

**Are you 18-25 and looking for somewhere to live in Southwark's social housing?**

**Have you got Special Educational Needs and/ or a disability?**

### **The Housing Register (The Homesearch Register)**

**What is it?**

It's a database of everyone who is eligible to be housed in social housing. You need to be registered here to access social housing in Southwark.

**How do you get onto the housing register?**

**1. Register online** here: <https://www.southwarkhomesearch.org.uk/> . Remember to fill in information about your disability or your Special Educational Needs on the medical information form.

- You will receive a **reference number**. Keep this safe. You will need it later.

#### **What forms of ID do you need?**

You need to get copies of these proofs of ID ready for later:

- proof of ID with a photo of you on it (a full driving licence, or a passport), or
- proof of ID (non-photo)- e.g. a birth certificate
- 2x proofs of where you are living (a bill with your name on it, a bank statement with your name on it, a payslip with your name on it, a benefit letter)- these must have a **date in the last three months** on them
- proof of your medical condition or disability (a doctor's letter or your Education Health Care Plan- EHCP)
- a passport sized photograph
- **Please speak to your support worker if you are unable to provide the required ID/Docs.**

It's a good idea to create an online account at the same time so you can access all of Southwark's Housing services easily and they can contact you. This is called **MySouthwark**: <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/mysouthwark> .

### Do you need help to use the online portal?

If you need help to use the online portal, you can get it from the Housing Solutions service at 25 Bournemouth Road, London, SE15 AUJ. Help could include:

- **Translation** of all written material into another language you speak.
- An **interpretation** service if your first language is not English.
- **Signing interpretation** if your speech or hearing is impaired.
- Provision of documents in **large print** if you are visually impaired.
- **An interview** to explain the content of this document.
- Information about where you can access **independent advice**.

## 2. Tell the Council about your SEND and/ or medical condition(s).

You should tell the Council about your Special Educational need and/ or Disability and let them know if you have any medical conditions. You can do that by **completing a “Change of Circumstances” form**.

- You need your reference number from the Homesearch website (see step one) to be able to complete this. Complete the form here:  
[https://forms.southwark.gov.uk/showform.asp?fm\\_fid=864](https://forms.southwark.gov.uk/showform.asp?fm_fid=864)

## 3. Make an appointment with Southwark Service Point

- Make an appointment at MySouthwark service point at Peckham Library. You can do that online here: <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants-services/mysouthwark-service-points>
- Find the **proofs of ID** that you got ready when you set up your account and take them with you to the appointment.

### What forms of ID do you need?

- proof of ID with a photo of you on it (a full driving licence, or a passport), or
- proof of ID (non-photo)- e.g. a birth certificate
- 2x proofs of where you are living (a bill with your name on it, a bank statement with your name on it, a payslip with your name on it, a benefit letter)- these must have a **date in the last three months** on them
- proof of your medical condition or disability (a doctor’s letter or your Education Health Care Plan- EHCP)
- a passport sized photograph

## 4. Receiving your decision about the Housing Register

- Your application will be assessed by the Housing team and they will run a check to verify the information you have provided. You will normally get a decision within 28 days but it might take up to six weeks. **Please ensure that all medical documents and information are included to enable the right decision to be taken regarding your application.**

- You will usually **receive a letter** to the address you have registered on MySouthwark, so remember to update your address there if you change where you live during this time. You might receive an email as well.
- If you have been accepted to apply for social housing, your decision letter will tell you which band you are in [see appendix 1] and will give you a username and password (login details) for the next steps. Keep these safe but separate from your Homesearch reference number (you will need both but be data secure!).

### **What happens if your application is not successful or you are not happy with the band you have been given?**

- Your decision letter will give you information about what you can do if you are not happy with the decision made. This will include the name of a person or team that you can write to and details about the information you will need to provide.

### **5. You have been successful- what happens now?**

You have to start bidding on a property on Homesearch.

- Log on to Homesearch using the username and password in your acceptance letter.
- Every week on a Thursday, you can look at the new list of properties.
- You can see all the properties on offer for the week but you can only bid on the ones you are eligible for. You can only bid between Thursday and midnight on Sunday.
- **You can access help to bid from the Southwark Council Library close to you or via the MySouthwark Service Point at Peckham Library.**

#### **Adverts for properties**

Advertisements will include as much information as possible, including information about:

- a. Where it is
- b. The property (house or flat, how big it is, what floor it is on)
- c. Type of tenancy to be offered
- d. Amount of rent and other charges payable
- e. What type of heating it has and whether it has a heating charge that is not covered by housing benefit
- f. Whether the property has a garden or parking available
- g. Photographs of the property and links to guides about the local area
- h. Adaptations that have been made to the property to aid mobility within the home.

- You can only bid on one property at a time, so if you bid on a property and you are very far down the queue, you can withdraw that bid and bid on another property to see if you move up the queue.
- Keep bidding every week until you are successful. If you need help or support with this process, you can go to the Housing Solutions office at 25 Bournemouth Road, London, SE15 AUJ.

## 6. Your bid was successful! What happens now?

- You will receive a telephone call or a text message to confirm that you are happy with your choice. Remember, you are not the only person who has been successful at this stage. The phone call will tell you if you are the “first bidder”. If you are, then you are the first in line (subject to checks, etc.) for this property when you go and see it.  
If you are “second or third bidder”, you will only be successful if the person ahead of you refuses the property.
- If you are not happy with your choice, you can refuse the property. Be careful, you can only refuse a property that you have bid on three times in any year.
- Once you are happy with your choice, you will get a letter from the HomeSearch Lettings team confirming the date, time and address for you to go and see the property and this will also confirm your position in the queue (1-3). You will receive in the letter a name and phone number of the Lettings Officer dealing with this property. It will be a group viewing, which means that you will see the property at the same time as the other bidders.
- If you have a Disability or Special Educational Need or medical condition that makes a group viewing inappropriate, speak to your Lettings Officer.
- If you are unable to make the appointment, you need to phone the Lettings Officer as soon as possible to let them know.

## Viewing the Property

- The Lettings Officer will phone you before the viewing to confirm their name and the appointment. **They might leave you a voice message or send a text so check your messages. Assistance is available if you require detailed guide on the process.**
- Before your viewing appointment, you need to get your proofs of ID together. These are similar to ones that you took to the Service Point.

### What forms of ID do you need?

- proof of ID with a photo of you on it (a full driving licence, or a passport), or
- proof of ID (non-photo)- e.g. a birth certificate
- 2x proofs of where you are living (a bill with your name on it, a bank statement with your name on it, a payslip with your name on it, a benefit letter)- these must have a **date in the last three months** on them
- proof of your medical condition or disability (a doctor’s letter or your Education Health Care Plan- EHCP)
- a passport sized photograph

- Go to the property on the day and just before the time of your appointment. You will meet the Lettings Officer there. It should be the same Lettings Officer that called you, but on rare occasions, it might be someone different. Look for the person wearing a Southwark Council staff badge to check their ID.
- The Lettings Officer will show you round the property and will tell you about any works that will take place in the property to make it ready to move into. You can ask them questions about the property or anything that you are not sure about. The Lettings Officer will tell you when the property will be ready for the second viewing. Remember, this viewing will only be for the successful applicant. That might not be you yet.
- After the viewing, if you have been successful, you will be asked to sign a pre-allocation document. This means that the property is reserved for you (subject to completion of works and verification of your documents).
- You will be kept informed of progress and your property should be ready within 6 weeks. It could take longer, but you will be kept informed.
- When the property is ready, you will be invited to view it again (the second viewing).
- At the second viewing you can see and check any work that has been done and you will be asked to sign an inventory (a list of all the things that will be in the property when you move in).
- You will go to the Housing office to sign the tenancy agreement. This is a legally binding contract which says how much rent you will need to pay every week, any conditions for living in the property (for example, what happens if your circumstances change). **The tenancy agreement and documents will be explained to you and further support would be given if you require one like the Interpreting and Language service to enable you have a better understanding. Also your support worker can accompany you to sign the tenancy.**
- The Lettings Officer will also tell you who else to contact in the council to help you apply for Housing benefit, etc. **Your support worker can also assist you with this information.**
- The Lettings Officer will give you the name and contact details of your Resident Services Officer and general number to contact the Rent Income team. The Resident Services Officer will visit you in your home within 13 weeks of signing your tenancy to see how you are settling in and provide further support to you, signpost or refer to other agencies for help.
- The Lettings Officer will tell you how to switch on your utilities (gas, heating, etc.) and will give you the details of who your utilities providers are so you can register with them or change provider.

- You will get your keys and you can move into your new home!
- Ongoing support would be provided to you throughout your tenancy to help you sustain the tenancy and manage your home. Please contact your Resident Services Officer or speak to your support work.
- If you require repairs to your home, please call the Southwark Repairs Contact Centre on 08009524444 or 020 7525 6200.

## Appendix 1

### Which Housing Band are you in?

Band 1	
1A	Applicants who have a statutory right of succession and wish to succeed to a London Borough of Southwark or Housing Association property, but that property is not suitable for their household type due to under-occupation, or being designated as sheltered housing and/or having been adapted and the applicant in question does not qualify for an adapted property.
1B	Tenants who are under-occupying their accommodation which is owned by the London Borough of Southwark or Housing Association.
1C	Emergency Transfer of Council or Housing Association Tenants within the Borough in exceptional circumstances where there is urgent housing need. This type of move will be kept to a minimum, and all such landlord request transfers will be authorised by the Housing Choice and Supply Manager. Examples of these cases include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Threat to life.</li> <li>b) Households who, on police advice, must be moved immediately due to serious threats to one or more members of the household, or whose continuing occupation would pose a threat to the community.</li> <li>c) An applicant who has an exceptional need that is not predicted or covered within the Allocations Scheme.</li> <li>d) Other circumstances as authorised by the Director of Resident Services.</li> </ul>
1 D	Applicants with urgent housing needs who falls within one or more of paragraphs (a) to (e) of s166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996 and who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from serious injury, illness, mental ill health , or disability which is attributable to the person's service</li> <li>(ii) formerly served in the regular forces</li> <li>(iii) has recently ceased, or will ceased to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the MOD following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service or</li> <li>(iv) is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the persons service</li> </ul>

1 E	Southwark tenants whom need to move as their property falls under a regeneration programme.
1 F	Southwark Council tenants whom need a permanent move from their current accommodation due to major works required within the property.

<b>Band 2</b>	
2 A	Tenants who are statutorily overcrowded as defined by Part X of the Housing Act 1985 and lack two or more bedrooms on the Authorities allocation space standard (as set out in Appendix B).
2 B	Applicants or member(s) of their household where their current housing is so severely affecting their health, disability or welfare that it could become life threatening or lead to rapid deterioration if they are not rehoused and/or the applicants or member(s) of their households condition is life threatening and their existing accommodation is seriously undermining their health. This may include a wide variety of individual circumstances.
2 C	Applicants who permanently lack one or all of these essential facilities – hot water, heating, a kitchen, internal toilet and bathroom.
2 D	Applicants nominated by Adult Social Services/Children’s Services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care leavers</li> <li>• A need to move due to child protection issues</li> <li>• Fostering carers for the Authority where there is a need to move to a larger home in order to accommodate a looked after child</li> <li>• Adoption arrangements the Authority where there is a need to move to a larger home in order to accommodate a looked after child</li> <li>• Adult Social Services customers who would otherwise be in priority Band 3 or 4</li> </ul>
2 E	Applicants who are occupying Partnership Agency accommodation and who have an agreed move on. This is commonly known as Hostel Move On accommodation. This is for the purpose of bringing about the efficient use of such accommodation.
2 F	Applicants who no longer require the adaptations in their current home. Applicants who release an adapted property where such an applicant no longer requires their current home and will therefore be releasing an adapted property by moving.
2 G	Applicants who are part of a multi-agency public protection agreement (MAPPA).
2 H	Applicants who were homeless and toward whom the Authority would have accepted a statutory duty to accommodate pursuant to Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, but who accepted a private sector solution under the Authority’s homelessness prevention and relief duties or are homeless at home. Applicants who accept a property in the private rented sector through sections 148 and 149 of the Localism Act.

<b>Band 3</b>	
3 A	Applicants who are homeless and toward whom the Authority has accepted a statutory duty to accommodate pursuant to Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
3 B	Tenants who are statutorily overcrowded as defined by Part X of the Housing Act 1985 but do not meet the criteria for Band 2 <b>and</b> are not deemed to have deliberately worsened their circumstances
3 C	Applicants with a moderate medical priority where there is clear objective need for a move, because they include a person (or persons) whose illness or disability is either made worse by their present living conditions, or where a move to more satisfactory accommodation is likely to result in an improvement in health.
3 D	Applicants who are homeless, but to whom the Authority does not owe a duty to house under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. For example they may be without a priority need.

<b>Band 4</b>	
4 A	All applicants who would otherwise be in Bands 1 – 3 but who lack a local connection with the Authority.
4 B	All applicants whose priority has been reduced under Section 6 of this scheme.