

Migrant Workers and Housing

The majority of migrant workers will find accommodation with private landlords. Housing will assist in this process through our Homes 4 U scheme, signposting to appropriate landlords and offering good housing advice. We can also assist eligible workers to obtain low cost home ownership and shared ownership affordable housing. This is a scheme where the worker can part rent and part purchase a home. Workers who are eligible for inclusion on the Council's Housing Register (waiting list), for social housing, have the same right as a resident of the UK. The eligibility criteria for social housing has 3 broad categories as follows:

1. E.U Nationals e.g. France, Germany, Spain

Must be working and have proof of this. Can be self-employed.
If they are working they do not need to pass the habitual residency test.

2. E.U Nationals from the A8 countries e.g. Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic

Must be working and need to show documentary evidence that they are:

- ❖ Registered with the Home Office
- ❖ Self-employed, only accept a Construction Industry Scheme card as proof
- ❖ Are here on a work permit or other authorised scheme
- ❖ Have been working here continuously for 12 months, within 12 months A8 nationals can fall in and out of eligibility

3. People from outside of the EU

Those subject to immigration control are ineligible. They must have indefinite leave to remain or enter, or Limited Leave to Remain for 5 years, with recourse to public funds. e.g. nurses from South Africa, will have a visa to work here but not eligible for social housing as no leave to remain or enter.

Swindon Context (Social housing)

We have around 8000 applicants on our Housing Register (waiting list) and have about 1000 available lets each year.

We currently have 700 homeless households in temporary accommodation.

Focussed prevention work has halved the number of homeless acceptances in the last 18 months

The number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced by 12% in the last 18 months and we have a target to reduce the overall number to a maximum of 435 by 2010.

The allocation of Social Housing

We have developed a 'Choice Based Lettings' scheme to allocate vacant properties to households on the waiting list (Council and Housing Association properties). Choice Based Lettings is a transparent method of allocating social housing in which home seekers play a proactive part. Rather than being allocated a social home, which may not be appropriate or desirable for them, applicants 'bid' for advertised properties. The successful applicant is the bidder with the greatest priority, in accordance with housing need and the allocations policy. Applicants receive feedback after each bid, which helps them assess how long they will have to wait in the chosen areas for the options of their choice (even though some may find this disappointing). We use a broad range of media and outlets to provide information for customers including, website, magazine, libraries, customer contact centre, face-to-face advisers. We allow advocates to bid on behalf of people and we will also place bids on behalf of vulnerable clients.

Housing Options

Our Housing Advice Service offers free and confidential advice for people who live in the private sector (home owners or private rented). Our aims are to prevent homelessness, improve housing conditions in the private sector and improve accessibility to affordable housing. The contact number for our Housing Options team is given below.

**For more advice or information please contact
Housing Options Team
01793 463181**