Your Guide to Homespot
What is Homespot?
Homespot is Falkirk Council's Choice Based way of letting houses. Houses available for let are advertised and you can decide which houses you wish to be considered for.

We advertise our vacant properties every week. You can look at the list of adverts on the Council’s website at www.falkirk.gov.uk/homespot or in the Homespot newsletter that is available throughout the Council area i.e. at our Housing Needs Service, Advice and Support Hubs, local supported accommodation projects, libraries and in housing association partners’ offices.

There is also a free phone service (0800 678 3091). This is an answer machine service where you can leave a message and a member of staff will phone you back.

If you see a property that you like you can “bid” for it. A bid lets us know you are interested in a particular property and would like to be considered for it. It does not mean you will have to part with any money.

How do I register with Homespot?
You can get a registration form from our Housing Needs Service or one of our Advice and Support Hubs. A list of contact details is given at the end of this booklet.

If you need help to fill in the registration form staff from the Housing Needs Service or Advice and Support Hubs will be happy to assist.

To help us get you registered as quickly as possible you should make sure that you answer all the relevant questions on the form.

When you have filled in your registration form you should return it to the Housing Needs Service or Advice and Support Hubs.

How is my application assessed?
We will use the information you give us to decide what applicant group you are in e.g. a Home Seeker, Home Mover or Home Starter and you will also be placed in one of four “Bands”. A Band is a way of describing the priority for housing which you have been awarded (see section below for further detail of these).

The Band you are placed in depends on your level of housing need. You may be placed in Band 4 (which is the lowest band) when you first register until we have carried out a full assessment of your housing need.
If an assessment is carried out this should be done within 28 days of registration.

Within each Band applications are then placed in date order.

If your circumstances change at any time, you must tell us as it may affect the Band in which you are placed and the type of properties you can be considered for.

What are Home Seekers, Home Movers and Home Starters?
You are a Home Seeker if you are considered homeless in terms of homeless legislation. This is decided by a homeless assessment by our Housing Needs Service.

You are a Home Mover if you are already a tenant of Falkirk Council, a Housing Association or a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) living in the Council area and looking to move home.

All other applicants are Home Starters. This includes applicants that have been assessed as threatened with homelessness within the next two months.

We aim to let 33% of our vacant houses to Home Seekers, 33% to Home Movers and 33% to Home Starters.

What priority will I have for housing?
There are four levels of priority for housing which we refer to as “Bands”. Band 1 (the highest level of priority), Band 2, Band 3 and Band 4 (the lowest level of priority). You will be placed in one of these Bands depending on your level of housing need. The Bands are explained below:

Band 1

You will be placed in Band 1 if any of the following apply:

- You are a Home Seeker who is unintentionally homeless in terms of homelessness legislation. This includes applicants living in supported accommodation who are ready for more independent living.
- You are leaving the Armed Forces and your right to occupy service accommodation is coming to an end. You need to have been issued a certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to occupy Service Living Accommodation.
- You have been “looked after and accommodated” by Falkirk Council and are leaving your care placement.
- Your home is causing significant problems due to your medical condition or disability and you are unable to access or use essential facilities such as the bathroom
You need to be re-housed as a result of regeneration or redevelopment within the Falkirk Council area.

You are a Home Mover and together with another Home Mover wish to move to a bigger house so that you can live as a family unit. Priority will only be awarded if neither house is big enough for both households to live in and overcrowding will result from both parties living together in their current properties.

You have exceptional housing needs and a multi-agency case conference has recommended that you need to move. If you are awarded this priority you will be directly matched to a suitable property.

- You are overcrowded and two or more bedrooms are needed to meet your needs (see “What size of house will I be considered for?”).
- You live in a one bedroom property and you have two children under the age of 8 years sharing a bedroom with you.
- You have two teenage children of different genders sharing a bedroom.
- You are a Home Mover living in a house that is too big for your needs.
- You live in a house which lacks standard amenities e.g. a fixed bath or shower with a satisfactory hot and cold water supply.
Band 2

- You will be placed in Band 2 if any of the following apply:
  - You are a Home Starter living in the Falkirk Council area with no security of tenure. This does not apply to applicants living care of relatives, friends or lodgers.
  - You are sharing amenities with another household and you are overcrowded (see “What size of house will I be considered for?”).
  - You are overcrowded and one more bedroom is needed to meet your needs (see “What size of house will I be considered for?”).
  - You are living in a bed-sit.
  - You need to move for a social need e.g. to give/receive support.

Band 3

You will be placed in Band 3 if any of the following apply:

- You have children under the age of 10 and live in a tenement flat with no access to a shared garden or your own garden.
- You have frequent and regular overnight contact with children where the children’s principal home is elsewhere and you do not have a home of your own.
- Your independence is limited because you have a medical condition or disability and your current housing is not suitable (see Housing Priority Functional Assessment booklet).
- You have a local connection to the Falkirk Council area e.g. family reasons or employment.
- You are a Home Starter living in a house that is too big for your needs.
- You are living in the private sector and have a short assured tenancy agreement.
- You are sharing amenities with another household.

Band 4

You will be placed in Band 4 if you do not have any of the housing needs listed previously.

We will also tell you your Band date (this is the date you were awarded priority and your band). If you are Home Seeker with Band One priority, your band date will be the date you first contacted us to let us know that you are homeless. For all other applicants, your band date is the date your assessment was completed or 28 days after your date of application for priority, whichever is sooner.

If your circumstances change, this may also result in a change in the Band of priority you have been awarded. If your Band of priority changes then the band date will also change.
What if I have more than one housing need?

You will be awarded only one level of priority. If you have more than one housing need, you will be awarded priority for your highest ranked need.

Secondary housing needs are only taken into account when they relate to a medical condition or disability and following a Functional Needs Assessment (see Functional Needs Assessment booklet). On these occasions an indicator (F) is added to the banding e.g. an applicant may have a Band one priority for overcrowding and a medical recommendation for ground floor housing with a shower so their priority award will become Band 1(F) or B1F. This (F) indicator will allow you to bid for properties advertised as “Adapted”.

If you think that the priority you have been awarded does not reflect your needs, you can ask us to review your circumstances by using the Appeals Process (see our Allocations Appeal Process leaflet on how to appeal).

What choices do I have?

The aim of choice based lettings is to give you more choice over where you want to live and the type of house you want to live in.

We have a range of different types of houses that you can apply for. When we advertise a property we will say which applicant group can bid for it. You can only bid for properties that are advertised for your applicant group or properties that are advertised for All Groups.

When you register you will be asked which allocation area you would prefer to live in. There are ten allocation areas across the Council area and you can choose as many of these as you like. The allocation areas are:

- Bo’ness
- Bonnybridge / Banknock Braes
- Dawson
- Denny
- Falkirk Central
- Falkirk East
- Falkirk West Grangemouth
- Larbert / Stenhousemuir
**What if I recommendation for a certain type of house?**

If you have been awarded Band 1F or Band 3F priority because your home is unsuitable for you due to a medical condition or disability it may include a recommendation of the type of property that will be suitable for you. We will not consider you for any houses that do not match this recommendation, even if you bid for them. For example, if the recommendation is for ground floor housing, you will not be successful if you bid for a house with internal stairs.

If you feel that your health has improved and the recommendation is no longer relevant, you should tell us about this and we will review the priority and any recommendation. This may involve an Occupational Therapist or a Housing Visitor visiting you at home.

A review may not remove restrictions on the type of house you can be offered.

Properties that have been adapted will be advertised as “Adapted” properties and all applicants with a medical recommendation will be able to bid for these properties irrespective of whether they are a Home Seeker, Home Mover or Home Starter (see below for further information on this).

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**What size of house can I apply for?**

We want to make the best use of our housing stock and to do this we have Household Size Criteria as follows:

Couples are expected to share a room. Couples and single applicants will be considered for properties with one or two bedrooms.

Each household member over 8 years of age can have their own bedroom. Priority for overcrowding will not be awarded where two children under 8 years of age of either sex share a room which is larger than 110 square feet (10 square metres).

If you have two children of the same sex aged 8 years or over they can share a bedroom if you wish.

If you wish to move to a house the same size as the one you live in just now, we will not consider any overcrowding priority you may have.

Due to the lack of larger houses with three or four bedrooms, you can be considered for a property that is smaller than you need if it will still reduce overcrowding.

We recognise that some households may need a home that is bigger than the household size criteria allows e.g. an additional room may be needed because of a medical condition. Any professional recommendation for additional rooms will be taken into account in deciding what house size you qualify for.
Based on the household size criteria above you will only be able to bid for properties that meet the needs of your household.

**Property sequencing process**

In order to meet our target of allocating 33% of available properties to Home Seekers, 33% to Home Movers and the 33% to Home Starters we have an automatic sequencing process for vacant properties.

This process takes into account the allocation area the property is in, the size of the property, the property type and the date the property became void.

There are ten Allocation Areas which are listed under the “What Choices do I have” section. Within each Allocation Area, properties are grouped into the following sizes:

- Bedsit - two bedrooms
- Three bedrooms
- Four bedrooms or more

Within each Allocation Area and property size, properties are grouped into the following types:

- House / Bungalow
- Four-in-a Block
- Flat / Maisonettes / Multi Storey Flat

Properties are then sorted by the date they became void and sequenced separately for Home Seekers, Starters and Movers.

This is a rolling process which means that wherever we end one sequencing cycle the next one starts.

Housing with Care properties Level 3 and properties that have been designed or previously adapted for applicants with particular needs are not sequenced.

**Adapted Properties** - When we advertise adapted properties the advert will say that the property is adapted and what facility or adaptation is in the property e.g. level access shower, external ramp or fully adapted or accessible kitchen. All applicants that have been awarded priority following a Functional Needs Assessment will be able to bid for these properties irrespective of whether they are a “Home Seeker, Home Mover or Home Starter”. Preference will be given to applicants that need the facility or adaptation.
Local Lettings Initiative
Falkirk Council aims to make suitable allocations and to promote stable communities. Accordingly, some properties will be advertised to say that they are subject to a local lettings initiative. The following are our current Local Letting Initiatives:

**Group Settings** - When a house in a grouped setting e.g. within a block of flats, is vacated Neighbourhood Coordinators may consider the profile of the other households living within the grouping and, where appropriate, specify further eligibility criteria for lettings within the block or grouping.

**High Flats** - These are advertised to say that they are subject to a local lettings initiative and that “preference will be given to applicants aged 60 or over”.

**New Build Council Houses** - There is also a lettings initiative for the initial allocation of new Council houses built under the new house building programme. Where the Council has built general needs housing, preference will be given to existing Falkirk Council tenants.

The purpose of this lettings initiative is to maximise the opportunity for meeting housing needs that the additional supply of new Council housing offers. For example, rehousing existing tenants will result in more Council properties becoming available for letting to other housing applicants. In this way, more applicants can be rehoused. In effect, two households can benefit from each new build property.

Existing Council tenants that bid for new build general needs housing will be prioritised according to their Band of priority and their date of award of priority.

In the unlikely event that there are no suitable bids for these properties from existing Council tenants then other applicants will be considered.

Within the new build programme, ground floor properties are designed to barrier-free standards and are suitable for wheelchair users.

These properties will be advertised as “Adapted” and preference will be given to applicants that need the facilities provided.

**Will all houses be advertised?**
We will let most of our houses through Homespot however there are some exceptions and these are explained below:

Housing with Care level 1 and 2 i.e. housing for older people who are physically frail and need care and support services at home (see separate leaflet on Housing with Care). These properties will be matched to applicants following a full assessment of their needs.

We may need to use a property for temporary accommodation as a result of an emergency situation or to discharge our statutory duty in terms of homeless legislation.
If a property would meet the needs of an applicant with particular needs e.g. someone who cannot leave hospital because their own home is unsuitable then we may re-house another applicant to allow their property to be let to the applicant with particular needs.

We may need to use a property to house an applicant that has been awarded priority due to exceptional needs.

How long will the advertising cycle last?
Properties are advertised every week. The cycle opens at 12 noon on a Wednesday and closes at 12 noon 7 days later. All adverts clearly state the closing date for bids to be made.

What information will be included in an advert?
We aim to make sure that adverts have enough information to help you make an informed decision about whether or not the property is right for you.

An advert will include the following information:
- the address of property
- the property type e.g. house, flat, multi-storey flat
- the number of bedrooms
- the type of heating
- the weekly rent
- which applicant group will be given preference i.e. Home Seeker, Home Mover, Home Starter, Adapted or All
- any additional qualifying criteria
- the date and time that bidding for the property closes
- a photograph of the property.

What do I do if I see a property I like?
When you see a property you are interested in, you should check what applicant group the property has been advertised for e.g. Home Seeker, Home Movers or Home Starter. You can only bid for properties that are advertised for the applicant group that you are in. For example, if you are a Home Seeker applicant you can only bid for properties advertised for Home Seekers. The same applies to Home Movers and Home Starters.
You can bid for a property in the ways listed below:

- online through our website at www.falkirk.gov.uk/homespot
- by contacting one of our Advice and Support Hubs or Housing Needs Service
- by filling in and returning a bidding coupon
- by phoning 0800 678 3091 (free phone).

If you want to bid for a property you must make sure that we receive your bid before the closing date and time stated in the advert. Bids will not be accepted after the list has closed.

**How many properties can I bid for?**

You can bid for as many properties as you like in any advertising cycle as long as the property is advertised for the applicant group that you are in.

**Important** - if you bid for more than one property, you need to enter your bids in the order of your preference starting with the property you are most interested in. This is very important because if you are successful for more than one property that you bid for we will allocate the properties in the order you bid for them starting with your first bid. If your first bid is successful, we will not consider any later bids you have made.

**What help and support will I get?**

Our staff will help you use Homespot until you get familiar with bidding for properties. We can continue to help you if you have particular problems using Homespot.

How do you decide which bid is successful?

It does not matter whether you make your bid on the first day or the last day of the advertising cycle. Once bidding has closed, everyone who has made a bid for a property will be considered. We will prepare a short-list of suitable applicants who:

- meet the criteria in the advert i.e. Home Seeker, Home Mover or Home Starter and any additional qualifying criteria
- would make “best use” of the property - for example would use all the bedrooms are not suspended for any reason
- have a recommendation for a property type which matches the property advertised (where applicable).

The short listed applicants will be ranked in order of their level of priority. If there is more than one applicant with the same level of priority, the property will be offered to the applicant that has had that priority longest. For applicants in Band Four, this will be their date of application.
What will happen if there are no eligible bids from the advertised applicant group?
If there are no eligible bids for a property from the advertised applicant group, we will either directly match the property to a Home Seeker that has not been bidding for properties (see section “What is time limited priority for Home Seekers?”) or re-advertise the property for All Groups.

How will I know if I am to be offered a property?
If your bid is successful, you will normally be contacted within 7 days of the closing date. If you are not available when we try to contact you a letter will be left at the address you have given on your application asking you to contact us urgently. It is very important that you respond quickly. If we do not hear from you within 48 hours it will be considered that you are refusing a potential offer of housing which means that the offer will count as one of your offers of housing. Your application will also be suspended for 28 days and if you do not contact us within the 28 days, to let us know that you are still interested in housing, your application will be cancelled.

If you have bid on a property and have not heard from us within 14 days of the closing date, it is unlikely that you have been successful on that occasion and you should keep bidding for properties which suit your needs.

What happens if I refuse a property?
All applicants can be made up to two offers of housing. We hope that if your bid is successful you will accept the property you are offered.

However, if you are a Home Mover or Home Starter and refuse two properties you will lose any priority for housing need and move to Band Four. After 12 months you can ask to have your situation re-assessed. If you are a Home Seeker and you have been bidding for properties on a regular basis you can be made up to two offers. If you refuse the first offer this will not affect your priority however, if you refuse two offers your priority for homelessness will be removed as the Council will have discharged its duty to you in terms of homeless legislation. Your application group will change from Home Seeker to Home Starter and your housing situation will be reassessed. If you are living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council, you will have to leave this.
**Time limited priority for Home Seekers**

If you are a Home Seeker and have not been actively bidding for properties we will make you an offer of housing out with Homespot i.e. we will directly match you to a property. We will try to offer you a property in the areas you have chosen but this will depend on the availability of properties. If you refuse this offer of housing, your priority for homelessness will be removed as the Council will have discharged its duty to you in terms of homeless legislation. Your application group will change from Home Seeker to Home Starter and your housing situation will be reassessed. If you are living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council, you will have to leave this.

We will also directly match you to a property and make you an offer of housing out with Homespot if:

- you successfully bid for a property and then refuse it and do not bid again for more than three months
- you do not bid for suitable properties advertised by Link
- Housing Association through their HomeHunt scheme
- you refuse a property offered under nomination arrangements.

However if, during the three month period, no suitable properties are advertised or your bids have been unsuccessful, you will continue to be a Home Seeker with Band One. We will continue to monitor your application to make sure you are bidding for properties which meet your household needs. If you are living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council, you can continue to live there.

**How will I find out about which properties have been let?**

We will publish information about properties that have been let in previous advertising cycles. We will tell you the number of applicants that bid for the property, the Band and the Band date of the successful applicant. We will not publish personal information about the successful applicants, such as name and address.

This information will be available on our website at www.falkirk.gov.uk/homespot and at our Advice and Support Hubs and Housing Needs Service.

We hope that this feedback will give you a better idea of how popular a particular property or area is and how long you would normally have to wait. You can then decide whether to look for other types of properties or areas where you may not have to wait as long.
Useful Contacts

**Abbeyfield Society (Falkirk) Ltd**  
Thornville, Ladysmill  
Falkirk FK2 9AU  
Tel: 01324 634357  
Website: www.abbeyfield-scotland.com

**Ark Housing Association**  
The Priory, Canaan Lane  
Edinburgh EH10 4SG  
Tel: 0131 447 9027  
Website: www.arkha.org.uk

**Barony Housing Association**  
2 Earls Court, Roseland Hall Earls Gate Park Grangemouth FK3 8ZE  
Tel: 0845 140 7777  
Website: www.baronyha.org.uk

**Bield Housing Association**  
7 Eagle Street, Glasgow G4 9XA  
Tel: 0141 270 7200  
Email: info@bield.co.uk  
Website: www.bield.co.uk

**Cairn Housing Association**  
15 North Claremont Street  
Glasgow G3 7NR  
Tel: 0141 353 1944  
Website: www.cairnha.com

**Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association**  
1 Hay Avenue, Edinburgh EH16 4RW  
Tel: 0131 657 0600  
Email: customer@castlerockedinvar.co.uk  
Website: www.castlerockedinvar.co.uk

**Hanover Housing Association**  
95 McDonald Road  
Edinburgh EH7 4NS  
Tel: 0131 557 0598  
Email: admin@hsha.org.uk  
Website: www.hsha.org.uk

**Horizon Housing**  
Association Leving House,  
Fairbairn Place, Livingston EH54 6TN  
Tel: 0845 600 8648  
Website: www.horizonhousing.org

**Key Housing Association**  
The Square, 70 Renton Street  
Glasgow G4 0HT  
Tel: 0141 342 1890  
Email: info@keyhousing.org  
Website: www.keyhousing.org

**Kingdom Housing Association**  
Saltire Centre, Pentland Court,  
Glenrothes Fife KY6 2DA  
Tel: 01592 631 661  
Email: kingdom@kingdomhousing.org.uk  
Website: www.kingdomhousing.org.uk

**Link Housing Association**  
Watling House  
Callendar Business Park  
Falkirk FK1 1XR  
Tel: 0845 140 0100  
Email: csc@linkhaltd.co.uk  
Website: www.linkhousing.co.uk

**Loretto Housing Association**  
Head Office:  
Lipton House, 2nd Floor  
170 Crown Street, Glasgow G5 9XB  
Tel: 0141 420 7950  
Email: headoffice@lorettoha.co.uk  
Website: www.lorettoha.co.uk

**Margaret Blackwood H.A.**  
1 Belses Gardens Cardonald G52 2DY  
Tel: 0141 883 4477  
Email: info@mbha.org.uk  
Website: www.mbha.org.uk

**Paragon Housing Association**  
Invergrange House, Station Road  
Grangemouth FK3 8DG  
Tel: 01324 664966  
Email: enquiries@paragonha.org.uk  
Website: www.paragonha.org.uk
Penumbra
Norton Park, 57 Albion Road
Edinburgh EH7 5QY
Tel: 0131 475 2380
Email: enquiries@penumbra.org.uk
Website: www.penumbra.org.uk

Scottish Veterans Garden City Association
New Haig House, Logie Green Road
Edinburgh EH7 4HQ
Tel: 0131 557 1188
Email: mail@svgca.org.uk
Website: www.housesforheroes.org.uk

Weslo Housing Management
15 North Street, Bo’ness EH51 0AQ
Tel: 01506 639100
Email: wesloproperty@weslohm.co.uk
Website: www.weslo-housing.org

Y People
William Harte House, 15 Dava Street
Glasgow G51 2JA
Tel: 0141 565 1200
Email: admin@ypeople.org.uk
Website: www.ypeople.org.uk

Deposit Guarantee Scheme
Corporate & Housing Services
Falkirk Council
The Forum Callendar Business Park,
Falkirk FK1 1XR
Tel: 01324 506070
Email: privatesector.housing@falkirk.gov.uk
Website: www.falkirk.gov.uk

Housing Team
Advice and Support Hubs
Housing Needs Service
Callendar Square
Falkirk FK1 1ZF
Freephone: 0800 587 4440
Tel: 01324 503600
E-mail: ath@falkirk.gov.uk

housing.cameron@falkirk.gov.uk
housing.dawson@falkirk.gov.uk
housing.denny@falkirk.gov.uk
housing.falkirk@falkirk.gov.uk
housing.grangemouth@falkirk.gov.uk
(houses for heroes)
housing.stenhousemuir@falkirk.gov.uk
01324 506070

HUBS
West Advice and Support Hub
Carronbank House
Carronbank Crescent
Denny FK6 6GB

East Advice and Support Hub
5 York Lane
Grangemouth FK3 9BD
Privacy Statement
The Council must comply with Data Protection Legislation as defined by the Data Protection Act 2018. If you supply personal information to us you can find out how we handle personal data at www.falkirk.gov.uk/privacy

Have your say on how your Housing Service is run, or how it could be improved. To find out more, contact Inspector Tenant on 01324 590796, email inspector.tenant@falkirk.gov.uk or visit us at www.falkirk.gov.uk/inspectortenant for more information.

If you would like this information in another language, Braille, large print or audio tape please contact Housing Needs Service.

Falkirk Council
www.falkirk.gov.uk/homespot

December 2018