



It's your choice!

A guidance note from
Cherwell District Council

This leaflet tells you about Choice Based Lettings (CBL).

Council partners

Instead of having our own CBL scheme we have formed a partnership with three other councils to create a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme. The other three councils that we are working with are:

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- Oxford City Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- The Vale of White Horse District Council.

The map shows the area formed by the partnership arrangements.



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What is CBL?

CBL is a way of allocating housing through choice, giving you a greater say over where you live.

Overview of CBL

- an empty property is advertised
- eligible applicants apply for a property
- when the advertising period is complete, shortlists are created from those who have applied
- the successful applicant is nominated to our partner housing association
- if approved a provisional offer is made.

Transparent information

We believe CBL is much more transparent for you as one of our customers. For example:

- you can check your position in the list when you apply for a property
- if you check your position later in the advertising period and you have slipped down the list, you can withdraw your application and place it elsewhere
- when you apply for a property your application is accepted or rejected
- if rejected you are told why
- we publish on our website and in our property newsletter the result of applications for properties once the advertising period has come to an end.



How will CBL help me?

The scheme puts the initiative on you to apply for properties that are advertised.

CBL will:

- give you a real choice about where you live by allowing you to apply for empty properties referred to us by our partner housing associations
- show your position on the list. This gives you the option to confirm your request or search for other properties where you may be at or near the top of the list
- allow you to see what housing stock there is to rent, its location and how many applicants are applying for each property
- give you useful feedback on how close to success you have been in getting your choice of property
- avoid risk of personal bias and knowledge which might cause you to be overlooked
- provide better quality information about the properties that are advertised.

What CBL can't do

CBL can't:

- make more properties available
- create more 4 and 5 bedroom houses for example
- change the location of the available housing stock.

How do I join CBL?

That depends. If you are already on our Housing Register you don't have to do anything. If you are not on our Housing Register you must apply to be included on it.

Contact us for an application form and our information leaflet '*Applying for a home in Cherwell*'. Both documents can be downloaded from www.cherwell.gov.uk.



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Partnership arrangements in the sub-region

Empty properties provided by our housing association partners are advertised through CBL. Advertised properties are:

- available to Cherwell District Council applicants only, or;
- advertised in the sub-region and are available to applicants on our housing register along with applicants from our partner councils.

Each council has agreed that:

- up to 100% of empty sheltered properties
- up to 100% of empty adapted for the disabled properties
- 10% of other empty properties, such as houses, flats, bungalows, maisonettes and bed-sits which are not sheltered or adapted for the disabled

are advertised in the sub-region.

When can I apply for properties?

You can apply for accommodation once you have been accepted on to our Housing Register and your application has been made active. You can't apply if your application has been suspended.

Why would my application be suspended?

We may suspend your application for a variety of reasons such as:

- rent arrears
- proofs not provided
- change of circumstances.

We will write to you if we suspend your application explaining why we have done so.

Tell me about choice in CBL

There's lots of choice. You can choose to apply for any property which matches the size of your family in any village or town within our area or the sub-region.

How do I find out about empty properties?

We advertise properties in a variety of different ways. These include:

- our dedicated website – www.oxfordshirehomechoice.org.uk
- our property newsletters produced every two weeks
- single sheet property adverts.

Where can I find CBL property newsletters?

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You can find them in:

- our reception at Bodicote, Bicester, Kidlington and Banbury town centre office
- local libraries
- some doctors' surgeries
- any local Citizens Advice Bureau.



How do I apply for a property?

You can:

- apply to our dedicated web-site – www.oxfordshirehomechoice.org.uk
- text 07781 486969
- phone 0800 027 7889
- come into our local office where staff can help you to apply
- ask a friend or relative to apply on your behalf.

If you want to apply for a property you will need:

- your housing register reference
- your date of birth
- the reference number of the property or properties you are interested in if applying by phone or text.

You can't apply for properties if your application is suspended.

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How to apply using the website

1. go to the website
www.oxfordshirehomechoice.org.uk
2. click on Cherwell District Council
3. click on Login/my account
4. enter your housing register reference and date of birth
5. follow the onscreen instructions.

How to apply by phone

1. phone **0800 027 7889** – free from a landline
2. follow the automated instructions.

How to apply by text

1. start a new text message
2. type in your housing register reference [space] your date of birth [space] first property reference [space] followed by a second property reference if applicable. Make sure you put a space between each property reference.
3. send to **07781 486969**.

Please note dates of birth should be typed in the following format dd/mm/yyyy.

How many properties can I apply for?

You can apply for up to 3 properties for rent that you are eligible for in any advertising period.

This means that you can apply for up to 3 social housing properties in each advertising cycle whether they are in the sub-region or in Cherwell. For example you could apply for:

- 3 Cherwell properties whether advertised in the sub-region or not, or
- any 3 properties advertised by any of our partners in the sub-region, or
- a combination of properties advertised by us or by our partners.

You can also apply for any number of shared ownership properties in any one advertising cycle. All shared ownership properties are advertised in the sub-region.

How often are properties advertised?

They are advertised every two weeks. The advertising period starts on a Wednesday and finishes at **midnight on Monday** two weeks later. This may vary occasionally to allow for holiday periods such as Christmas.

Can I apply for any property?

When your application for the Housing Register is accepted you are told the size of property you need for you and your family. You can only apply for properties matching that information. If you try to apply for a property that doesn't, your application will be rejected.

Each advert tells you the landlord, location, size, rent and other features of the property to help you decide which properties are right for you. The advert also tells you if there are any special requirements that you must meet to be able to apply.



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The table below is a guide to the size of property you can apply for.

Household size	Number of bedrooms
# Single person	Studio or 1 bedroom
# Couple	1 bedroom
2 applicants not couple	2 bedrooms
Household with 1 other	2 bedrooms
Household with 2 others	2 or 3 bedrooms
Household with 3 others	3 or 4 bedrooms
Household with 4 others	3 or 4 bedrooms
Household with 5 others	*3, 4 or 5 bedrooms
Household with 6 others	*3, 4 or 5 bedrooms
Household with 7 or more others	4, 5 or 6 bedrooms

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* Refers to a 3 bedroom parlour house. This provides an extra room at ground floor level which can be used as a bedroom.

Sometimes we may allow households without children to apply for 2 bedroom flats, bungalows or maisonettes. Such properties are clearly labelled at advert and will vary between landlords and nominating authorities.

Whilst we will not allow statutory overcrowding, applicants may apply for properties smaller than their needs to try and improve their housing circumstances. For example, an applicant who needs a 4 or 5 bedroom property can decide to apply for a large 3 bedroom to improve their housing circumstances as larger properties are in very short supply.

What happens next?

At the end of the advertising period no more applications for properties are accepted. Every applicant who has applied for a property is placed on a list. This is called a shortlist. The shortlist is sorted by:

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- **Applicant type** – but only if an applicant type preference is specified in the advert
- **Parish connection** – but only if a parish connection preference is specified in the advert
- **Mobility level** – but only if a mobility level preference is specified in the advert
- **Band** – will always be used. The band order is: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- **District connection** – will be used for properties which are not advertised in the sub-region. It may also be used for sub-regional properties at the discretion of the local authority
- **Size of household** – but only if preference to larger families is specified in the advert
- **Regional connection** – will be used for properties advertised in the sub-region
- **Effective date** – when Band 1 applicants are compared
- **Registration date** – when applicants in Bands 2 to 5 are compared.

We select the successful applicant after checking that their circumstances have not changed. Once selected, we refer the applicant to the landlord of the property. The landlord of the property is always responsible for making offers. They may also carry out checks before offering you the property. When a provisional offer is made you can view the property and decide whether to accept or refuse it.

Date order

Two dates are used to sort out the order of priority when deciding who to nominate for a property. These are:

- the registration date – the date your application was received
- the effective date – the date an applicant is assessed for Band 1.

The registration date applies to anyone in Bands 2 to 5. The effective date is used for Band 1. The date is changed to when the circumstances arose which caused the applicant to be granted Band 1.

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Feedback

We publish on websites and in our property newsletters the results of applications once the advertising period has come to an end. We tell you the number of applicants that applied for the property, the band and the registration date of the successful applicant.

This information gives you a better idea of how popular a particular property or area is and how long you would normally have to wait. You can then decide whether to look for other types of property or areas where you don't have to wait as long.

Low cost or shared ownership

Some of our partner housing associations offer subsidised forms of home ownership which may be advertised on our sub-regional website and in our property newsletter.

You can apply for these properties in the same way as you can apply for rented properties.

The short-list will be prioritised in the same way as for rented vacancies and the shortlist is then passed to the housing association for them to choose and process successful applicants. Those selected to proceed to purchase may not necessarily be those highest on the list.

Don't forget, you can apply for any number of shared ownership properties in any advertising cycle.

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How to contact us

We hope that you have found the information in this booklet useful. For more details, or if you have any queries relating to the booklet please contact the address below:

Housing Services
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire OX15 4AA

Phone: 01295 252535
Textphone: 01295 221572
Fax: 01295 221642
Email: housing@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Website: www.cherwell.gov.uk

Call **01295 252535**
or visit **www.cherwell.gov.uk**

This information can be made available in alternative formats including Braille, large type, audio tape, and other languages on request. Please phone 01295 227001.

Jezeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać: 01295 227001

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਸਾਡਾ ਵਾਰੀ ਬੁਕਲੈਟ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਿੱਠ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਵੋ। 01295 227001

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。01295 227001

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