

Applying for housing with whg: Advice pack

January 2023



Facts about our homes:



The demand for housing is extremely high.

- As of 1 September 2022 there were over 16,000 households on our housing register.
- Last year we let just over 1,500 properties across the West Midlands, 1000 were relets and 500 were new build.

Larger accommodation is very scarce.

We have 407 households on the housing register waiting for a four bedroom property. In 2021 we only let 28 properties that had four or more bedrooms.

We have a very high demand for homes. The current average waiting time from application to offer varies a lot. Your banding, what type and size of home you are looking for as well as areas you are looking at all impact waiting times.

Gold Band At least six months

Silver Band At least 12 months

Bronze Band At least 18 months

The average wait time depends on the area – a person wanting a three bed house in Aldridge could be waiting for four years, while a three bed house in a less desirable area could be available within a year. We recommend applicants widen their search and consider all homes that meet their need, not just those that are in their preferred area.

We have an ambition not to evict anyone into homelessness and have a very effective record of sustaining tenancies. This means that fewer properties are becoming available each year for those on our waiting list. We are committed to building new affordable homes but demand for homes far outstrips supply.

Even if no new applicants applied, it would take many years to clear the current housing register.

We simply do not have enough homes to meet the demand. This is why we have to prioritise, and some people will feel they are waiting far too long. We understand this is really difficult for you to hear.

FAQs

Why have I been waiting so long for a house?

We simply do not have enough homes to meet the demand, this means you may have to wait much longer than we would like.

There are some practical steps you can take to increase your chances of success and reduce your wait time, these include considering other areas and house types. For example, if you are applying for two bed houses you could also consider two bed flats. The more selective you are on the properties you want to live in, the longer your wait time could be.

What should I do if I have a query about my application?

All the information you need about your application can be found on your choose and move account, you can also update your details online. To log in to your account please [**click here.**](#)

You can find a helpful list of FAQs on our website, just [**click here.**](#) If you do not have access to online services or still have a query you can contact our Customer Service Team on 0300 555 6666

How do I apply for a home with whg?

You can [**log on**](#) and follow the instructions to check if you are eligible to join our housing waiting list. The system will immediately let you know if you are eligible to apply. As soon as you have completed your application online you will receive a band award and will be able to start applying for homes.

If you do not have access to online services you can call our Customer Service Team on 0300 555 6666 who will provide advice and assistance.

How can I update my application with change of details/circumstances?

You can log on to your online account [here](#) and update your details with your current information, attaching any evidence.

What band/priority do I have?

You can check your band award by logging into your choose & move account.

How do you decide which band to give?

Our Allocations Policy sets out our band awards and under which circumstances they are applied. [Click here to read policy.](#)

Our choose & move system generally awards priority at registration. More complex applications may need to be reviewed manually.

I don't think my band award is correct. What do I need to do?

If you consider your band award to be incorrect, in accordance with our Allocations Policy, you can request an appeal directly on our choose & move service explaining clearly why you believe this to be so. We would be grateful if you could follow our process so we can deal with your request as quickly as possible.

Unless your circumstances have changed since you submitted your application, it is very unlikely your banding will be changed. We appreciate this will be disappointing to you, but we must prioritise applications in line with our Allocations Policy.

What can I do to improve my chances of being rehoused sooner?

You should continue to place applications on a regular basis, widen your choice of area and consider flatted accommodation in addition to houses, if eligible, to improve your chances of being offered a home.

You should also consider all other available housing options, such as other housing associations or renting privately. You can find more information from Walsall Council on their options [here](#).

I have been waiting a while to be rehoused, how much longer will it take?

We have a very high demand for homes. Waiting times depend on what band you are in, what size and type of home you are looking for and which areas you are considering.

Gold Band At least six months

Silver Band At least 12 months

Bronze Band At least 18 months

If you are very selective or specific on the type of home or high demand areas, waiting times will be significantly longer.

I have seen an empty home that I am interested in. Can I apply for it?

Our homes are managed via our choose & move online system. You can apply for any home if it has been advertised to you on there. If a specific home has not been advertised to you it means the home is not available to apply for. If the home is advertised to you, your application will then be considered in line with our Allocations Policy.

As demand is so high our homes are let as quickly as possible. In many cases if you have seen a vacant home, it has very likely already been relet.

Individual circumstances:

I need an adapted home as my current home is no longer suitable. What is the process?

If you already live in a whg home, please contact our Customer Service Team directly who will provide further advice.

- **Minor adaptations** – small changes (like rails) can be installed by our Repairs and Maintenance Team.
- **Major adaptations** – more complex changes such as installing a stair lift or level-access shower are assessed by the local authority. They will arrange an assessment by an occupational therapist.

If you are not yet in a whg home, you will need to upload medical evidence from an Occupational Therapist or a medical specialist that specifically confirms what home is required to meet your medical needs and why your current home is not suitable.

I am imminently homeless/have no fixed address, what should I do?

If you are homeless or at risk of homelessness, you should contact your local authority. They may nominate you directly to us or another local housing association for rehousing. More information can be found [here](#).

I am overcrowded in my home. Can you help?

You will need to provide evidence that you are overcrowded to support your application, you can do this on your choose & move account. If you have children and are overcrowded you will need to provide evidence that an adult in the household is receiving child benefit.

If you are overcrowded by at least two bedrooms and you are either a whg customer or not currently housed with a Registered Provider, you will be allocated our highest priority gold band.

If you are overcrowded by one bedroom and you are either a whg customer or not currently housed with a Registered Provider, you will be awarded a silver band.

If you are housed with a Registered Provider that is not whg, you will be in bronze band award. If you are in these circumstances, we would recommend you contact your current landlord.

To check if your home is overcrowded you need to look at the number and gender of people who have to sleep in the same room.

People who can share a room include:

- Two adults living as a couple
- One bedroom for two children aged 21 years or below and same gender
- One bedroom for two children aged 9 years or below regardless of gender

For example, if you were a couple with a 9 year old son and 5 year old daughter living in a two bedroom flat you would not be classed as overcrowded, as two children aged 9 or under can share a room, regardless of gender. Once your son turned 10 you would fit the overcrowding criteria.

I have more bedrooms than I need. Can I apply for a smaller property?

Yes. If you are a whg customer and are underoccupied we will give you priority for a move to promote better use of our homes.

You will be awarded gold band if:

- You are a whg customer currently living in a two or three bedroom house but want and are eligible for a one or two bedroom flat or bungalow.
- You are a whg customer living in a four bedroom house or larger wanting a smaller property with a maximum of two bedrooms.
- You are a whg customer who is underoccupying by two bedrooms and are subject to under-occupation deductions or Local Housing Allowance cap.

I live in a flat with two young children and struggle with the stairs and pushchairs, can I be rehoused?

If you are already one of our customers, have sufficient bedrooms in your current flat, and are looking for houses only, you will be awarded a Silver Band priority.

Houses are in extremely high demand so unfortunately there will be a significant wait to this property type. You may want to explore other housing providers or privately renting.

I have an outstanding debt with my landlord. Would you consider me for rehousing?

You may have your application suspended if you have rent arrears or another housing related debt owing to us or any other landlord.

If you owe debt to other landlords you will need to provide evidence that the debt is now cleared to progress your application.

I am escaping domestic abuse and require urgent rehousing, what should I do?

If you are a whg customer you should speak to us. We will look at the most appropriate action to take.

If you are currently housed with another housing association or council then you should speak to them.

If you are not housed with a housing association or council you should contact your local authority's housing team for further advice and support.

I have an autistic child who needs their own bedroom, what should I do?

In order to qualify for a bigger home on medical grounds you must provide evidence for consideration. For example, a suitably qualified medical practitioner would be required to provide written evidence in support of your child's requirement to have their own bedroom and how this will improve your child's health and welfare. There will still be a long wait as demand is high.

I earn more than the income threshold/saving threshold as listed in your Allocations Policy. Can I apply for a home?

If you earn more than our income thresholds or have above the savings threshold then you will probably not be able to apply. You can complete our eligibility survey on choose & move to find out.

We do have specifically designated homes for customers over 55 years. If you are interested in one of these you may be eligible despite earning more than the income/saving threshold.

For more FAQs please visit [our website](#).