

## Inside this issue...

- 4 steps to a new home page 2
- Your questions answered page 3
- Contact us page 4

## A popular misconception

There are several misconceptions about choose & move. The scheme does not mean that we have:

- more whg homes available to let
- more two, three or four bedroom houses available to let
- more properties to let in the areas that are most popular.

**But it does mean that you are in charge of where you want to live.**

## Did you know...

We have a total of 8,860 applicants looking for a property locally and they are categorised into the three bands of gold, silver and bronze. Page 3 explains more about banding and what it means.

**Gold 341, Silver 3359, Bronze 5160.**

**During the past year we let a total of 1441 homes through choose & move.**

KEY	■ Bungalows	■ Low rise flats (age 60+)	■ Low rise flats	■ Multi-storey flats	■ 2 bedroom house	■ 3+ bedroom house
-----	-------------	----------------------------	------------------	----------------------	-------------------	--------------------



# choose & move

## Newsletter Issue 1

# Simply choose & move!



**Welcome to our brand new newsletter which brings you lots of useful information about choose & move.**

For the past 12 months, all homes in Walsall have been let using a choice based letting scheme. This means customers can choose where they want to move to, rather than waiting to be allocated a property.

whg's scheme is called choose & move. It is as simple as looking at properties we advertise to let, bidding for those you are interested in, and if your bid is successful you move in!

This newsletter explains more about choose & move and answers some of your most frequently asked questions. It also aims to encourage applicants to get involved and share their views on the scheme so that we can shape it to fully meet the needs of our customers. Turn to the back page to find out more.

**Aldridge & Brownhills Housing Trust - total homes to let 294**



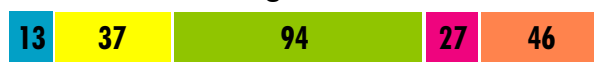
**Bloxwich Housing Trust- total homes to let 328**



**Central Walsall Housing Trust- total homes to let 354**



**Darlaston Housing Trust- total homes to let 217**



**Willenhall Housing Trust- total homes to let 248**



## Take 4 steps to a new home

choose & move involves just four simple steps, but can lead you to a whole new future in a new home.

### Step 1 – Register

You can register by filling in a form at our property shops and offices. The addresses are printed on the back page. Soon you will also be able to register on-line at [www.chooseandmove.co.uk](http://www.chooseandmove.co.uk)

### Step 2 - Choose/Bid

Properties to let are advertised in our property shops and offices. They are also advertised in the local free newspapers and at [www.chooseandmove.co.uk](http://www.chooseandmove.co.uk)

Properties are advertised on a Thursday and you have until the following Tuesday to let us know if you are interested in a property.

If you see any properties you like, and you meet the criteria stated in the advert, you should 'make a bid' by telephoning or calling in to your local property shop or office. You can also email them. Details can be found on the back page.

No money is involved in bidding – you are just telling us that you are interested in a property. You can 'bid' for up to three properties each week, so make your bids count.

### Step 3 - Offer

After the bids have closed, we look to see who is interested and the applicant who has been waiting to move for the longest amount of time, is made an offer.

Before making the offer we have to check if the applicant is suitable and this usually takes a few days.

Unfortunately we are not able to contact all the bidders, but if you have not heard from us within seven days of the closing date, this usually means you have not been successful on this occasion.

We publish the results in our property shops, offices and on our website. You can always find out how long the successful bidder has been waiting for a property.

### Step 4 - Move

If your bid is successful you will be contacted by letter. This letter will include important information about the offer and will ask you to let us know within a few days if you want to accept.

It will also explain the need to pay your rent in advance.

## My new home



Debbie Sutton is delighted to have moved into her new home in Darlaston just a month after the property was advertised.

The three bedroom property in Margaret Road was advertised in the local free newspapers on 18th January and appeared in our property shops and offices, and on our website from 18th to 23rd January. A total of 30 bids were received for the property.

Having previously bid for four other properties in the Darlaston area, Mrs Sutton was very pleased to have been successful on this occasion.

Her tenancy started on 19th February and Mrs Sutton was surprised how quickly she was able to move in to her new home.

She is pictured in her brand new kitchen, with Carol Hollinshead from choose & move in Darlaston, on the day she signed up for her new tenancy.

## Changes on-line

**We are developing and improving our website all the time, so keep surfing!**

Visit [www.chooseandmove.co.uk](http://www.chooseandmove.co.uk) to find out more about the properties available each week at a glance.

The results of recent allocations are published on the website very soon after the bids have closed.

A host of other improvements are in the pipeline – watch this space!

## Top tips

**Tip 1** Most customers place their bids by telephoning us, but telephone bids close at 5pm on a Tuesday. If you email your bid through our website at [www.chooseandmove.co.uk](http://www.chooseandmove.co.uk) you can bid up until midnight.

**Tip 2** Remember, you will not be offered a property if you have rent arrears, if you cannot provide a suitable reference or if you are considered to be unsuitable in any other way. Contact us if you think this might apply to you and we can discuss your circumstances.

**Tip 3** Once you have been offered a property, let us know straightaway whether you want to accept it. If you do not want the property, we can offer it to the next person on the list and you can continue bidding for other properties.

# Your questions answered

Here we answer some of the questions applicants have been asking us recently. If you still have any further queries, please contact your local property shop or office. Full details are listed on the back page.

## Q How do you decide which band I am in?

A The decision is based on your personal circumstances. You will be placed in one of three bands as follows:

### Gold

- If you are homeless
- If you need to move for medical reasons
- If you have any other urgent need to move

### Silver

- If you are over 60 and need to move to a ground floor flat or to a bungalow
- If you are a whg tenant, live in a flat and have dependent children
- If you have fewer bedrooms than you need

### Bronze

- If you do not live, work or study in Walsall
- If you are adequately housed
- If you have your own bedroom.

## Q I think I have been put in the wrong band. What can I do?

A Let us know if you think we have got it wrong and we will look at your circumstances.

## Q How do you decide who can bid for a property?

A We have rules about who is eligible for the different kinds of properties that we have available. Houses, for example, can only be offered to a family. A family with one child can only bid for a two bedroom house and so on. The advert will always tell you who can apply.

## Q How do you decide which band each property is in?

A This depends on the type of property it is. Ground floor flats, for example, are available to all bands, but we always give preference to the Gold band. This is because these flats are suitable for applicants with medical needs who are always put in the Gold band.

Flats above ground floor and houses are shared between the bands on a rota basis. This explains why you can have two flats or houses in the same street in different bands. The rota that we use has been designed to achieve the following balance between the three bands – 50% to Gold, 30% to Silver and 20% to Bronze.

## Q What do I do if I see a property I am interested in?

A Telephone or call into one of our property shops or offices or email us. Full contact details can be found on the back page or contact us through our website at [www.chooseandmove.co.uk](http://www.chooseandmove.co.uk)

## Q How do you decide which bid is successful?

A We look at the effective date - usually the date you registered with choose & move – to decide which bid is successful. This means that the applicant with the earliest effective date ie the one who has been waiting to move the longest, will be offered the property.

## Q How will I know if my bid has been successful?

A We will contact you within about seven days of the closing date for bids if you are successful. Unfortunately we are not able to contact those who have not been successful, but you can check the results at our property shops, our offices and on our website.



