

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q – Why is the Council no longer going to be to using Boston Homechoice?**

A – The housing register IT system known as Boston Homechoice is now old technology and cannot be upgraded. The new system is much more modern and easier and quicker for most applicants to use and bid for properties.

### **Q - How do I re-register?**

A – If you have within the last few months contacted the Council for Homelessness advice you might receive an email from your case officer with a link that you can click on which will allow you to complete your application. Otherwise re-registering should be completed online via our website <https://www.mybostonuk.com/housing/finding-a-home/affordable-homes/>

When registering you will be creating your own account known as the Customer Portal. This is where you manage your application, upload documents, bid for properties and can read letters from us. When selecting the Council choose Boston. Do not also apply for East Lindsey because if you are accepted for Boston you will automatically be able to bid for some properties in the East Lindsey district if you wish to.

For those who need assistance to register, please wherever possible ask a family member or friend to help you. If you don't have anyone to help we can offer a telephone appointment to complete your application but this will likely delay you being able to re-join the housing register. We are unable to offer face to face appointments at the current time due to Covid.

### **Q – Will my information be transferred over from the Boston Homechoice register system?**

A – No information will be transferred from the current system to the new system. Unfortunately some of the data will be out of date and therefore would be inaccurate and cause incorrect banding. We are asking you to reregister to ensure the information we hold is accurate. We can only apologise for any inconvenience this may cause you, however, we will provide assistance to those who require it.

We will ensure your current application date and band date remains the same unless your circumstances have changed. This will ensure you still benefit from the amount of time you have already been waiting on the register.

### **Q – What will happen with my proofs and documents that I have already supplied to you?**

A – If you upload your proofs yourself on the new system you will speed up the process of your application being assessed by us. However, if you have already provided them to us we may be able to access those proofs such as doctor's letters and copies of passports. We can then link them to your application. If the proofs are out-of-date, you can upload more recent documents directly via the customer portal when you re-register and we can advise you if further proofs are required.

When you have completed your on-line application and signed the declaration, you will see on your customer portal what document proofs are required for us to verify your application before it becomes live. Failure to provide all of the proofs required could result in your application being deleted. If you are able to upload the documents yourself, you can do so through your customer portal on the website.

Alternatively you can send your document proofs along with your application number to [Housing.dept@boston.gov.uk](mailto:Housing.dept@boston.gov.uk) or post them to us.

**Q – Will I need to send medical information again?**

A – No. There are questions on the application about health and disabilities that you can complete. If we required further information we would let you know.

**Q – Will I still qualify to be on the housing register?**

A – Most applicants will still qualify. Due to recent the changes to the Housing Allocation Policy it may mean that some applicants who were on the housing register no longer qualify to remain on the register. You would be informed during the re-registration process whether you still qualify. You can check the qualification criteria in our revised Housing Allocation Scheme Policy which is available on our website

<https://www.mybostonuk.com/housing/finding-a-home/affordable-homes/>

*Anyone who is not or no longer eligible to join the register will be informed in writing and provided with details of other housing options that they can explore. A review of our decision could be requested.*

**Q – Why does the Housing Register website reference East Lindsey District Council?**

A – The housing register IT system is shared with East Lindsey District Council. If you remain on the housing register, you will be able to bid for some properties in that district but higher priority will usually be awarded to applicants with a strong connection to that district.

**Q – I am already registered on East Lindsey District Council Housing Register, do I need to reregister?**

A – No, you don't need to re-apply. We will let you know if you need to make any changes to your application. If you are unsure if you are registered let us know.

**Q – How long will I have to register on to the new system?**

A – You should ideally have registered by the end of July 2021 so that you can bid for properties when we start advertising them again. Once you start your application you will have 28 days to complete it. The system will automatically delete your application if not completed within 28 days.

**Q – How long will I have to provide the required proofs?**

A – You should provide your proofs as soon as possible because without them your application can't be assessed. The system will automatically delete your application if the proofs are not provided with 56 days.

**Q – How long will I have to wait to find out if I have qualified to remain on the housing register?**

A – Unfortunately we are unable to provide an answer because this is dependent upon how many applications our staff have to re-assess.

**Q – What day of the week will available properties be advertised on the new system?**

A – Properties will not be advertised on the system on a set day, we will be having 'any day' adverts. This means that properties will be added any day from Monday to Friday and the advert will run for a minimum of four days. Therefore we advise that you check the system for available properties twice a week or alternatively you can create saved searches in the customer portal and the system will notify you if a property is advertised that meets your criteria.

**Q - How can I find out what properties are available?**

A – All available properties will be advertised through the new housing register system. The Boston Homechoice magazine will no longer be produced. You will be able to view and bid for the properties through the customer portal. As stated you can create saved searches and the system will email you.

**Q – Will I still need to bid for properties once the new system is up and running?**

A – Yes you will still need to bid for properties. If you are unable to bid online because you struggle using a computer or do not have one, there will be an ‘auto-bid’ function but we recommend you ask a family member or friend to help you to bid on properties that interest you. If you rely on the system bidding for you it might bid on something that doesn’t meet all of your requirements.

For some properties you will be asked to provide evidence that you meet the property requirements such as specific local connection criteria for example have you lived within the location for the property for 5 years?

**Q – What will happen once I have bid for a property?**

A – Your details will be checked to ensure you are still eligible, your banding is still correct and the advertised property is suitable for you. We will then provide the list of applicants to the housing provider who will allocate the property. The property will usually be allocated to the applicant with the highest priority, this being the applicant with the highest banding who had been waiting the longest in that band. For some properties, applicants will have to meet specific local connection criteria which would be listed on the property advert.

**Q – What will happen to my Boston Homechoice application?**

A – The Boston Homechoice system will not exist after June 2021 meaning your application will be deleted. Any information that you have previously provided will be managed in line with our data retention policy.

**Q – Will my banding on the Housing Register stay the same?**

A – For most applicants the position on the new register is likely to be similar to now unless circumstances have changed or banding was wrong. The name of each band is changing:

- Gold band - will become Band 1 (Urgent Need)
- Silver band - will become Band 2 (High Need)
- Bronze band - will become Band 3 (Medium Need)
- Copper band - will become Band 4 (Low Need)

**Q – What happens if I have a change in my circumstances?**

A – Once you are registered on the Housing Register, you will be able to log in to your customer portal and amend or update any information. It is your responsibility to ensure all details are correct. If you do not have access to the internet or struggle to use a computer, you can report your changes to us by contacting the Housing Team on 01205 314200 or emailing [Housing.dept@boston.gov.uk](mailto:Housing.dept@boston.gov.uk).