

The Right Move

# Choosing a Home in Ashfield



## Ashfield Homes The Right Move

Ashfield Homes is an Arms Length Housing Management Organisation set up to manage Ashfield District Council's housing properties. In November 2001, Ashfield Homes successfully bid for extra resources to spend on Council housing repair and modernisation in the area. This will mean that spending on Ashfield Council's properties over the next 10 years will reach almost £98 million.

New kitchens, bathrooms, rewiring, central heating, replacement windows and doors as well as fences, paths and paving are just some of the improvements that will be seen over the next few years.

As a result, Ashfield's Council houses will be more attractive than ever. Council rents in Ashfield are still low compared with other types of rented property and yet the quality of our homes is improving. We have approximately 8300 properties in almost all areas of Ashfield. Applying for an Ashfield Home could well be 'The Right Move' for you.

### What can you do if you are homeless now or will soon be homeless?

If you are concerned that you may become homeless, then please contact one of the Ashfield Homes Offices and ask to see a Housing Officer. They will endeavour to help as much as possible by giving information regarding choosing a home with Ashfield Homes but are likely to advise you to speak to someone in Ashfield District Council's Homeless Department.

## How to Apply for an Ashfield Home

All you need to do is ask for a 'Housing Application' form and an 'Area Property Guide'. They are both available from any of our Housing Offices. Either call in for them or telephone us and we'll post them to you straight away. The addresses, phone numbers and opening hours of all our Offices are listed at the back of this booklet. Or you can e-mail us at [n.poulton@ashfieldhomes.co.uk](mailto:n.poulton@ashfieldhomes.co.uk) and we will send them to you in the post.

### There are 4 different 'Area & Property Guides' covering:

- Sutton in Ashfield
- Kirkby in Ashfield
- Rural (covering Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood)
- Hucknall

Each of the guides is filled with information about the properties that we have in the area.

It tells you which properties we have on each street, how many bedrooms and what type of property. By ticking the right boxes in the guides you can tell us which areas or streets you would like to live in.



## Who can apply for housing?

- Anyone aged 16 or above.

### Why certain people might not get an offer:

- Certain people from abroad subject to immigration control cannot be offered a property.
- Some people whose behaviour is unacceptable will not be offered a property. In such cases the applicant will be informed in writing and they have a right to appeal.
- Applicants aged 16 or 17 will only be rehoused where there is a statutory duty upon the council to do so.

### Help us to help you

- Please give accurate information
- Tell us straight away if your choices or your circumstances change.
- We will send you a form each year to review your application. Please fill it in and return it.

Only tell us about the properties you would accept if offered - we do not wish to waste your time by offering properties to people who do not want them.

### What happens next?

- Once you have filled in the forms and returned them to us, we will register your application on our waiting list.
- We aim to register your application within 5 working days and we will write to you to let you know how many points your application has been given

## How we let our empty properties

When a property becomes available for letting we ask the computer to run a “match” list for that specific property.

The list contains everyone who wants that type of property, in that particular area.

The list prints in points order, those with the most at the top. We let the property to the person at the top of the list, if it is refused we work our way down the list to those with lesser points.

A copy of the Lettings Scheme is available at all offices.



### Our empty properties

We can let you know about which properties we have empty in a number of ways:

- **Estate-agency style leaflets in the housing offices.**
- **Our magazine called ‘Your Future in Our Homes’ which we send to everyone who is on the Housing Register.**
- **Via the telephone. The contact telephone numbers are at the back of this booklet. We can advise you on empty properties, your application, points, other housing options.**
- **Call in to one of our offices for more advice, leaflets or make an appointment for a private interview.**
- **Handouts. We will sometimes write to you, advertising specific empty properties.**
- **On-line. Our website at [www.ashfieldhomes.co.uk](http://www.ashfieldhomes.co.uk) is packed full of interesting information on all aspects of moving and you can search the site for details of empty homes.**



## Waiting for an offer

Some people need to move quickly. Others can afford to take their time. Some people live in difficult circumstances or want to be nearer to relatives. Others may need to move for health reasons. Whatever your reason for moving there are a number of things added together that will help determine how long your wait on the list will be. These are:

### *Demand + Supply + Points + Your Choices*

#### **Demand.**

The number of applicants that want a particular area makes up the 'demand'. In popular areas there will be more people waiting than in areas where the demand is low. Therefore, if you request a popular area it is likely that you will not be housed as quickly. We can help you in your choices by giving you information about the demand for different areas.

#### **Supply.**

The supply of empty properties can be unpredictable. In popular areas people tend to move away less often and so fewer vacancies occur, whereas in less popular areas there is often a greater number of properties available. Again, we can give you information about the supply of empty properties in different areas.

#### **Points.**

The number of points that we give your application depends on your circumstances. A list of the different reasons we give points for is supplied on a separate sheet. Your chances of getting an offer quickly may be greater if you have more points, but not always. If your points are low and the area you want most of all is very popular you may decide to alter your choices to improve your chances of getting an offer.

#### **Your choices.**

You can alter your choices at any time. Your choice of areas is entirely your own. We will help to make you aware of the likely waiting time for the areas you want so that if you wish to move more quickly there are other choices open to you.

As you can see, working out how long you may have to wait is not always easy. We always do our best to give you as much information as we can about your points and the supply and demand for different areas so that you can make the right choices. If you are unsure at any time, please ask us.

*Demand + Supply + Points + Your Choices*



## Our Points System

We aim to make sure that our empty homes are let to those people that need them most. Our points scheme gives people choice and helps us to consider everyone's application fairly. The greater your needs, the more points you are awarded. Your points score is worked out using the information that you supply to us on your housing application form. It is in your own interests to:

- Give accurate information
- Tell us straight away if your choices or your circumstances change.
- Return your yearly review form.
- Only tell us about the properties that you would accept if offered – we do not wish to waste your time by offering properties to people who do not want them.
- Please see our Points leaflet for additional information.

### Introductory / Secure Tenancies

Ashfield runs a scheme whereby new tenants are given an Introductory Tenancy, unless you are already a Secure tenant in which case you'll be given a Secure Tenancy again. Introductory tenancies were brought in for the benefit of all Ashfield's tenants however, where an Introductory Tenant breaks their tenancy agreement it is easier for Ashfield Homes to regain possession of their property. This provides some protection for our tenants from those who commit anti-social behaviour for instance. Most Introductory Tenants do not breach their Tenancy Agreement and after 1 year, the Introductory Tenancy will usually become a Secure Tenancy.



## What we can offer

When it comes to making an offer of a property to you we will give you:

- **A chance to view the property**
- **A decoration allowance to allow you to buy decorating materials (where these are needed)**
- **Advice about moving home**
- **An Introductory or Secure tenancy.**

We can make you up to 4 reasonable offers. A reasonable offer is one which meets all the following criteria:-

- **The property meets the occupancy standard for the applicant (and his/her household)**
- **Is in the area which the applicant requested**
- **Has the heating type requested by the applicant.**

If you refuse 4 reasonable offers your application will be suspended and no offers will be made for 1 year. You will be informed in writing about the suspension and you do have a right of appeal.

The **type and size of home** that we can offer you depends upon the size of your family. The table below shows you what you are entitled to:



Size & Type of Property	Size of Family
Studio Flat	Single person
1 bed or 2 bed flat	Minimum of 1 person
1 bed or 2 bed bungalow	Minimum of 1 person (aged 60 or more, or disabled)
2 bed or 3 bed house or flat	Minimum of 2 people
4 bed house	1 or more adult, plus 4 or more children
2 bed maisonette	Minimum of 2 people

## Type of home

### Flats

Some of our flats are let to people of certain ages. For instance, some flats are let to people aged 60 or more, while others are given to anyone aged 16 or over. Every flat that becomes empty has a minimum age attached to it and details can be obtained from any of our Housing Offices.



### Bungalows

At least one person in the household needs to be aged 60 for us to be able to let a bungalow to a family, except where the Occupational Therapy Team of Social Services agree that a bungalow would be suitable accommodation for a disabled person.



### Houses

We have two, three and four bedroom houses throughout the Ashfield district. They can all be let to anyone over the age of 18 provided they meet the occupancy criteria.



### Sheltered Schemes

We have sheltered schemes throughout the district all with community lounges, and a variety of other facilities such as: guestrooms, laundry rooms and social activities. The accommodation comprises of either studio or one bed flat and can be allocated, in some case to those aged 40+ although the majority are for those aged 60 years and above.



## Other Choices for Moving

### Transfers

If you wish to move from one council property to another, collect an application form from any housing office. With the information you provide your application will be registered and you will be given a “points score” based on your housing needs. Please note: before you will be allowed to move, housing staff will need to inspect your property to make sure it has been maintained to a satisfactory standard and that your rent account is clear.

### Mutual Exchange

If you are already an Ashfield Homes, Housing Association or Tenant of another council, you may be able to exchange with another tenant. You can do this by finding a tenant who wishes to swap with you. Each housing office has a list of those wishing to exchange or you could advertise in the local papers.

When you find a property that you think may be suitable, it is up to you to contact the tenant directly. You will both need to complete a Mutual Exchange form which can be collected from any housing office. We will need to inspect your property to make sure it has been maintained to a satisfactory standard. We aim to give you a decision about your request to exchange within 28 days.

### Homeswap

This is a national scheme for tenants who wish to exchange properties moving from one area to another. Each main office has a copy of the list for you to look at, and a registration form to join this scheme. Each person must get written permission from his or her own Council or Housing Association as it works in a similar way to a mutual exchange.

### Homes (National Mobility Scheme)

If you need to move to another part of the country perhaps for a new job or to take care of relatives, this scheme may help you. The scheme aims to provide a small number of council's lettings each year to people from another Council area. Owner occupiers may also apply to use this scheme. Forms are available from your local housing office.



## Other Choices - Continued

### Housing Associations

#### Metropolitan Housing Trust Ltd

Raleigh House  
68-84 Alfreton Road, Nottingham NG7 3NN  
Tel: (0115) 9887100 Fax: (0115) 9887290

#### Housing 21 (Central Region West)

5-7 Upper Brook Street, Rugeley,  
Staffordshire WS15 2DP  
Tel: (01889) 583822

#### East Midlands Housing Association

65 Church Street, Sutton-in-Ashfield  
Nottinghamshire NG17 1FE  
Tel: (01623) 556656

#### Leicester Housing Association Ltd

174 Derby Road,  
Nottingham NG7 1NF  
Tel: (0115) 9709600

#### Anchor Trust

Bridgford House  
Pavilion Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5DZ  
Tel: (08456) 031139

#### North British Housing Association Ltd

12 Vivian Avenue, Sherwood Rise,  
Nottingham NG5 1AF  
Tel: (0845) 6044446

#### Derwent Housing Association

359 Nuthall Road  
Aspley, Nottingham NG8 5BU  
Tel: (01332) 346477



See Housing Association leaflet for more details.

### What are they?

They are non-profit making organisations whose main concern is to provide homes for rent to people with housing need. They are partly financed by government grants, which are used to build new homes or modernise older homes. Rents may be slightly higher than Ashfield Homes's rents but tenants may apply for housing benefit.

When you put your name down on the Housing Register please let us know if you would be interested in being housed by a Housing Association by ticking the box in your housing application. Or if you wish, you can apply directly to a housing association.

### Private-Rented Sector

There are a number of local estate agents with information on private-sector lettings. Local papers also have information on properties to rent. You may be able to get help with paying the rent. It's a good idea to contact the Housing Benefit Department and ask for a "Pre-tenancy Determination Application Form". You and your prospective landlord should complete this and return it to the Council and they will inform you of the maximum rent that will be used to work out Housing Benefit on the property you wish to rent.



## If You Have Cause For Complaint

If you are unhappy with our service please contact your local housing office where it will be possible to make an appointment with a Neighbourhood Housing Officer or the District Housing Manager to discuss your concerns. If you are not satisfied you can ask for a complaints form. We will investigate your complaint fully and reply to you in writing usually within 5 working days. If this is not possible, because the complaint is particularly complex, then we will write to you within 5 working days and advise you when a full reply will be made.

### Right To Appeal

If we make a decision that affects your application in any way then you have a right to appeal. There are instances where we may suspend an application from the housing register for example, where an applicant has a known history of anti social behaviour or where 4 reasonable offers have been refused.

Appeal forms are available from any of the housing offices. The appeal is considered by the District Housing Manager and our aim is to send a written reply within 10 working days.

### Equal Opportunities

Ashfield Homes has adopted an equal opportunities policy. We are committed to giving everyone an equal opportunity of obtaining housing. Further details can be obtained from your nearest housing office.

### Further Information

This booklet is a summary of Ashfield District Council's Lettings scheme. A full copy of the scheme is available from any of our local housing offices, free of charge.

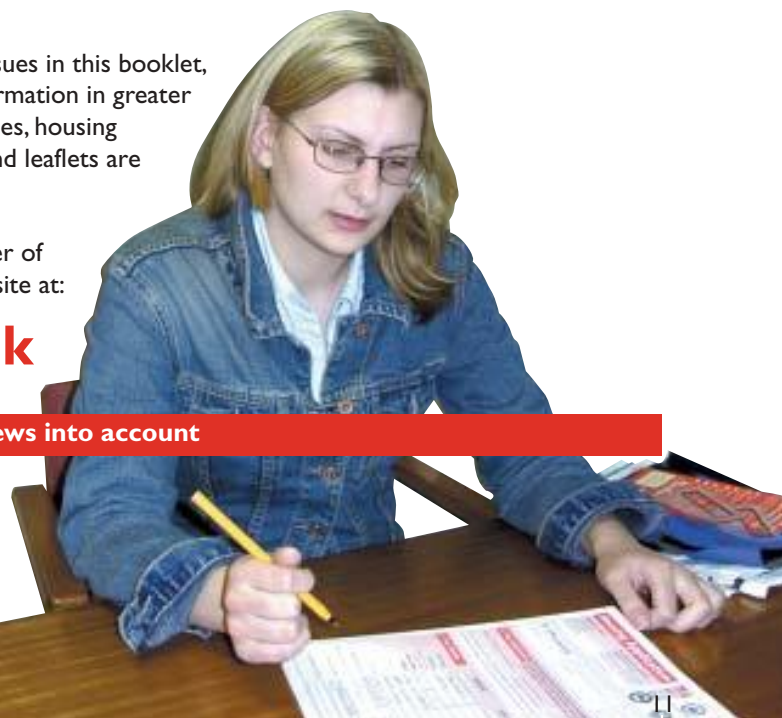
If you want or need further information about any of the issues in this booklet, Ashfield Homes also produces a range of leaflets giving information in greater detail. There are leaflets for instance about exchanging homes, housing associations and equal opportunities. This is not a full list and leaflets are constantly updated – so please ask if you need something.

All our leaflets are available in large print as well as a number of different languages. Information is also available on our website at:

[www.ashfieldhomes.co.uk](http://www.ashfieldhomes.co.uk)

### Taking your views into account

Ashfield Homes wants to involve tenants in decision making. We believe that by doing this it ensures that Ashfield has a prosperous future. We will inform tenants and those on the housing register of current decisions and policy changes as soon as possible.



## Housing *Offices*

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### HUCKNALL

Council Offices, Watnall Road, Hucknall,  
Nottinghamshire, NG15 7LA  
Telephone Nottingham (0115) 9568720  
Open Monday to Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm (4:30pm Friday)

### KIRKBY-IN-ASHFIELD

Council Offices, Urban Road,  
Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire,  
NG17 8DA  
Telephone Mansfield (01623) 457266  
Open Monday to Friday  
8:30am – 5:00pm (4:30pm Friday)

### SUTTON-IN-ASHFIELD

Council Offices, Fox Street, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire,  
NG17 1BD  
Telephone Mansfield (01623) 457012  
Open Monday to Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm (4:30pm Friday)

**REPAIRS EMERGENCY  
AFTER HOURS NUMBER**  
Telephone Mansfield  
(01623) 457999

**FOR ALL OTHER COUNCIL  
EMERGENCY**  
Telephone Mansfield  
(01623) 550077

**SERVICES FOR  
OLDER PEOPLE**  
Telephone Mansfield  
(01623) 608990

**REPAIRS  
HANDLING CENTRE**  
Telephone Mansfield  
(01623) 457999

**TENANT CONSULTATION  
HOTLINE**  
Telephone FREEPHONE  
0800 9520198

