığınızdan bölgenizdeki konut vakfıyla temas kurmanıza yardımcı olmasını isteyin.

