

FACT SHEET

HomeHunt

1. Do you need to move home due to one of the following reasons?

- You're under-occupying your home and have been impacted by the bedroom tax.
- Your home is overcrowded.
- You need to move because of a medical condition.
- You can't afford to live in your existing home.
- You want to move into older people's accommodation.
- You need to move for employment reasons.

A transfer to another one of our properties through HomeHunt may be the answer.

2. What is HomeHunt?

The HomeHunt website advertises a small number of homes for existing residents for internal transfers - these properties will be put onto HomeHunt for residents to see and bid on. Residents will be able to choose which properties they would like to be considered for.

3. What should I do if I want to apply for a transfer?

You'll need to register with HomeHunt and then you'll be able to bid on any properties you'd like to be considered for which suit your needs.

4. Can non-Sovereign residents bid on your properties?

Occasionally we'll put vacancies on HomeHunt that have already been advertised with the local authority. We may allow applicants that aren't already with Sovereign to bid for these, but will always prioritise existing Sovereign residents.

5. Which properties will you be advertising?

We'll be using HomeHunt for properties in the local authority areas of Bath & North East Somerset, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cheltenham, Christchurch, Cotswold, Devon, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Isle of Wight, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, South & Vale, Stroud, Swindon, Tewkesbury, West Berkshire and Wiltshire.

6. How can I increase my chances of moving?

As well as registering on HomeHunt, we strongly recommend that you also register on your local authority's housing register and at www.homeswapper.co.uk to try and exchange.

To improve your chance of getting a move, it's important that you check HomeHunt and HomeSwapper regularly.

You should check the local authority's property listing weekly to see if there are any homes you would like to bid on.

7. How do I register for HomeHunt?

Please visit www.homehunt.co.uk.

Choose Apply on the top bar, then click on 'Complete the full HomeHunt application form'.

Create an account by filling in the required details, or Login with Facebook. Make sure you select Yes in section 2 to register with Sovereign, and choose Sovereign as your current landlord.

If you're not sure what to do then you can watch our short film at www.sovereign.org.uk/homehunt. If you need support, please ask a family member or friend to help if they can. Alternatively, if you don't have anyone that can give help, please let us know and we can arrange support.

8. What if I don't have a computer?

Please feel free to come and use the Touch Points in one of our reception areas. Most libraries and local authority offices also have computers that have free public access.

9. Could my application be rejected?

To be able to register, you need to hold an assured or fixed term tenancy, so if you're still within your probationary period your application won't be accepted.

Only Sovereign residents who have kept to the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement will be allowed to move.

10. How will we decide the number of bedrooms each household is allowed?

The number of bedrooms you'll be allowed depends on the number of people in your household, their age and gender.

One bedroom will be allocated for each of the following:

- A single adult aged 16 or over
- A couple
- Two children of mixed or same sex both aged under 10
- Two children of same sex both aged under 16

11. Why can't I see any homes to bid on?

We only put a small number of properties on HomeHunt each week, so it's possible that there aren't any advertised at the moment.

12. How do I bid on properties on HomeHunt?

- Once your application has been approved, you'll be able to log onto HomeHunt and start bidding for suitable properties.

- It's important you 'Save a search' when you have registered with HomeHunt, to tell us the properties and areas you may be interested in moving to. HomeHunt will then send you an email when a property is advertised in that area.
- You can save more than one search if you're interested in different areas.
- Being emailed about a property doesn't necessarily mean that you'll be able to bid for it. This will only be possible if you meet the criteria on the advert and your household matches the size of the property. It's a good idea to make sure that your saved search includes properties that your household is entitled to as in question 10.
- The website's user friendly and you shouldn't have any problems easily identifying properties you're interested in and placing bids. If you need some help then please let us know.
- Check HomeHunt regularly so that you don't miss any homes you may be interested in.

13. Which properties will I be allowed to bid on?

You'll only be allowed to bid on properties where you meet the criteria identified in the advert.

14. How long will properties be advertised for?

Each property will normally be advertised for 7 days to give people time to bid. The advertising cycle could start and end on any day of the week. For example, a property advertised on a Wednesday will close the following Tuesday.

Occasionally we may decide to shorten the bidding cycle on a property if we believe that there is good reason to do so. This will only happen in exceptional circumstances.

It's important that you check your emails regularly for alerts of properties that match your saved home searches.

15. How will I know if my bid has been successful?

Once each cycle has closed we'll run a shortlist of all the applicants that have bid on that property.

The applicants will be ranked by their band and then their registration date. If you come at the top of this shortlist you'll be contacted and invited to view the property, providing you are keeping to the terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement at that time.

If the person at the top of this shortlist refuses the property then we'd go down the shortlist until somebody suitable accepts it.

You can log on to HomeHunt and check the status of your bids on the 'homes applied for' section at any time.

16. What are my chances of being successful at bidding for a property in the future?

The details of the successful bid on each vacancy will be published on HomeHunt. This will show what band the successful bidder was in and their application date.

Over time, this'll give you an idea of the most popular areas

and property types, so you can decide whether you'd like to amend your bids to give you more chance of success.

However, we'd still recommend that you continue to bid on any properties you'd like to be considered for.

17. What can I do while I'm waiting?

- We recommend that you use the time you're waiting to save some money. Moving can be an expensive time, with the cost of removals and new flooring, carpets and curtains for your new home.
- We'll also expect you to pay your first week's rent in advance before you sign your new tenancy agreement.
- You'll need to give us two weeks' notice in writing on your current home. We'll do our best to try and make sure that this doesn't mean you have to pay for both properties at the same time, but sometimes this can't be helped.
- You should also make sure that your home meets our lettable standard. Before you move, you'll be visited and the condition of your home will be assessed to make sure it's up to standard, so it would be a good idea to use the time you're waiting to do any repairs or redecoration that are needed before this.

18. What happens if my application is set to pending?

Your housing officer will be in contact with you within 5 working days to discuss this and ask you for any further information that may be needed.

19. Is it true that residents who keep contacting you get rehoused quicker?

No. We're happy to help people with any enquiries they may have, however contacting us on a regular basis doesn't give you any extra priority. It just uses up time that could be used more effectively.

20. Who should I contact for more help?

There's a list of Frequently Asked Questions on the HomeHunt website. If you've looked at these and still not found the answer you need then please contact us:

Berkshire residents – Homehunt-Berks@sovereign.org.uk

Bristol residents – Homehunt-Bristol@sovereign.org.uk

Devon, Dorset, IOW – Homehunt-South@sovereign.org.uk

Hampshire residents – Homehunt-Hants@sovereign.org.uk

Oxfordshire residents – Homehunt-Oxon@sovereign.org.uk

Swindon residents – Homehunt-Swindon@sovereign.org.uk

For more information on swapping your home, please visit: www.sovereign.org.uk/homehunt