



Moving home with Dacorum - your questions answered

Introduction

There's a lot to consider when looking for your new home. Housing applicants often ask us about their eligibility and the bidding and allocations process, so we have put together this sheet to answer the questions that we are asked most often.

We have split this information into eight sections:

- Section 1: General questions**
- Section 2: Eligibility for housing register**
- Section 3: Administration of the housing**
- Section 4: Common questions relating to points**
- Section 5: Bidding**
- Section 6: Village connection**
- Section 7: Supported (including Sheltered) Housing**
- Section 8: Adapted properties**

Section 1: General questions

I have been regularly checking for adverts but there aren't any properties advertised, why is this?

Due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus, there has been a reduction in the number of people moving from their existing home, so fewer vacant properties than usual are being returned to the Council and local housing associations. This is why there are fewer properties advertised at the moment.

I am a homeless applicant - can I bid?

Yes, if you have not yet had a homeless decision you are able to bid for accommodation. However, once you receive a duty letter and this is a positive decision, you will not be able to bid. The Council will offer you accommodation using a direct offer process.

How do I get a Council or housing association property?

You need to be accepted onto the Dacorum Borough Council Housing Register, which is now run through the [Moving with Dacorum](#) website.

What is the difference between a Council and a housing association property?

Council properties are owned and managed by Dacorum Borough Council. The Council is the landlord.

Housing associations also provide affordable homes. The rents and terms are broadly similar and you bid for properties in the same way. The main difference is that the housing association owns and manages the property and is the landlord.

Where can I find details of available properties?

Properties are advertised each week on the [Moving with Dacorum](#) website. You can view the properties that you are eligible for on your My Account page. You can also search all available properties through the Property Search page.

For those applicants without internet access, we can provide a paper list of available sheltered housing properties upon request. Copies of this are available at Dacorum Borough Council offices in Hemel Hempstead, Tring and Berkhamsted. In special circumstances (such as severely impaired mobility), we can send these property handouts to you by post.

Section 2: Eligibility for housing register

How old do I have to be to register?

You must be 18 years old to register with [Moving with Dacorum](#). Registering does not necessarily mean that your application will be accepted (see below).

What is local connection and what is Dacorum Borough Council's criteria?

A local connection is where you or your immediate relatives have lived in an area for a defined period of time, connecting you to that area, or are in permanent employment for a period of time in that area. Each council has different criteria, which are set out in their Allocation Policy. Dacorum Borough Council's criteria is that you must meet at least one of the following:

- A 10-year residency within the borough at some point in your lifetime;
- Family connection where an immediate family member (parents, children, siblings) has continuously been a resident within the borough for 10 years immediately preceding the date of your application;
- Currently in permanent employment within the borough boundary, working at least 16 hours per week, and which has been continuous for at least the past 24 months.

My application has been rejected, why is this?

Your application will be rejected if we do not believe you meet the eligibility criteria, or you are considered to be adequately housed.

Can I apply if I have savings?

To be eligible to apply for housing, you must not have more than £16,000 in savings, which includes all types of bank accounts, building society accounts, savings accounts, ISAs and so on.

Supported Housing applicants 60 and over will be exempt from these criteria if it is evident that their total financial means is £250,000 or less.

Are there financial criteria to be able to join the housing register?

You will not qualify if you have the financial means to meet your own housing need. We define this as you and/or your partner having in excess of £60,000 gross income.

Can I move with rent arrears?

You will not qualify to move unless you have made six months of regular repayments to any property-related arrear, including rent and Council Tax.

I am pregnant - can I register to bid on a 2-bed home?

A baby will not be considered part of the household until they are born. However, some housing associations will allow you to apply for a 2-bed if you provide your Matb1 form as evidence.

My children are aged over 18 can they still live with me?

Yes if they are permanent household members, they can continue to live with you.

I only have my child at the weekends, am I eligible to register for a 2-bed (or larger)?

No. A child is not part of the household if:

- The applicant has staying contact with the child for less than 50% of the time.
- In the case of equal contact time, the property would need to be considered the child's main or principal home.

You may be able to move to a property with an extra bedroom by mutual exchange with another tenant. To find out more and register for a mutual exchange please visit

www.houseexchange.org.uk

My child has just moved in with me, are we eligible to move to a bigger property?

If you hold responsibility for residency of a child through a court decision, the child is immediately considered part of the household.

Residency arrangements agreed by parents require the applicant to provide supporting evidence of the arrangement, including evidence that the child has been living as part of their household for a minimum of six months and any documents required by Housing Benefit to support this claim.

I have just moved to the area - am I eligible?

If you meet, our local connection criteria below you are eligible to apply.

- A 10-year residency within the borough at some point in your lifetime;
- Family connection where an immediate family member (parents, children, siblings) has continuously been a resident within the borough for 10 years immediately preceding the date of application;
- Currently in permanent employment within the borough boundary, consisting of at least 16 hours per week, and which has been continuous for at least the past 24 months.

I have just come out of prison - am I eligible?

Yes - If you meet our local connection criteria

- A 10-year residency within the borough at some point in your lifetime;
- Family connection where an immediate family member (parents, children, siblings) has continuously been a resident within the borough for 10 years immediately preceding the date of application;
- Currently in permanent employment within the borough boundary, consisting of at least 16 hours per week, and which has been continuous for at least the past 24 months.

I have just come from the armed forces - am I eligible?

Yes. Local connection is not required for members of the armed forces where the application is made within five years of discharge. (This includes bereaved spouses and civil partners leaving service family accommodation following the death of their partner.)

Members of the armed forces who qualify to our housing register will receive additional points if:

- You are serving in the regular forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to your military service;
- You formerly served in the regular forces;
- You have recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled to reside in the accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of your spouse or civil partner who served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable to that service;
- or
- You are serving or have served in the reserve forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability, which is attributable to your service.

I work full time - can I register?

Yes - provided that your gross household income does not exceed £60,000 and you do not have £16,000 or more in savings.

I am unemployed - can I register?

Yes.

I am a care leaver, can I register to bid?

Yes. However it is often the case that your leaving care support will already be in contact with the Council, because prior to an allocation of accommodation, evidence will need to be provided to show that you are ready to live independently and that support will be in place for you if required.

I have now turned 60 - can I bid on supported housing?

Yes, once you reach your 60th birthday, supported housing properties will be available to you.

Can I apply for supported housing if I am only 59?

Supported housing is normally advertised for those who are 60+. On some occasions, the age requirement is lowered to 55 and if so, you will be able to bid on these properties.

Can I apply for flexi care for a relative?

You will need to apply via Herts County Council or through your social worker.

Section 3: Administration of the housing register

Will I still receive three offers?

No, you will only receive one offer. If you refuse your single offer, your application will be suspended for six months.

Can I refuse a property offer?

Yes you can refuse an offer. Your application will then be suspended for six months and you will be unable to bid on any current properties

Do I have to bid on all eligible properties to stay active?

No, please **only** bid on properties that you would wish to move to.

Can my son and daughter share a bedroom?

Yes - they need to share until the age of five with Dacorum, or until the age of 10 under other housing associations' housing policy, please check this before bidding on a property to avoid being overlooked. Please also note that Housing Benefit and Universal Credit will only be paid in full according to the government's policy, which allows opposite-sex siblings to share until age 10 and same-sex until age 18.

I was at the top of the list but wasn't successful, why did the property go to someone with fewer points?

It could be for a number of reasons, for example having a local connection to a village.

How often do I have to check for advertised properties?

Properties can be added to the website throughout the day Monday to Friday so you should check the website every other day to ensure that you see all properties available.

Can I still apply if I don't have a passport?

Yes but you will be required to produce some form of photographic ID to verify your identity and eligibility.

Can I remove my application from the housing register?

Yes - online to request closure of your application or by contacting the Housing Needs Team.

Can I downsize from a 3-bed to a 2-bed if I live alone?

Yes - you can look for a mutual exchange through www.houseexchange.org.uk

If you are a Dacorum Borough Council tenant wishing to downsize to a home with fewer bedrooms, you can apply for a transfer with www.movingwithdacorum.org.uk

You can find more information in our [Moving to a smaller home](#) leaflet.

Can I move with rent arrears?

For any property-related arrears including rent arrears, Council Tax arrears, housing association arrears or private sector rent arrears, you will need to be able to demonstrate you have adhered to a repayment plan for the past six months, which has reduced your arrears. However, please be aware that some housing associations will not accept an applicant with arrears even if they have kept to a payment plan.

Are step siblings part of the household?

Provided that they live with you as part of the household and it is their permanent home.

My stepchildren share bedrooms at the weekends, are they eligible for their own bedroom?

Unfortunately not unless they live with you and are part of the household.

I need an extra bedroom for medical reasons, am I eligible?

You will need supporting evidence from an Occupational Therapist, or a medical report from your GP or Consultant that you require an additional bedroom for your own needs.

Will housing benefit pay my rent if I am under occupying?

No, only it will only meet your full rent up to the number of bedrooms you are entitled to. If you have one spare bedroom you will lose the equivalent of 14% of your rent and for two or more spare bedrooms you will lose the equivalent of 25% of your rent.

Is my baby (under age one) entitled to their own room?

Yes, though please also see rules about sharing with siblings.

Can a housing association refuse me if I have been nominated across to them?

Yes, housing associations have their own housing policies, but the Housing Needs team will try to allocate a property accordingly and to keep you up to date if this isn't possible.

Do housing associations have their own allocation policies?

Yes, we work together with housing associations but they do have their own individual policies, which can be found on their own websites.

Section 4: Common questions relating to points

Why are my points lower than on my previous application?

The Council's Allocations Policy was changed in November 2013. This changed the number of points for all applicants.

How many points do I need to obtain a property?

It is not possible to inform applicants what levels of points are necessary to obtain properties, because this depends on what properties are available and which applicants chose to apply for them.

I have not been given the correct amount of points, how can they be changed?

To update your points, please log into your account and update your application form. Your points may be amended based on the information you have given us. Where possible, please use the supporting information boxes to update your information.

My home is overcrowded, am I eligible for more points?

Yes, you may be entitled to overcrowding points provided that all household members have been part of the household for the past 12 months to qualify for overcrowding points.

My third bedroom is very small, does this count as lacking a bedroom?

You can check the size against the government's [housing space standards](#).

Do I get points for downsizing?

Yes, 45 points per bedroom.

Do I get extra points if there isn't a lift in my block?

Yes, if you have children in flats under the age of nine where there is no lift. Or possibly if you have medical points relating to the use of stairs

Section 5: Bidding

How can I bid?

You can bid via the [Moving with Dacorum](#) website, or by calling 0300 1113570

You can also bid by text message following instructions below:

- Start a new text message to 07786 201 131
- Enter your Moving with Dacorum reference number followed by a space
- Enter your memorable date followed by a space (your memorable date will always be in the format: DD/MM/YYYY)
- If you have a second or third property that you would like to bid on enter each reference number followed by a space
- For example, if you are bidding on three properties the text should look something like this:
12345 01/01/2000 101 102 103
- When you have entered all of your choices, send your text message to 07786 201 131

How can I bid for a relative?

Providing you have, their authorisation to bid you can bid via the website, or by calling 0300 1113570

Where are properties advertised?

On the [Moving with Dacorum](#) website.

Can I withdraw a bid?

Yes if you withdraw a bid during the advertising process by logging into your account and selecting the property for which you wish to withdraw your bid.

What happens if two applicants have the same amount of points and bid on the same property?

The person who bids first will be in first position, because Moving with Dacorum logs the exact time an applicant bids.

I am homeless - can I still bid?

Yes, you may still bid if you are homeless, but please also contact our homelessness team.

Section 6: Village connection

My family live in a village - do I get a local connection to that village?

If you have at any point in your life lived within that village for ten years, or your immediate family currently live within that village and have done so for the past ten years continuously.

What villages are there in the Dacorum?

Aldbury, Bovington, Flaunden, Flamstead, Great Gaddesden, Gaddesden Row, Kings Langley, Little Gaddesden, Long Marston, Markyate, Northchurch, Potten End, Wilstone, Wigginton.

Do I get priority to a village property, even if I have lower points?

Yes - local connection to a village will be given priority even if your points are lower than the highest bidder on a shortlist.

Section 7: Supported (including Sheltered) Housing

What is flexi care?

Flexi care is a sheltered housing scheme that has carers on site.

Can I apply for supported housing if I am still working?

Yes, you can still apply if you are working. Many residents of our supported housing are still active and working.

Is sheltered housing like a residential home?

Sheltered housing is not a residential home, they are individual flats designed for independent living.

Are the doors for sheltered housing locked at night?

No, you are free to come and go as you please.

Is there a curfew with sheltered housing flats?

No there isn't a curfew.

What is an SHO?

An SHO is a Supported Housing Officer. They are there to signpost tenants to services they may need - similar to a tenancy housing officer. If you are active and working you may wish to see your SHO only a couple of times each year. Most older residents have a visit once every one or two weeks.

Will the SHO do my washing?

No - the supported housing officer is there to guide or signpost you to services not to do your washing or any other personal tasks.

Is the SHO on site 24/7?

The SHO works Monday to Friday 9am-5pm and in most cases won't be on site every day.

Can I smoke in my own flat?

Yes, smoking is permitted inside your own flat, but not in any internal communal (shared) areas. You must not discard cigarette ends in any communal areas.

Are there laundry facilities on site?

In most sheltered schemes there are laundry facilities on site, usually within the scheme building, or a very short walk away. In the cases of bungalows, you need to provide your own washing machine and/or tumble dryer.

Do I have to pay for laundry facilities?

No the laundry facilities are free to tenants within that scheme.

Do I have my own front door in sheltered housing?

Yes.

Can the SHO come into my flat at any time?

No - it is your home and your SHO will ask permission to visit you.

Will I have my own kitchen or is it communal?

You will have your own independent kitchen.

Do I have to attend the communal activities?

No - you only attend activities if you wish to.

How quickly am I expected to move?

Potentially within two weeks of bidding on a property.

Do I get a downsizing payment?

We will pay you £500 for each bedroom that you are giving up. (One payment will be made per household). You can also have a look at the benefits available with our [Moving to a Smaller Home Scheme](#).

Section 8: Adapted properties

How do I get disabled adaptations for my home?

If you require an adaptations and it is not possible for these to be completed in your current home, you will need to arrange for an Occupational Therapist assessment to be completed by Hertfordshire County Council. This will provide us with detailed information about what size property is required and what adaptations are required.

You will need to apply to the housing register in the normal way, and if accepted will either be awarded points based on your need or placed on the direct offer list as we do not advertise properties that already have significant adaptations.