

A guide to Southwark Council’s Housing Allocations Scheme

This guide is intended to support those who are on the Southwark Council Housing waiting list, use this guide to check if you are in the correct priority band.

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Who can apply to join the housing list in Southwark?

Age

- You can apply to the Southwark Council Housing list from the age of 16, however this does not guarantee housing under this scheme.
- By law you cannot be granted a tenancy until you're 18 years old, however a trustee can be appointed and will be required to sign the tenancy agreement on your behalf until you're 18 should you be offered a property.
- Your needs will be assessed within your individual circumstances and you'll need to meet the eligibility and qualifications criteria.

Local Connection

To qualify to join the housing register an allocation you will be required to meet the "local connection criteria". This means meeting the one of the following requirements:

- You have lived in Southwark for the last 5 years
- You work in the area, a working household is one where at least one adult member of the household in employment and has to have been working for 16 hours or more per week for 9 out of the last 12 months. You must also demonstrate a housing need in accordance with the Housing allocations scheme.
- You want to live near to a close relative who has lived in Southwark for more than 5 years and receive or provide support/care
- There is another very specific reason why you need to live in Southwark, (for example severe social or medical needs)

Applicants who are homeless placed in temporary accommodation in Southwark by another local authority do not meet the "local connection criteria". The local authority who made the placement owe a homeless duty.

Exemption to Local Connection Criteria:

In line with the [Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces\) Regulations 2012](#), there is an exemption to the local connection criterion for the Armed Forces, this is for the following applicants:

- Anyone serving in the regular forces or who has served in the regular forces within five years of the date of their application;
- Anyone who has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner where— (i) the spouse or civil partner has served in the regular forces; and (ii) their death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
- Anyone serving or has served in the reserve forces and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.

Can the council remove your application?

It is important to bid on properties as the council monitor an applicant's bidding patterns and can identify applicants who fail to bid for more than 12 months. If you do not bid for more than 12 months the council will contact the applicant to inform them that their housing application has been removed from the housing register.

If you refuse 3 reasonable offers of accommodation within 12 months of the first offer and have had the opportunity to view the properties, your priority for rehousing will be downgraded to the "Reduced Priority Band", Band 4, for a 12 month period from the third point of refusal. After this 12 month period your priority would be reinstated unless your circumstances have changed.

Reasonable reasons for a refusal of alternative accommodation

- The property is in the immediate location of someone who could present a danger to the applicant
- The property has stairs which the applicant is unable to manage and this is confirmed by the health/medical assessment
- The applicant needs an adapted property or the adaptations do not satisfy the applicants needs and this is confirmed by a medical/health or Occupational Therapist assessment
- The previous tenant moved out of the property due to Hate Crimes, and the new tenant may also suffer from similar Hate Crimes Unreasonable reasons for a refusal of alternative accommodation

Unreasonable reasons for refusal of alternative accommodation:

- The property is too small but meets the applicants housing needs according to the bedroom standard contained within this Housing Allocations scheme
- The applicant would prefer a house or a bungalow, but the property offered meets the applicants needs
- The property is not situated in the applicant's specific area of choice but meets the applicants needs
- The property is on the wrong floor level, but the applicant is able to manage the property offered (i.e. would prefer ground floor, would prefer upper floor etc)

How do you apply to join the housing list in Southwark?

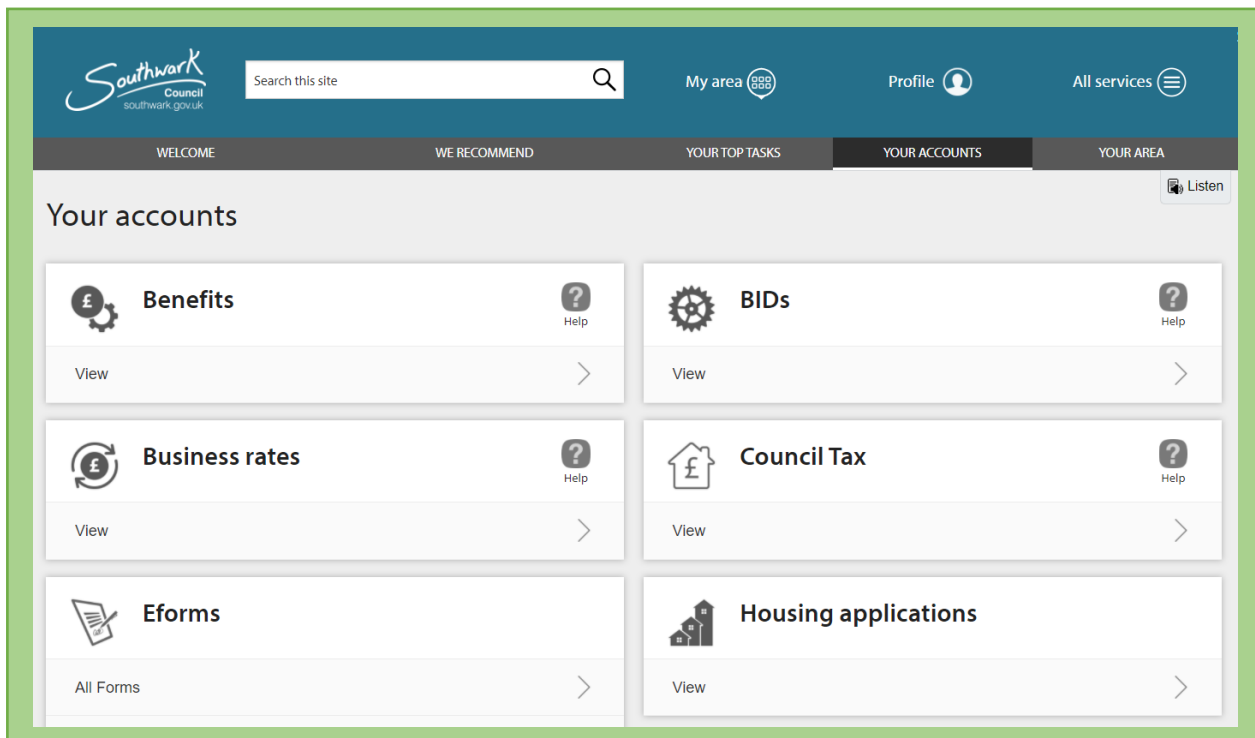


Image 1: My Southwark, Your Accounts Page

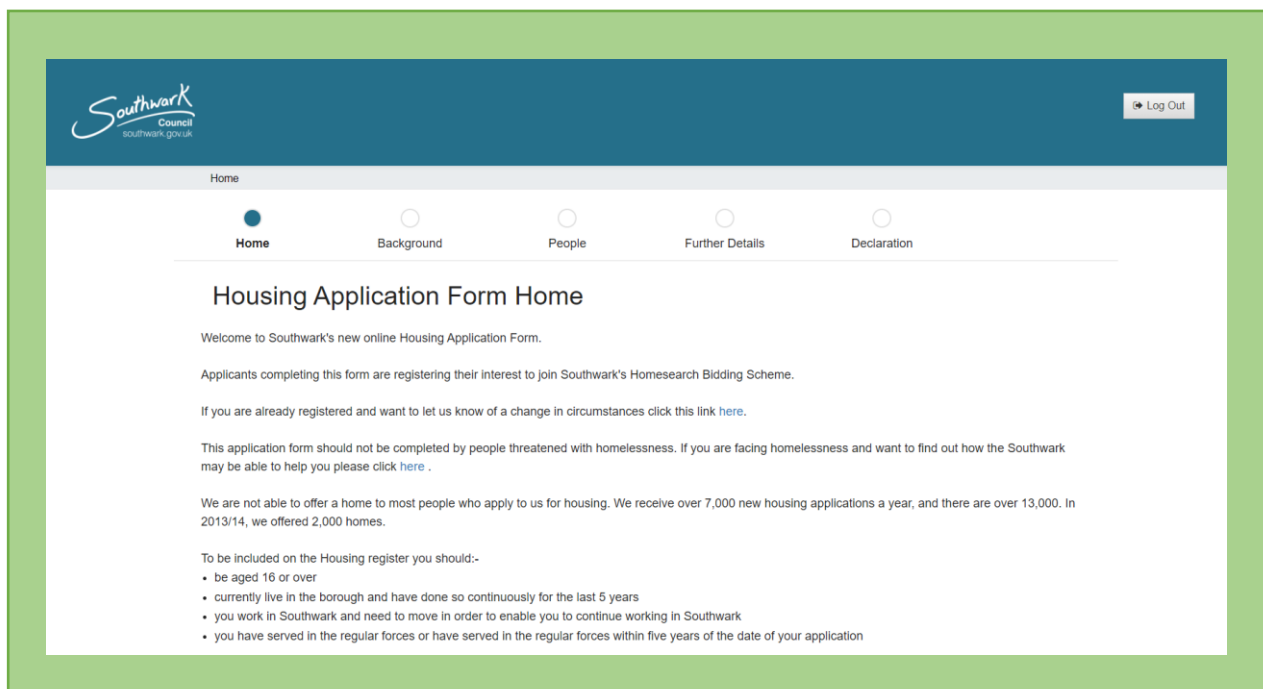
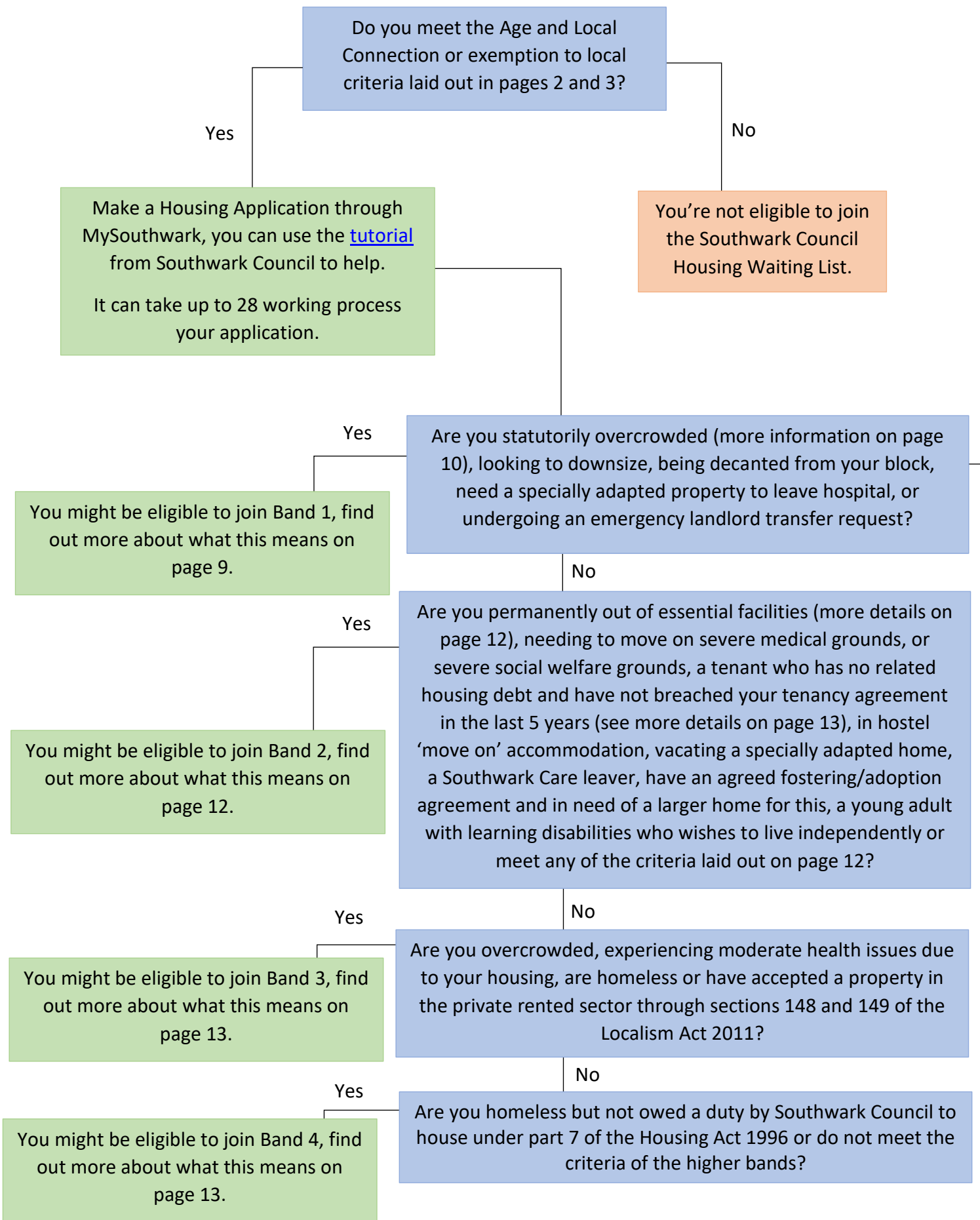


Image 2: Housing Application Form Home Page

To apply to the Southwark Council Housing waiting list you will need to register on [MySouthwark](#) to create an account. Once you have done this, log into your MySouthwark Account. Go to the 'Your accounts' page, you may see an option to add the 'Housing Applications' service, save this. Next click on 'View' Housing Applications and then click on 'Complete a Housing Applications Form'.

Southwark Council have made a short video to take you through the process of applying for the housing waiting list which may be useful, you can find it here:

[Southwark Housing Register Tutorial Master \(vimeo.com\)](#)



Have you worked out what Band you should be in?

No, head back to page 7

You might be entitled to additional priority within your band through a priority star.

You can read more about what this means on page 14.

You can get as many priority stars as you are entitled to have. You can read more about how this impacts your position on the housing list on page 14.

You are entitled to a working star, for more details go to page 15

Yes

Have you worked at least 16 hours per week for the last 9 months of the year?

You are entitled to a voluntary contribution star, for more details go to page 15

Yes

Have you volunteered in Southwark at least 10 hours per month for at least 6 months?

The council will automatically award you this star, if you believe you are entitled to medical or social welfare priority go to page 17 and 22

Yes

Have you been assessed as needing to move on severe medical grounds?

Yes

Have you been assessed as needing to move on severe social welfare grounds?

The council should award this once you have been assessed as needing to move to a particular locality.

Yes

Have you been assessed as needing to move to a particular locality in the borough?

Yes

Are you an applicant owed a statutory homelessness duty?

Yes

Are you currently living in unsanitary or statutorily overcrowded housing?

Upon assessing your initial application, the council should award you these stars, if you have not been awarded the priority stars but think you are entitled to them email:

housinglist@southwark.gov.uk

Southwark Council's Banding System:

Banding System:

The banding system is made up of 4 priority bands, band 1 is the highest and band 4 is the lowest. To be moved into a higher band you must meet one of the higher band criteria, dependent on what you meet will determine your banding on the housing list.

Band 1

This is the highest priority band, it means that you're at the top of the priority list. You're very likely to be rehoused when in this band. To qualify for band 1 you might be:

- Under occupying your current home or you might have a statutory right of succession to a Southwark Council or housing association property however this is unsuitable for your household due to under occupation,
- Need to move due to the council doing major works to your home,
- Statutorily overcrowded (see below to find out if your household is statutorily overcrowded),
- Emergency landlord request transfers - there may be exceptional circumstances where the only way an urgent housing need can be resolved is through management discretion, all landlord request transfers will be authorised by the Head of Operations. Some examples of these cases include:
 - Threat to life.
 - Households who, on police advice, must be moved immediately due to serious threats to one or more members of the household, or whose continuing occupation would pose a threat to the community.
 - An applicant who has an exceptional need that is not predicted or covered within the Allocations Scheme.
 - Other circumstances as authorised by the Head of Operations.
- Need a specially adapted accommodation so that you can leave hospital,
- or you might have sustained serious illness/injury during service in the armed forces.

Calculating if you're statutorily overcrowded:

A guide for this can be found on Shelter's Website at: [Check if your home is overcrowded by law - Shelter England](#)

There are two standards by which you can use to calculate if you're statutorily overcrowded:

- The room standard
- The space standard

Room Standard:

- This looks at the number and sex of people who have to sleep in the same room. This includes: Living rooms, dining rooms and studies as rooms you can sleep in.
- Your home is overcrowded by this standard if:
 - 2 people of different sex have to sleep in the same room and they're aged 10 or over

Space Standard:

Count the number of people:

- anyone aged 10 or over counts as 1 person
- children aged 1 to 9 count as 0.5
- children under 1 year old don't count

Count the number of rooms or measure the floor space of each room.

Do not count any room that is:

- under 50 square feet or 4.6 square metres
- not a bedroom or living room

Number of rooms:

| Number of rooms | Max. Number of people allowed |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 |
| 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 5 |
| 4 | 7.5 |
| 5 | 10 |

Floor space of each room:

| Room's floor space in square feet | Room's floor space in square metres | Maximum number of people allowed |
|--|--|---|
| 50 – 69 | 4.6 – 6.4 | 0.5 |
| 70 – 89 | 6.5 – 8.3 | 1 |
| 90 – 109 | 8.4 – 10.1 | 1.5 |
| 110 | 10.2 | 2 |

Band 2

This is the second priority band. You're likely to be rehoused when in this band. To qualify for band 2 you might:

- Have a severe medical need to move (as determined by the medical panel, see more on this process in the next section)
- Have an urgent need to move due to your social welfare (as decided by the social welfare panel, see more on this process in the next section)
- Permanently lack one or all of the following essential facilities: hot water, heating, a kitchen, internal toilet and bathroom
- Private sector tenants who are required to vacate their home as a result of enforcement action by the local authority
- Southwark care leavers are granted Band 2 priority and permitted to bid for studio flats only.
- Those who are in hostel 'move on' accommodation, applicants in this position should be supported in the process of moving from shared/supported living to independent living within 2 years. This applies to applicants who are occupying partnership agency accommodation and who have an agreed move on.
- Council or housing association tenant vacating specially adapted homes
- Applicants who are part of a multi-agency public protection agreement (MAPPA)
- Serious threat to the wellbeing of a child and their accommodation is a contributory factor to the risk. These are cases where an emergency move is required to mitigate the risk to the child as confirmed by Southwark Council's Children's Services
- Applicants who have an agreed fostering or adoption agreement in place with Southwark Council, who need to move to a larger home in order to accommodate a looked after child
- Applicants who could not be expected to find their own accommodation, such as young adults with learning disabilities who wish to leave the family home so that they can live independently within the community
- Applicants who are in housing need and being discharged from the Armed Forces such as bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces

- The 'Good Tenant Priority', this applies to secure or assured tenants who have lived at the tenancy for five years or more, have no related housing debt and have not breached the terms of the tenancy agreement.

Band 3

- Those who are homeless and who Southwark Council have a statutory duty to accommodate under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996
- Applicants who accept a property in the private rented sector through sections 148 and 149 of the Localism Act 2011
- Overcrowded but not statutorily overcrowded as defined by part 10 of the 1985 Housing Act
- Applicants with moderate health related issues where there is a clear objective to move

Band 4

- Applicants who are homeless, but to whom the authority does not owe a duty to house under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. These applicants are given priority by being awarded one star
- All other applicants.

Priority Stars:

Priority Stars increase your position within your band, for example if you're bidding against someone who is in your band, you will place higher on the list than them with the addition of a priority star.

There are 6 priority stars:

1. People owed a statutory homelessness duty under either s193(2) or s195(2) Housing Act 1996
2. People occupying unsanitary or statutorily overcrowded housing (as defined by [part 10 of the Housing Act 1985](#)) or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions in accordance with hazards identified through the housing health safety rating scheme as confirmed by Southwark Council
3. People who need to move on severe medical or severe welfare grounds
4. People who need to move to a particular locality in the area of the authority where failure to meet their needs would be detrimental to their health and wellbeing and cause severe hardship
5. A working household
6. Applicants who are volunteering in the community.

Once you get a priority star, you will see it on your Homesearch account below your application reference number as shown below:

Social housing

Application reference:

Star count: 1

How to apply for a priority star?

You can apply for the working star and the voluntary contribution star, the other stars are awarded through assessments performed by the council – more detail can be found on pages 17 to 22.

The Working Star:

You can apply for this star if you meet the following criteria:

- You or anyone moving with you has a job - it can be permanent, temporary, or self-employed; and
- That person is aged 18 or over; and
- They work for at least 16 hours a week; and
- They have worked for at least nine out of the last 12 months.

You will be required to provide the following documents in order to receive the working star should you meet the criteria above:

- Pay slips
- P45 and P60
- Tax Returns (if you're on the PAYE system, the council might request a contract instead)
- Bank statements showing your wages
- A verifying letter on headed paper from your employer

- **The Voluntary Contribution Star:**

You pass the community contribution test if you, or anyone moving with you:

- Have lived as an adult (18 and over) in one of Southwark's rehousing areas for three years continuously - now or in the past; or
- You undertake voluntary work for at least ten hours per month, and have done so for at least six months continuously. The volunteering must be for a not-for profit organisation or charity.

You will be required to provide the following documents in order to receive the Voluntary Community contribution star:

- A letter from a manager responsible for volunteers to confirm an applicant's involvement and that the applicant has undertaken a minimum of 10 hours of work for over a period of 6 months.
 - This person cannot be related to the applicant in any way.
- Change of Circumstances - Effective dates and how this impacts your priority on the housing list.

If you fit the criteria for either the working star or the voluntary contribution star then you should email housinglist@southwark.gov.uk with the subject line "Working/Voluntary Contribution Star", to avoid delays in the process of applying the star you should attach all the evidence required in the email you send.

Medical, Welfare and Disability grounds:

This category includes applicants whose health is being affected by their current property and where a move to another more suitable property would alleviate their condition or make it easier to manage, and other management action or adjustment to the property cannot alleviate the problem.

Medical Assessment:

You can inform the council of medical conditions through the [“Change of Circumstances form”](#), through this you can submit evidence. Once you have done this the council should respond to your change of circumstances form within 14 days, if you do not hear back, send a chaser email to housinglist@southwark.gov.uk and it is recommended to CC in your local councillors so that they can chase this up too. You can find out who they are at: [Find Councillor - Southwark Council](#).

Medical awards:

Within the council housing allocations scheme is the breakdown for the different degrees of medical awards, based on the advice provided by the medical advisor the decision is made by the Housing Choice Team Leader to award either:

- a) Severe medical award where it can be demonstrated that, due to an illness or disability, it is unacceptable for the applicant to remain in their current dwelling, or
- b) Moderate medical award where it can be demonstrated that due to an illness or disability the applicant finds living in their current dwelling difficult and it is clear that remaining in that dwelling will contribute to deterioration in their health. Or it would be beneficial for the applicant to move to alternative accommodation but, at present, the applicant can manage in their present dwelling, or
- c) Where appropriate, the medical advisor will also recommend the type of property most appropriate to the medical needs.

Welfare

Within the allocations scheme welfare grounds can also apply to your household under the Medical, Welfare and Disability grounds, this may apply to any member of the household and will include situations such as:

- a) Infirmary due to old age
- b) The need to give or receive care
- c) Behavioural difficulties
- d) The need to recover from the effects or threats of violence or physical or emotional abuse
- e) Young people at risk
- f) A mental or physical disorder
- g) A physical or learning disability
- h) Financial hardship.

How to use the Change of Circumstances form:

The change of circumstances form can be found here: [Housing - Housing register change of circumstances | Southwark Council](#)

Southwark Council
southwark.gov.uk

Enter keywords

Login

Home / Housing - Housing register change of circumstances

Housing - Housing register change of circumstances

About you

(* Required field)

Who is completing this form?

Please choose *

I am registered on the Homesearch bidding system

I am a council staff member, completing on behalf of the account holder

Form Progress

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Back Save Continue

- Once you start the form you will be asked who is completing the form, tick “I am registered on the Homesearch bidding system” and continue to the next section.
- Next you will see that you are asked to fill in what the changes are from a long list of options, this might be an opportunity to note any other changes you might need to make regarding your circumstances.
- You will be asked to confirm your details on the following page, this includes:
- Your Name, Date of Birth, Current Address and Contact Details
- On the following page you will be asked to confirm your employment status and income.

Housing - Housing register change of circumstances

Medical assessment section

Once any other changes have been completed, the Medical Assessment Service will assess this section of your application.

Please note: In order for the Council's Medical Assessment Services to look at your housing needs, everyone in your household with any health, treatment and support needs will need to complete a separate medical assessment form. This part of the form is repeatable so it can be completed for each member of your household whose medical condition has changed (or for new members with a relevant medical condition).

(* Required field)

Please provide details of the person to be assessed:

First name *

Last name *

The Medical Assessment Section:

- This is the part of your change of circumstances form that the Medical Assessment Service, Now Medical, will use to assess your health and support needs. This section includes:
 - At this point you are asked to submit evidence to the form, evidence for this might include:
 - GP Letters
 - Letters from Consultants and health professionals
 - Information regarding your conditions
 - Symptom logs

The evidence you submit within your change of circumstances form is what Now Medical, will use to provide their opinion to the council regarding your medical priority need. Now Medical provide local authorities (who use the service) with housing medical and psychiatric advice on housing applicants using the evidence submitted to them. Once they've assessed the application they provide the council with their own assessment which the council then

use to determine your priority in line with criteria provided in the councils allocation scheme.

Receiving the Outcome of the Medical Assessment Decision

You should receive the medical assessment through the post however it might also be sent to you electronically via email. The decision letter will tell you if you have been awarded higher priority as a result of your medical needs, there are two priority bandings for medical health:

- Applicants with moderate health related issues where there is a clear objective to move will be awarded priority in Band 3
- Applicants who have a severe medical need to move will be awarded priority in Band 2
- As mentioned earlier there is a medical priority star, this should also be awarded to applicants assessed with medical need to move.

However, the council may decide that you do not have needs to move on medical grounds and not award you this priority. You have a statutory right to request a review of this decision. To do this you should email: housinglist@southwark.gov.uk within 21 days of the date of the letter you have received. Once you have done this allow 28 working days for a response and chase this up if you do not hear back within this time.

Social Welfare Panel

In some cases, it may be that the criteria for the social welfare priority may be more applicable to your housing circumstances.

How do I get referred to the Social Welfare Panel?

The Social Welfare Panel will consider referrals directly from an applicant, or from any support agency, any statutory agency, any voluntary agency, a Housing Officer, any Officer from the Homelessness and Housing Options team, and, or, from the applicants medical representatives. To be referred or refer yourself, you or one of the agencies above can email housinglist@southwark.gov.uk, with the subject "Urgent Referral to the Welfare Panel" in the email.

The criteria for urgent Social Welfare priority can be found below, one or more must apply:

- Likelihood of admission to residential care of a family member if re-housing is not made
- Likelihood of a child being accommodated by the local authority if re-housing is not made
- Discharge from hospital or residential care is required and is prevented by the housing situation
- A child experiencing abuse needs to be moved away from the perpetrator
- The applicant, or member of their household, is at serious risk of harm either to themselves or to other people in their present accommodation
- The housing application does not fall within a single priority need band and could possibly fall into two priority needs bands.

In addition, the following conditions also have to be met:

- The applicant has severe financial hardship
- The applicant's wellbeing is seriously affected by their housing situation
- The applicant cannot reasonably be expected to find accommodation for him or herself.

During the social welfare panel meeting, the panel will consider the referral letter, the applicants file and a print out of the applicants IT file to ensure a transparent decision is made on all cases. Only written material is considered at the meeting, so it is important that you submit as much written evidence as you can for this.

This might include:

- Doctors Letters
- Police Reports
- Your own statements on how your housing is impacting your welfare
- A symptom log
- Safeguarding Letters

Once the panel have met minutes will be produced of each Social Welfare Panel meeting and the outcome of this recorded onto an applicant's IT account within 24 hours. The applicant will be advised within 48 hours in writing of the outcome of the Social Welfare Panels Decision.

If the panel decide you are not eligible for the Social Welfare priority, but you believe you have grounds for this additional priority, you have a statutory right to review the decision made by the Social Welfare Panel. The review will be carried out by the Head of Housing Operations, or a Senior Officer of the Housing and Community Services Directorate who was not involved with the decision made at the Social Welfare Panel Meeting.