

Housing



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

August 2017

Changes to Homechoice at Reading: FAQs

This factsheet provides a summary of the changes we are making to Homechoice at Reading and what they mean for you. These changes will take effect from 2 October 2017.

What will change?

- We will be changing the way we advertise available properties:
 - We will add properties to the system as soon as they become available
 - Bidding will stay open for one week from the date a property is added.
- We will no longer be printing and distributing the property freesheets.
- We are updating and improving our website. This will allow us to:
 - Improve the way we communicate with you – for example we will be able to let you know about important issues regarding housing options available
 - Provide more local information about each property advertised.

Why are you making these changes?

We want to speed up the lettings process.

Instead of having to wait for the next fortnightly bidding cycle, the Council and registered providers will be able to advertise their properties as soon as they become available and relet them quicker.

Why are you stopping the printed property sheet?

The new process means it will be impossible for us to produce an up-to-date property sheet. In the time it would take to commercially print and distribute the freesheet the bidding on some properties will have closed and new properties may have been added.

Can I still get printed information?

Yes - we will print out a list of properties for you on request. However, you should be aware that this list will only include the properties that were open for bidding at the time it was printed.

The best way to see the properties advertised is to check the website. You can access the internet free at the Civic Offices or your local library. If you need support to use the website please ask a member of staff.

How can I make sure I don't miss any properties?

If you log on to the website on the same day every week you will see all available properties.

You will also be able to sign up for email alerts to let you know whenever a property suitable for your family is added. If you do not have a current email account you can set one up for free on line.

Make sure you let us know your email address so we can load this into our system for you.

Will I be able to see all vacant properties?

This isn't changing. You will still only be able to see the properties that you are eligible to bid on.

This includes:

- unrestricted properties that are suitable for your household
- suitable properties that are restricted to your application type (for example if you already live in social housing you will only see properties restricted to transfer applicants. If you are a new applicant you will only see properties for waiting list applicants)
- suitable properties with other restrictions if you meet the criteria (for example you must be over 55 to access sheltered housing)

Please note: Even if you can view and bid for a property we may not consider you for it and you must read the advert details to ensure that it is a suitable property that we can consider you for.

Will my login details change?

No. You will use the same PIN and login details - but the login page and website will look different.

How many bids will I have?

You can have active bids on up to three properties at a time. Bids will be released as soon as the bidding cycle closes.

How long will bidding stay open?

Bidding will stay open for a week from the day the property is added.

How will I bid for properties?

You can bid:

- online using a PC, tablet or smartphone (98% of all bids are already made online)
- by text or
- by asking a member of staff to bid on your behalf although, due to the sanctions that may apply if you refuse 3 reasonable offers in a 6 month period, we will ask you to sign a disclaimer to allow us to bid for you.

Can I get help with bidding?

The Voids and Lettings Team can help you see what's available and place bids for you.

You can also ask any other member of staff who has access to our system, such as our support team.

We can also place bids for you due to any vulnerabilities - you must confirm your instructions so we are clear about your needs.

Will more properties be available?

No. These changes won't affect the number of properties becoming vacant

Useful Contacts

Voids and Lettings Team	0118 937 2172	allocations@reading.gov.uk
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This information can be provided in alternative formats (Braille, audio, large print) or languages on request