**Applying for council housing in Wigan**

Wigan Council has a choice-based lettings system for council properties. This means that available properties are advertised every week and you bid for the properties you want. To be able to bid for properties, you must be accepted on to the housing register.

When you apply to the housing register you will be given a priority status; this a combination of housing bands and points. Properties are offered to the bidders with the highest priority.

**Who can apply?**Most people aged 18 or over can apply to join the housing register. You may not be eligible for the housing register if:

* you do not meet the immigration and residence conditions
* you do not have a local connection, for example, you have not lived or worked in the borough for long enough and don’t have family connections here
* you or a member of your household has behaved in an unacceptable way
* you have a substantial housing debt relating to a Wigan Council or other social sector tenancy

**How to join the housing register**

The Wigan Council housing register application form is online; to access the form you must log on to ‘MyAccount’ on [www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk).

To set up MyAccount with Wigan Council, you will need an active email account. If you have not got an email address you can use, you can set up an email account for free at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) or [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com).

As well as completing the online application form, you will need to provide some supporting documents for your application to be considered, for example, to prove your identity and address. You will be told what information you need to supply when you submit your application. You can take any documents into Wigan or Leigh Life Centres.

**Can I join the register if I do not have access or am unable to use a computer?**There is no alternative application process for the housing register application. If you are unable to apply online, and there is no family or support worker to help you, please contact Age UK’s Housing and Care Options Service on **01942 241972** for help to make the application.

Wigan Council aim to process applications within 20 working days. However there is high demand for this service and, at busy times, applications can take longer than this.

You will receive a letter once your housing application has been processed; if your application is accepted this letter will include your unique reference number and what band and points you have been allocated.

**How to bid on a property**The best way to bid for properties is through MyAccount on the Wigan Council website. The housing register works like an online shop so you select the properties you are interested in; these properties are saved in your shopping basket and **you must check out your basket for the bids to be registered**.

Wigan Council produce a property list every Thursday. This list is available through MyAccount and can be downloaded from <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Housing/Council-homes/Find-a-home/Housing-register/Bidding-for-a-property.aspx>. Paper copies of the weekly property list are also available at Wigan and Leigh Life Centres. You can bid for properties from Thursday until 5.30pm on the following Tuesday.

If you have difficulties bidding online, you can email the Housing Register team on [houreg@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:houreg@wigan.gov.uk) or call them on 01942 486183 to ask for bids to be placed for you; please make sure you use your unique reference number and the property reference number when you ask for bids to be placed.

**You will be contacted by telephone if your bid for a property is successful so it's important you keep your contact details up to date.** You will then have the chance to view the property. You can turn down a property but please be advised that if you do this three times, your housing application can be suspended so it is important you only bid on properties you are interested in.

If you log on to your housing account after you have placed bids, you will be able to see what position in the list you were for each property you bid for.

**How can I bid if I don’t have access to or am unable to use a computer?**

If you cannot bid for properties yourself, you can ask to be included in Wigan Council’s Homefinder scheme. This means that bids will be placed for you on suitable properties (based on the information given in your application form).

## How long will I have to wait for a home?

The length of time it takes to be offered a property varies enormously. There is high demand for housing in Wigan and some areas and property types (e.g. bungalows) receive high numbers of bids. Your priority will also affect whether you are offered a property.

Please be as flexible as you can be when considering which properties to bid for as this will give you the best chance of success.

**How can I increase my priority for housing?**

If you need to move because you can’t manage to live in your current property because of health conditions or disabilities or need to move because your current housing is causing problems for you, you may be able to get extra points or a higher banding for medical or welfare needs.

For your full housing needs to be considered, you will need to complete a medical or welfare application form and send this to the housing register team. You can download these forms from Wigan Council’s website. If you need help to complete these forms, please contact Age UK Wigan Borough’s Housing and Care Options Service on **01942 241972**.

**Can I apply to join the housing register if I own my home?**

You can apply to join Wigan Council’s housing register if you own your current property, however your application could be affected by the value of your property. If you expect to have equity of more than £65,000 from the sale of your house (after costs) you would usually be in lowest priority group for bidding.

If you move to rented accommodation and own another property, please be aware that the property you own is likely to affect your entitlement to means-tested benefits including Housing Benefit and Pension Credit.