



East London  
Lettings Company

part of  
Choice  
HomesUK

YOUR

HOUSING

Choice Based  
Lettings and other  
housing options

GUIDE

Newham London



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**This housing guide explains how to bid for homes through Choice Based Lettings and lays out the other housing options available to Newham residents. This guide will help you to find the right housing option for you.**

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# Choice Based Lettings

# 01

The Choice Based Lettings (CBL) service advertises homes that become available for rent from local authorities, housing associations and other landlords.

For more info visit:  
[www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk)

## 1.1 Introduction

A new list of properties is advertised every week. Eligible households on the council's housing register can choose to apply for up to two properties that match their assessed requirements. The process of applying is called 'bidding'.

When advertising closes, all the bids received for each property are ranked according to the council's policies for prioritising applications. Offers of housing are made to customers whose bids have been ranked highest and whose eligibility to be offered the property can be confirmed. Offers will not be made to customers who have given false information or not informed the council of changes in their household circumstances. Customers who have knowingly supplied false information may be prosecuted.

## 1.2 Matching supply to demand

In Newham there is a very high and growing demand for affordable rented housing. Councils have a duty to ensure that their housing allocation policies give reasonable preference to households whose housing circumstances match those prescribed by part six of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 (the law relating to the allocation of housing). As the supply of local affordable rented housing far exceeds the level of demand, only a very small proportion of customers registering for housing are likely to be housed. It is anticipated that:

- at least 95 per cent of general needs properties advertised will be let to those in the Priority Homeseeker (PH) category
- up to 5 per cent of properties advertised will be let to households in the Tenants Seeking Transfer (T) category.



**Got a question?**

**call: 020 3373 4210**

**visit: [www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk)**

**[www.ellchoicehomes.org.uk](http://www.ellchoicehomes.org.uk)**

Customers whose circumstances are not recognised in law as requiring reasonable preference fall into the Homeseeker (H) category. This means that Homeseekers do not have the priority on the waiting list and can only bid for limited types of properties, such as sheltered accommodation and properties that are hard to let.

Bids are otherwise generally ranked according to how long customers have been waiting on the housing register. Customers with unavoidable special circumstances – such as tenants whose current homes are due to be demolished – may be given additional priority. When you register, your council will have sent you a letter detailing your registration category, registration date and the number of bedrooms your household is entitled to.




Further details are available in the document 'A guide to the housing allocation scheme', available online at [www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk) or on request.

### 1.3 Viewing property adverts

Properties are advertised weekly on Fridays:

- on the Choice Homes website at [www.ellchoicehomes.org.uk](http://www.ellchoicehomes.org.uk)
- on touch-screen kiosks situated in Local Service Centres (council offices)
- in Choice Homes magazine, available at 2pm from Local Service Centres (LSCs) and libraries.

Adverts provide property, location, rent and landlord details to help you decide which properties are right for you. Wherever possible photographs of properties are also included.

Ref: <b>84644</b>	<b>EAST HAM SOUTH</b>	<b>TELHAM ROAD, LONDON, E6 6BW</b>
	Landlord: Newham	Type: Maisonette
		Bedrooms: 2
		Bedsizes: 2 doubles
		Level: 1st floor
		Other: Gas central heating. 0.5 miles from East Ham Station.
		<b>RENT (including charges of £3.18) £63.74pw</b>
		

A 'general properties' advert

<b>CANNING TOWN NORTH</b>	<b>TERRY WAITE HOUSE, CLIFTON ROAD, LONDON, E16 4PX</b>
Ref: <b>84903</b>	Landlord: Newham
	Type: Flat
	Level: 1st floor
	Bedrooms: 0
	Bedsizes: Bedsit/studio
	Other: Bids accepted only from single persons. 0.5 miles from Canning Town station.
	<b>RENT (no other charges) £109.58pw</b>
	

A 'sheltered properties' advert

### 1.4 Which properties can I bid for?

In each advertising cycle (from Friday to midnight the following Monday) you can bid for up to two properties that match your registration category symbol and the number of bedrooms you require. You do not have to use both of your bids, only bid for properties you are likely to accept.

## 1.5 How do I bid?

There are several ways you can bid, all are simple; choose whichever way you find most convenient:

- on the Choice Homes website at **www.ellcchoicetomes.org.uk**
- on touch-screen kiosks situated in Local Service Centres
- by phoning our multi-lingual hotline - **0845 650 4125** (local call rate)
- by text - **0778 148 6526** (your tariff's standard text charge).

Whichever way you choose to bid you will need to enter:

- your housing registration number
- your memorable number which may be your date of birth
- the reference numbers of the properties you are interested in.

The system will advise you:

- if you are ineligible to bid – please contact your council to find out why this is
- of the properties you can not bid for because they do not match your registration details.

## 1.6 What are my chances of success?

As there are many more bidders than properties, bidders typically wait several years before their bid is successful.

There are several ways you can assess your prospects:

- when you bid for a property the system will inform you of your current position in the queue of bidders for the property; this may constantly change up to the closing of the bids as other people bid for the same property after you
- you can access details of all the bids you have placed and your final queue position for each bid through the website
- tables are published in the magazine and on the website showing the bids received for properties previously advertised and how long successful bidders had been on the waiting list
- by consulting the table on the next page, this shows the average waiting times for successful bids in 2009.



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**www.ellcchoicetomes.org.uk**

## 1.7 Average waiting times

### General housing in Newham 2009

The table below shows how many years the customers whose bids came first in 2009 had on average been waiting on the housing register in Newham. This table shows the details for the general housing stock - that is all the properties with no restrictions on who can bid on them.

2009	Bedsit	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms
<b>Houses and bungalows</b>	none let	none let	10 years 9 months	12 years 9 months	15 years 2 months
<b>Ground floor flats and maisonettes</b>	8 years 4 months	9 years 5 months	9 years 11 months	11 years 5 months	16 years 8 months*
<b>1st to 3rd floor flats and maisonettes</b>	7 years 11 months	8 years 9 months	9 years	10 years 9 months	13 years 9 months
<b>4th floor and above flats and maisonettes</b>	6 years 3 months	7 years 9 months	7 years 11 months	9 years 7 months	11 years 10 month

5 Bedroom Houses - 15 years and 10 months.

\* There were only four 4-bedroom ground floor properties available in 2009 so the average waiting time may be misleading.

- these average figures are offered as a general guide to waiting times; the actual time you wait may be longer or shorter
- waiting times are generally longer for properties such as houses than for properties such as flats and maisonettes
- where the table shows 'none let', no properties of this description were advertised in 2009
- waiting times for tenants being decanted are excluded from these figures
- properties that had an over ride bid from someone who was offered a property directly are not included in these figures.

### London Borough of Newham properties let in 2009 by category and bedroom sizes.

Category	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms	grand total
Decant	23	14	12	3	52
Emergency	19	10	13	3	45
General waiting list	149	69	29	8	255
Homeless	44	76	68	21	209
Ordinary transfer	12	22	25	11	70
Special schemes	56	6	2	0	64
Underoccupation	24	14	2	1	41
Cross-borough	18	10	4	0	32
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>768</b>

### Applications registered as at 31 December 2009

Housing List	Number of Applications Registered
1 bedroom	16564
2 bedrooms	10859
3 bedrooms	6334
4 bedrooms	1674
5 bedrooms	275
6 bedrooms	42
7 bedrooms	5
8 bedrooms	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>35754</b>

### Useful telephone numbers

Please note, contact telephone numbers have changed for the Lettings Agency.

#### Housing options and advice

**020 3373 4210**

Registration team

**020 3373 4230**

Allocations team

**020 3373 4220**



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# Other housing options

# 02

Given the prospect of a lengthy wait before a successful bid for an affordable rented home, customers may want to explore other housing solutions which may be faster.

For more info visit:  
[www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk)

## 2.1 Introduction

A number of options are briefly described below. Further information can be found through the Choice Based Lettings magazine, the website at [www.ellcchoicetohomes.org.uk](http://www.ellcchoicetohomes.org.uk) or [www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk)

## 2.2 Mutual Exchange Scheme

Mutual exchanges enable council or housing association tenants to swap their property with another tenant through an "assignment of tenancy". Newham usually agrees requests for mutual exchanges provided:

- they involve no significant under-occupancy or overcrowding
- there are no rent arrears
- properties are in good condition.

## 2.3 NewStart and LPR (Letting Private Renting) bonds

If you are an overcrowded council tenant and want to move to a larger property in the private rented sector the council can provide your new landlord with a damage deposit equivalent to four weeks rent. This is called a bond and some landlords are willing to accept them.

We may also be able to help you move to the private sector by paying your deposit (up to a maximum value) and giving you help with your removals.

## 2.4 Seaside and Country Homes Scheme

This scheme aims to help older tenants move to other areas in England. It is open to council and housing associations tenants who live in London. The applicant must be aged 60 or over and capable of independent living. Only couples and singles applicants can apply (you may not have any dependants/people other than your partner living with you).

The scheme's properties are located in several coastal and country areas, including Cornwall, Norfolk, Essex, Lincolnshire and the Midlands.



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## 2.5 New Build HomeBuy (formerly known as shared ownership)

New Build HomeBuy enables you to buy a share in a property whilst paying rent on the remainder. This usually costs less than to buy a property outright on the open market. Your monthly outgoings will probably include mortgage repayments; rent on the share of the property owned by the landlord; leasehold, service and insurance charges. Most schemes enable you to increase your share in the property when you can afford to. Shared ownership schemes are usually offered by housing associations.

## 2.6 Housing for key workers

If you are in a 'key worker' group, such as nurses, other NHS workers, teachers, social workers and certain other workers in the public sector you may qualify for help to buy your first home or to move into a family home, or be able to rent a home at an affordable price.

## 2.7 Private rented accommodation

Many properties in Newham are privately rented from letting agencies and private landlords. Some of these specialise in letting to people on low incomes and benefits. Details of these are available in local newspapers, on the Internet or in the Yellow Pages. You may be entitled to some assistance with the rent through housing benefit.

Please note that eligibility criteria can change rapidly and vary across regions.

## 2.8 Registration with other councils

If you have strong links with another area – for example, because you work there, used to live there, or have close relatives in the area – you may be able to register on the housing list of the relevant council. Please contact them directly.



# Service standards

# 03

The Lettings Agency aims to deliver an excellent service to all customers. The following information advises you about the service you can expect to receive from us.

For more info visit:  
[www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk)

## The service standards cover:

- applying for housing
- receiving an offer of accommodation.

## Applying for housing, we aim to:

- register your application within ten working days of receiving your completed registration form and relevant requested documents
- confirm your registration by letter advising you of your registration number, your priority category, and include a leaflet explaining the Choice Homes choice-based lettings scheme
- contact you either by phone or in writing (letter or email) if your application is not fully completed and explain to you the information we need to complete your registration; this will be done within 15 working days of receiving your application
- deal with any changes to your housing application that you tell us about (such as changes of address, additional household members) within ten working days of receipt
- write to you every year to ask you to confirm that you want to remain on the housing list and to check that you are still eligible.



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**Receiving an offer of accommodation, we aim to:**

- contact you by telephone (if we have your number) and in writing to advise you if your bid for a property under the Choice Homes scheme is one of those being considered for an offer; this would take place within five working days of the closing date for bids
- (for those being considered for an offer following bids), provide you with information in writing, at least two calendar days before the viewing date, about:
  - the time and location for viewing the property
  - who to contact in case of any queries
  - what your position is on the queue of bidders for the property compared to other applicants who have also been invited to view (we normally invite the first five people in the bidding queue to the viewing)
  - any other information that you may need to supply, such as proof of identity
  - the council's 'lettable standard', which sets out the minimum standard of repair/cleanliness you should expect to see in an empty property.

**We ask you to:**

- provide the required documents for your applications to be registered
- let us know immediately of any changes in your circumstances or household
- let us know if you move from your current property
- provide us with any relevant new contact details (including mobile numbers etc).



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