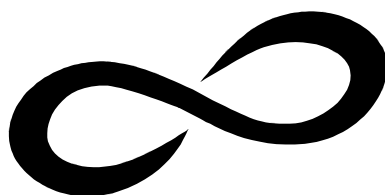


**Northamptonshire Community  
Housing & Support Network**



# **Choice Based Lettings**



**An Easy Read Guide to Choosing a Home for  
People with a Learning Disability**

by  
**Marion Turner**

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2011**



The Learning Disability Partnership Board has given us some money to make a guide to tell you about 'Choice Based Lettings' and how to choose a home with the help of the Local Council

This guide is for people with a Learning Disability

## **What is Choice Based Lettings?**

Choice Based Lettings is a new way to rent a home from the Council and Housing Associations

Rather than Local Council's deciding which housing to offer you, you can now choose which home you are interested in yourself.

Homes are advertised like an estate agent and you can then tell the Council which homes you are interested in. This is called bidding.

In Northamptonshire there are 3 different Choice Based Letting Schemes

- ❖ Keyways – Covering Corby, Wellingborough and Kettering areas
- ❖ HomeChoice-Link – covering Northampton and Daventry areas
- ❖ Nene Valley Home Choice – covering East Northants area



# Keyways



The 7 Local District or Borough Councils in Northamptonshire are responsible for these schemes. Some Council's have joined together to run them.

Each Scheme run schemes a little bit differently to each other

## **How Does Choice Based Lettings Work?**

You need to tell the Council that you want to 'bid' for a home. You do this by filling in an application form. This is called registering with the Local Council for housing. It is also called applying.

You can apply using an application form or using the Scheme's website.

Once your housing application has been accepted then you will be able to begin bidding for a home.

When you apply you need to tell the Scheme what type of home you are looking for and in what area you want this.

## **Why You Want to Move**

When you apply you need to say why you want to move out of the home you are living in now

You will need to tell them about any medical conditions and care or support needs you have. You will also need to tell them if these needs make it hard for you to carry on living where you do now.



They will also need to know if there are any other reasons why you wish to move

For example you may not be happy where you live now, you may be experiencing bullying or you may be being abused, and this could be making you unhappy

You may find it difficult in your present home, there may not be enough space

You may just want more independence and the chance to have your own place or to share a home with friends. You will need to tell the Council all about your reasons for wanting to move

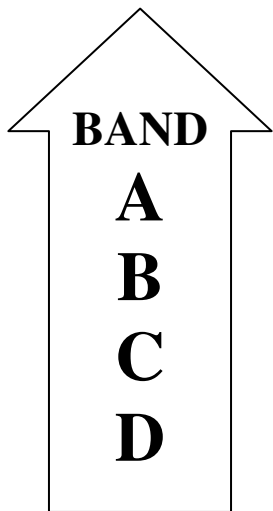
### **The Type of Homes The Council Can Help You to Find**

The type of home each Council can help you to find can be different. Some schemes will help you find a Council or Housing Association home to rent. This is called Social Rented Housing.

Other Schemes may also help you to rent a home privately in the area of your choice. This is called Private Rented Housing

Some Schemes may also tell you about low cost homes to buy. This is called Shared Ownership

And others may tell you about a home you can rent where you also receive support or care. This is called Supported Housing



## How Council's Decide Who Gets a Home First

Because the number of people wanting to rent from the Council is very high each Council has to create a way of deciding who should be offered a home first. This is called 'prioritising'.

All the Choice Based Lettings Schemes in Northamptonshire prioritise who they offer their homes to by:-

1. Banding people's applications and
2. Using how long people have been waiting for a home

### Banding

This is where Council's sort the applications from people into groups, depending on which people they think need help the soonest.

Many schemes band applications from A – D, some from 1 – 4, with the people they think being in the most urgent housing need being in Band A (or 1) and the people they think needing the least in Band D (or 4).

The Keyways Scheme in North Northamptonshire uses bands A – D.

Band A = these are people needing a new home in an Emergency, they may be homeless right now

Band B = these people need a new home very quickly and may be about to be homeless



Band C = these people need a home soon, they may be living in a difficult situation and need to move

Band D = these people would like a new home but are not in a hurry to find one, they have more time

Some homes in Choice Based Lettings Scheme are advertised only for people in band's A or B

### **The Time it Takes to Find a Home**

People in Band A could be offered a new home within 8 weeks of joining the scheme, but people in Band D may wait for a very long time.

In some Schemes people living with their families will be in Band D.

It is important that you tell the scheme about all of your needs and reasons you want a new home so that they can put your application in the right band.

If you are not happy with the band your application is in you can ask the Council to re-think their decision

You should be able to get help to do this from the Council or from a family member, a support worker or a local organisation like The Community Housing and Support Network





## Choosing a Home

Schemes often advertise new homes every week  
You can 'bid' for up to 2 homes per week.

Homes are advertised

- ❖ In the newspaper
- ❖ On the internet
- ❖ In the Library and
- ❖ At Local Council offices



## Bidding for a Home

You can say you are interested in a home in different ways, these include:-

- ❖ By telephone
- ❖ By text
- ❖ By the internet
- ❖ By post
- ❖ By visiting a Council Office and telling a member of staff



If you need help to bid, people at the Council Office will help you and, if you wish, they could even 'bid' on your behalf.



## Viewing a Home and Making a Decision

On the computer you can see where your bid is on the waiting list.

If it is near the top of the list you will be offered a chance to go and look at the home. This is called a 'Viewing'.

The Council should make sure that you have enough time to 'view' the property. It is a good idea to ask someone to come with you as you may need help to think through if it is right for you.

The things you will need to think about are:-

- ❖ Is it the right sort of home for me?
- ❖ Is it in the right place
- ❖ Can I get around, are there good bus & travel links
- ❖ Is it near my family, friends, work or college
- ❖ Is the rent and the cost of running the home something I can afford
- ❖ Can I access care or support here
- ❖ Does it have all the facilities I need

It is a really good idea to think about a lot of these questions before you even start bidding, like

- ❖ where do I want to live and who with
- ❖ what can I afford
- ❖ Can I get help with paying rent



- ❖ What care / support do I need
- ❖ Can I get help to pay for this
- ❖ Where do I want to live, in what area

If you think about these before you start bidding you will be able to make a decision much quicker about a home if you like it.

### **Making a Decision**

If you view the home and decide you like it you will probably then need to:-

1. Arrange the Care / Support you need to live there
2. Find out if you will be able to get help to pay your rent
3. Let the Council know your decision
4. Get help to sign the tenancy agreement

### **Signing The Tenancy Agreement**

A tenancy agreement, is a legal document where you (the Tenant) make an agreement with the Council (the Landlord) to pay some money to them in return for living their home.

The money you pay to your Landlord is called 'Rent'

You may need some help to understand the things that the Tenancy Agreement says before you sign it. It is important that you only sign this agreement if you understand it first.





The Landlord should help you to understand this agreement. They may have the agreement in Easy Read to make it easier for you to understand.

They should use different ways to help you understand if you need this.

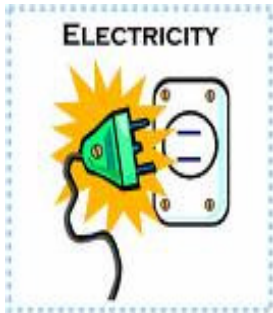
### **Getting The Keys and Moving in**

Once you have signed the Tenancy Agreement you will be given a date to move in and the keys for your new home.

To be ready to move in to your new home you may need to:-

1. Tell the people where you live now that you will be moving
2. Decide what furniture and electrical items you need for your new home
3. Choose a Care / Support provider and arrange for them to start helping
4. Arrange to move your things to your new home





## Settling In To Your New Home

When you move in to your new home it will take a little time for you to make it feel like home and make sure everything is working. This is called 'settling in'.

The First thing you need to do once you move in is make sure all the services to your new home are working. Services such as

- ❖ The Electricity
- ❖ The Water and
- ❖ The Gas (if you have gas)

You should also know when to pay your rent and how often.

It would be a good idea in the early days to say hello to your neighbours

And after a while you will want to tell your friends where you are living and perhaps invite them to visit.

It can take a while to settle in to your new home and your local area. Your landlord, support worker or family will help you with this.

There will be lots of new things to learn and people to meet



#### House Rules

1. If you open it, close it.
2. If you turn it on, turn it off.
3. If you unlock it, lock it.
4. If you break it, repair it.
5. If you can't fix it, call in someone who can.
6. If you borrow it, return it.
7. If you use it, take care of it.
8. If you make a mess, clean it up.
9. If you move it, put it back.
10. If it belongs to someone else and you want to use it, get permission.
11. If you don't know how to operate it, leave it alone.
12. If it doesn't concern you, don't mess with it.

Compliments of Leasing News

## Following The Rules

When you move in you will also need to agree to follow the rules of the place you live. If you are renting from a Landlord they will make sure you know the rules.

If you are sharing with others there may also be other rules to follow

Your carer, support worker or family can help you understand these rules and show you how to follow them

## Getting Help On Your Housing Journey – Your Rights

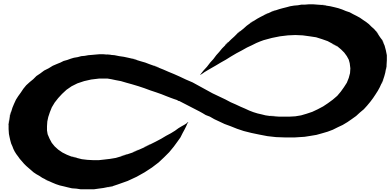
The Equality Act (2010) Disability Duty says that because of your Disability the Council and the Choice Based Letting Scheme should give you extra help on your housing journey if you need it.

You can get extra help and more time to:-

- ❖ Make an application
- ❖ Think about the home that you want and need
- ❖ Bid for a home
- ❖ View a home
- ❖ Make a decision
- ❖ Sign a Tenancy Agreement and
- ❖ Move in

If you need any extra help ask the Council or the Scheme when you apply





Northamptonshire  
Community  
Housing & Support  
Network



## People and Organisations that Can Help You

The Community Housing and Support Network will be able to help you in all areas of your Housing Journey. We aim to start the Network by June 2011.

You can contact the Network by ringing – 01933 677889 and leave a message for Marion Turner, or

By emailing – [mturner@myhomemysay.co.uk](mailto:mturner@myhomemysay.co.uk)

Also for lots of information to help you on your journey you can go to our website [www.myhomemysay.co.uk](http://www.myhomemysay.co.uk)

The Council or Scheme can also help you think through the housing you need and help you find it & move in

An Organisation called The Supporting People Team can also help you find the support you need to help you settle in to your new home. They are part of Northamptonshire County Council.

You can contact them by ringing 01604 237712 or  
By email to [spteam@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:spteam@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

Or by post at :-  
Supporting People Team,  
Room 129, County Hall, Guildhall Rd,  
Northampton, NN1 1AY



Your landlord and support worker could help you

Housing Options a National Organisation who help people with learning Disabilities find a home, can also help you. You can contact them by ringing 0845 456 1497,

or going to their website [www.housingoptions.org.uk](http://www.housingoptions.org.uk)



### **Using this Guide and Joining The Network**

We hope this guide has helped you think about housing and understand more about Choice Based Lettings.

If you would like to join the Housing and Support Network and help other people with Learning Disabilities find a home too, please

Get in touch with us we would love to meet you

You can contact the Network by ringing – 01933 677889 and asking for Marion Turner, or

By emailing – [mturner@myhomemysay.co.uk](mailto:mturner@myhomemysay.co.uk)



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