



A Guide to Supporting others to use Home Choice

**This booklet will help you understand how you
can help others to join the North Yorkshire Home
Choice scheme to find a home**

<http://www.northyorkshirehomechoice.org.uk/>

SUPPORTING OTHERS TO USE NORTH YORKSHIRE HOME CHOICE

Home Choice is a new way to rent from councils and some housing associations with homes in the black areas on the map below:

The Partnership Area and Partners



- Broadacres Housing Association
- Craven District Council
- Hambleton District Council
- Richmondshire District Council
- Ryedale District Council
- Scarborough Borough Council
- Selby District Council
- York City Council
- Yorkshire Coast Homes
- Yorkshire Housing

Partners agreed to introduce one system which covers all their homes within the Partnership area – with one application form and one lettings policy using a banding system rather than the points based systems which most councils and registered providers used to use. Instead of the council or registered provider contacting applicants when a suitable home becomes available, the properties are advertised so that applicants can choose which ones they are interested in. This is called bidding.

We understand that some applicants and in particular vulnerable people may feel disadvantaged when using a system for the first time and may need extra help to apply and bid for properties.

This guide is for Support Workers, friends and advocates to help them understand what Home Choice is and how they can help others.

Applying to join North Yorkshire Home Choice

It is important to make sure that the application form is completed correctly as this will be used to decide on what priority banding the person has for housing. Many people with support needs and in need of housing live in situations that do not place them in an obvious priority need because they may be considered to be adequately housed (for example, in the family home or in residential care or supported housing).

It is important to make the person's situation clear in the application, for example:

- Whether the person does or will suffer from mental or physical ill health by remaining in their current home including the effects that a lack of independence can bring
- Whether the person is suffering from any domestic abuse that includes verbal, physical and sexual abuse or harassment

- Whether the family or carer can continue to care indefinitely, and whether the carer is older and/or suffers physical or mental ill health or stress because of their caring role
- Whether it is unreasonable for the person to continue living in their current home for other reasons.

You can

- Complete a Home Choice application on line at www.northyorkshirehomechoice.org.uk
- Download a Home Choice application from www.northyorkshirehomechoice.org.uk and post to your local housing office
- Telephone or visit your local housing office to obtain a Home Choice application and post back to your local housing office
- Visit your local housing office to obtain a Home Choice application and assistance to complete it.

Help with the application

Your local housing office will help with the Home Choice application but they will not have personal knowledge of the person's particular situation. It is important that someone who knows the person well can support them with this part of the process.

If you are that person, you can help to make sure that we have all the relevant facts so that we give them the correct priority banding and that we communicate with them in the most appropriate way.

You can get additional support from

- Your Local Advocacy organisation – www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk

Help to bid for a home

There are lots of ways to bid and the bidding process itself is very simple and straightforward. The main role of the person supporting others to use Home Choice will be the following;

- Supporting a person to bid in the way that is best for them or doing it on their behalf
- Making sure that the person gets support to bid by the deadline
- Making sure that the person is bidding for the right kind of homes
- Helping the person to understand what the chances are of being successful in bidding for different types of homes and helping to manage their expectations
- If it is difficult to support the person to bid regularly, making sure they get the right help and finding out where this is provided locally
- You can get local housing staff to bid automatically on behalf of a person but it is important to make sure that they are bidding for the type of properties that the person actually wants and needs

Homes will be advertised every Thursday

They are advertised:

- on the internet www.northyorkshirehomechoice.org.uk
- in newsletters at town halls, council offices, libraries, public access areas, leisure centres and Housing Options offices
- Weekly mailings (where this is necessary)

The closing day for bids will be midnight on Tuesday

You can bid for a home by:

- Using the Automated telephone bidding line – 0300 011 2170
- Sending a Text message – 07537 402495
- On the Internet @ www.northyorkshirehomechoice.org.uk
- Postal Coupon – received by your local housing office no later than 3:00pm Tuesday
- Visiting your local housing office – no later than 3:00pm Tuesday
- Asking the applicant's Housing Officer

Help to look at a home and make decisions

If the person you support is asked to come for a viewing, they are likely to need support in some way;

- To read the letter offering a viewing
- To get to the property
- Help to think through whether the property and location is right
- Help the person to think about what is important about the home such as local public transport, shops etc.

Depending on the level of support the person needs, you need to;

- Ensure **your** contact details are on the Home Choice Application so that we can send you copies of any letters or ring you if necessary so that between us the person is assisted to bid and gets help to view properties.
- Help the person to think about what is important about the home and area they live in before viewing properties. Help them think about what is essential and what they may compromise on so they are more prepared when making a decision
- Get as much information about the property and area before the person goes to view it, like going to the area at night and during the day if possible
- Make sure that someone who knows them well can go and view the property with them
- Make sure that they are allowed privacy when talking about whether the property is appropriate for them and this may mean making clear to the local housing office that it is not appropriate to have shared viewings
- Make sure the local housing office is aware if the person needs extra time to make a decision because of their disability e.g. to get advice from an Occupational Therapist about the property.

Entering a tenancy agreement

It is important that the person you are supporting knows what is expected of them and their landlord before they enter into an agreement. Most people with a learning difficulty or disability can be supported to understand the basics of the tenancy agreement **ie. that you need to pay the rent, look after the house and let others around you live peacefully in return for being able to live peacefully in your own home.**

There are some people with a learning difficulty or disability who are not able to understand the basics of a tenancy agreement. This in itself should not stop people from getting a home of their own but the following should be taken into consideration:

The North Yorkshire Partnership accepts that housing is a necessity regardless of mental capacity and issues tenancies to people who lack capacity to understand the contract.

A tenancy that is entered into when the landlord knows about the tenant's lack of capacity is legal unless challenged. It is unlikely to be challenged unless for example, the rents are considered excessive in a housing benefit claim or the Care Quality Commission is concerned about whether the tenant is truly exercising their rights as a tenant. If there is doubt as to whether it is in the person's best interest to enter into a tenancy agreement, an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) can be appointed to support a decision about whether the tenancy is in the person's best interest

A Deputy, such as a family member can be appointed through the Court of Protection to sign on the person's behalf.

Information and advice about other housing options

It can take a long time to get a home through North Yorkshire Home Choice if the person's housing need is not considered urgent. Sometimes the homes available are not suitable for the person's particular needs. If the person wants to share with others, there may not be sharing options advertised through this route. You can get information about getting other types of housing. Your Local Housing Office should tell you about;

- Private renting and what they will do to help you get it
- Low cost home ownership and how mortgages for some people with disabilities are paid using Income Support
- Supported housing
- Extra Care & Sheltered housing

We hope that you have found the information in this guide useful. Other documents that may be useful are:

An Easy read "Guide to Home Choice"

Making decisions -The Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) Service -

www.dca.gov.uk/legal-policy/mental-capacity/publications.htm

**Thank you for helping others to use
North Yorkshire Home Choice.**

To get further advice on what we can do to help you or the person you are supporting you please contact your local housing office.

City of York Council

West Offices
Station Rise
YORK
YO11 2HG
Phone: 01904 551550
Email: housing.registrations@yorks.gov.uk

Scarborough Borough Council

Town Hall
St Nicholas Street
SCARBOROUGH
YO11 2HG
Phone: 01723 232323
Email: housingoptions@scarborough.gov.uk

Selby District Council

Civic Centre
Doncaster Road
SELBY
YO8 9FT
Phone: 01757 705101
Email: lettingsteam@selby.gov.uk

Hambleton District Council

Civic Centre
Stone Cross
NORTHALLERTON
DL6 2UU
Phone: 0845 1211555
Email: housing@hambleton.gov.uk

Craven District Council

1 Belle Vue Square
Broughton Road
SKIPTON
BD23 1FJ
Phone: 01756 700600
Email: housing@cravencd.gov.uk

Richmondshire District Council

Mercury House
Station Road
RICHMOND
DL10 4JX
Phone: 01748 829100
Email: susie.eales@richmondshire.gov.uk

Ryedale District Council

Ryedale House
MALTON
YO17 7HH
Phone: 01653 600666
Email: housing@ryedale.gov.uk

Yorkshire Coast Homes

Brook House
4 Gladstone Road
SCARBOROUGH
YO12 7BH
Phone: 0845 0655656
Email: info@ych.org.uk

Broadacres Housing Association

Broadacres House
Mount View
Standard Way
NORTHALLERTON
DL6 2YD
Phone: 01609 767900
Email: info@broadacres.org.uk

Yorkshire Housing

Dyson Chambers
12 – 14 Briggate
LEEDS
LS1 6ER
Phone: 0345 366 4404
Email: customerservices@yorkshirehousing.co.uk

**IF YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY IN READING OR COMPLETING THIS FORM,
PLEASE LET US KNOW AND ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED**

