

# Transition Guide for Refugees



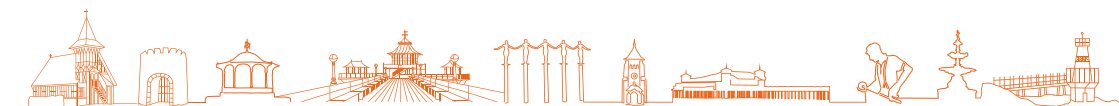
If you have nowhere to live or are at risk of losing your home, you must let the North Somerset Council Homeless Prevention Team know as soon as possible. If you need an interpreter, please ask for one.

We have a duty to try to prevent you from becoming homeless and may be able to help you with your search for housing. The Homeless Prevention Team will carry out a homeless assessment, as part of this they will need to ask you about your income, savings, health and current housing situation and that of any family members who normally reside with you.

They will give you a personal housing plan which will help you find somewhere to live.

In some cases, emergency housing may be offered, however it is important to note that the council do not have a duty to provide accommodation to everyone who approaches them. The assessment will enable the Homeless Prevention Team to establish what duties are owed to you and your household by the council.

Social housing is offered by the council's Housing Register, not everyone is eligible to join the register, the criteria is as follows:



## Eligibility

Certain people from abroad, including some who are subject to immigration control, are not eligible for an allocation of affordable housing. The regulations setting out which people from abroad are eligible or ineligible for an allocation are the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulation 2006. These regulations are set by Government and updated regularly. The council follows these regulations, that are available on request.

Applicants who are eligible for allocation as per the paragraph above must be over 16 years of age and meet one or more of the criteria defined in the qualifying groups to qualify for an allocation and join the housing register.

The Housing Team are likely to need to see the following documentation:

- Letter from Home Office confirming status
- Letter from hotel giving date they must leave
- Biometric Residency Permit (as soon as you have it)

## Qualifying groups

An applicant qualifies to join the housing register if they meet one or more of the following categories:

## Local connection

- Have, by choice, lived in North Somerset for the two consecutive years preceding the date the application is made or reviewed; or
- Have, by choice, previously lived in North Somerset for ten consecutive years no more than five years prior to the date the application is made or reviewed; or
- Have retained continuous employment in North Somerset, of a minimum of 16 hours per week, for at least the 12 months preceding the date the application is made or reviewed; or
- Family connections – applicant's immediate family member (parents/caregivers, siblings, non-dependent adult children) have lived in North Somerset for the last two consecutive years and applicant has a need to live near this person to give or receive significant care or support.



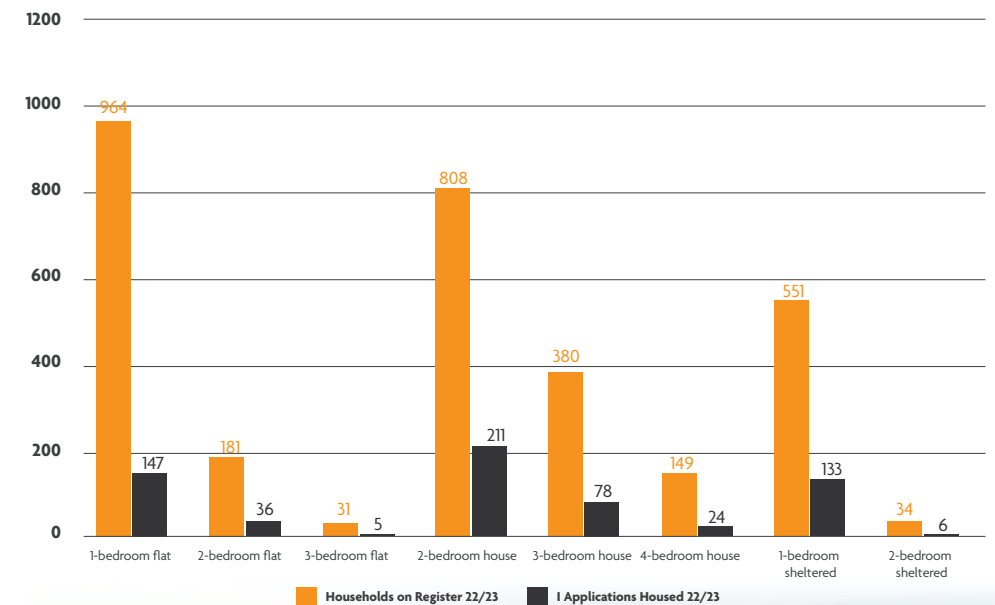
## Homelessness

- Have had a main homelessness duty accepted by North Somerset Council under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996; or
- Is homeless or threatened with homelessness and North Somerset Council has accepted either a prevention or relief duty.

Demand for social housing is exceptionally high and availability is scarce. The following table gives an indication of the current demand on the housing register for properties. Even people with the highest priority for housing face a significant wait for a property to become available.

## Homechoice data August 2023

HomeChoice Supply and Demand, 2022/23



**You will need to explore accommodation to rent privately yourself, details of private lets can be found here:**



- [www.zoopla.co.uk/to-rent/property/weston-super-mare](http://www.zoopla.co.uk/to-rent/property/weston-super-mare)
- [www.rightmove.co.uk/property-to-rent/Weston-Super-Mare.html](http://www.rightmove.co.uk/property-to-rent/Weston-Super-Mare.html)
- [www.onthemarket.com/to-rent/property/weston-super-mare](http://www.onthemarket.com/to-rent/property/weston-super-mare)
- [mason.zoopla.co.uk/to-rent/flats/weston-super-mare/paragon-road](http://mason.zoopla.co.uk/to-rent/flats/weston-super-mare/paragon-road)
- [www.gumtree.com/flats-houses/property-to-rent/uk/weston-super-mare](http://www.gumtree.com/flats-houses/property-to-rent/uk/weston-super-mare)
- [www.spareroom.co.uk](http://www.spareroom.co.uk)

You need to make sure you can afford the rent, utility bills and council tax on any properties so you will need to make sure you are working and claiming the correct benefits. Support with employment and benefits can be obtained from DWP and the Job Centre.

Local Housing Allowance: this is the maximum amount that you can claim via benefits to pay towards your housing costs. It is set by central Government. The amount depends on the size of your household and the area where you want to move to. You may not get the full amount of benefit, as the amount you can get will depend on your circumstances.

You can find out more about Local Housing Allowance by going to: <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/Search.aspx>

Search for Local Housing Allowance rates by postcode or local authority : DirectGov - LHA Rates ([voa.gov.uk](http://voa.gov.uk))

We are unable to provide furniture, carpets, curtains or white goods (fridges, washing machines etc). It is your responsibility to save for and source your own essential items that you will need when you have a property. You may be able to apply, through the welfare provision scheme <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/benefits-support/welfare-provision-scheme> for one item and your Homeless Prevention Officer can support you with this if deemed necessary.

You may be eligible for the Governments Help to Save scheme, for more information please check the Gov.uk webpage: [www.gov.uk/get-help-savings-low-income](http://www.gov.uk/get-help-savings-low-income)

**When dealing with services we ask that you deal with staff politely and courteously, we understand that people can become upset and angry when they feel that matters are not being dealt with as they wish, however if that upset and anger escalates into aggression towards staff it will be considered unacceptable. It is likely that staff may end phone calls and interviews if they consider you to be aggressive, abusive or offensive. Such behaviour is likely to result in a delay in accessing services.**