



BASILDON CHOICE

A Guide to Online Registration

Preparing to apply for housing

All applications to join the Homeseeker Register should now be made online. This applies to new applications or telling us about a change in circumstances on a current application.

If you are applying for the first time, have a pen and paper handy to make a note of your Housing Reference login number, memorable date and password. If your application is successful, you will need these to log back into your account to bid for properties.

You will need to provide your National Insurance number for yourself, joint applicant (if applicable) and anyone living with you as part of your household aged 16 or over. You should have these numbers ready before you start your application.

How long will it take to complete the application?

The form should take 30 – 60 minutes to complete dependant on the number of family members in your household to be included.

You will have up to 15 minutes PER PAGE. If you run out of time you will be returned to the login page, where you should re-enter your login reference, memorable date and password. You can then click on the link to continue your Social Housing application form. Details that you entered on the previous page will be saved, but part completed pages will not.

The application is in two parts. First you need to register your personal details.

Questions marked with an asterisk* are mandatory and you will not be able to move on to the next section until you have answered them. At this point you will be asked to choose a memorable date and password. When you submit the registration form this will create your personal account and you will be given a Login Reference number and you then can then click on the link under the Social Housing heading to complete the online Homeseeker application form.

Answer all questions that apply to you or if the question is asking for a Yes/No answer then click on the applicable one to your circumstances, then click on 'next page' to save your answers and move on.

You must provide information that is truthful and accurate. At the end of the application you will be asked to confirm an online declaration that you have answered the questions truthfully and have not withheld any information. You will also need to then download a copy of the 'Consent and Declaration' form. This needs to be signed by all members of your household aged 18 and above who are included on your Homeseeker application and will be moving with you, and returned to us within 5 working days from the date that you submitted your application online.

What if I don't have a computer?

Computer access is available free of charge in the reception of the Basildon Centre.

Can I join the Homeseeker register?

Some applicants are not able to join the Homeseeker Register because the law says they cannot (ineligible applicants) or because the rules in our Allocations Scheme say they cannot (non-qualifiers). These groups are described in more detail in the Allocation Scheme which is available on the Basildon Borough Council website page: <http://www.basildon.gov.uk/allocationscheme>

The application has a qualification test and if you do not pass this test you will not be able to complete the application and will be directed towards alternative housing options for you to consider

Basildon Council is unable to offer social housing to applicants that do not qualify in accordance with the Allocation Scheme.

What if I disagree with the decision?

If you are notified during the process that you do not pass the qualification test, you can ask for a review of that decision if you believe it is incorrect. You should put your request in writing on the Homeseeker online pre-assessment decision review form available on the Basildon Choice website detailing the reasons you disagree within 21 days of the decision. Please ensure you have included your Login Reference number on the form.

Some Information you may need when completing your form

- A pen and paper to note your reference number, memorable date and password
- National Insurance numbers for the main and joint applicant and all household members aged 16 or over
- Email address if you have one – we will send letters via email instead of post if you have notified us of your email address, which will enable us to contact you to request information or inform you of our decision more quickly– **it is important to provide an email address if possible**
- Names and dates of birth for everyone in your household who will be moving with you.
- A list of all addresses where you and other members of your household have lived for the last seven years including post code and landlord contact details
- Information about earnings, benefits, savings and owned properties for you and everyone considered as part of your household
- Details of any medical conditions affecting you or anyone included as part of your household. If you have stated you have a medical condition that makes your current home unsuitable or feel you a medical need for a particular property type, you will be required to complete the additional medical questions within the application
- If anyone is helping you complete the form, their name and contact details

Change in circumstances for existing applicants

If you are already registered on the Homeseeker Register and your application is active but you need to tell us about a change in circumstances, you need to log in to your online account and update your Homeseeker application form with the changes. This will ensure that your application is up to date and that you can bid for suitable properties which meet your needs and have been awarded the right level of priority. Please ensure that you go to the last page of the form and press submit once you have made the relevant changes to your application.

If your application is not currently active but you need to notify us about a change of circumstances then please contact the councils Customer Service Centre who will note the details and pass to the Housing Applications team who will contact you and reset your form if necessary for you to enter your changes.

Examples of changes of circumstances are detailed below, although this list is not exhaustive:

- You move home

- Someone in your household moving in or out your home
- You want to add a family member to your application e.g. birth of a child □ your employment or your earnings/benefits change in any way.
- You buy or sell a property, or have any change to you savings amount
- Change of medical circumstances of any household member
- Death of a joint applicant or household member
- Any other circumstances that may materially affect your Homeseeker application



The application will be suspended whilst we are reassessing your application. We will write to you to request any extra information or documentation required to support your changes and you must provide this within the stated timescale or your application will be cancelled.

Annual renewals

We no longer undertake annual reviews of Homeseeker applications, therefore it is essential that you keep your application updated.

However if you have not expressed an interest in any available properties for one year, we may contact you to see if you still wish to remain on the register and to explain that your application will be cancelled within 28 days unless we are advised otherwise. You may be requested to attend an interview to discuss your housing needs further if you wish to remain on the register.

Property Offers

If you receive an offer, this will be a provisional offer (notified by an online account message or email), and you will need to revalidate your application within 48 hours. This is to prove that you are entitled to the property and you have not had a change in circumstances that you have not notified us of.

Further details of the verification process and what documents you may need to provide will be detailed in the provisional offer letter.

Completing the application

The following sections refer to different parts of the online form and provide guidance to how to complete the form

Getting Started

Go to www.basildonchoice.org.uk

Click on the 'Register' tab at the top of the page

Enter national insurance numbers for you and the joint applicant if you have one

Making a joint application would result in any property offers being made to both persons as a joint tenancy, and both would share equal tenancy rights and responsibilities.

Existing joint tenants of social housing should apply as joint applicants

For other applicants, please see a summary of the qualification criteria on pages 14 & 15 of this guide. If only one of you meets the qualification criteria you cannot apply jointly and the non-qualifying person should be included on the form as a household member.

Section A

Applicant Details

Enter details of the main applicant

Enter details of current address where you reside. You can enter your postcode and then click on 'Find address' to choose your address from a dropdown list. If it doesn't appear on the list you can enter it manually. Enter the date you moved into this address

If the address where you receive your post is different to your main address, you can also enter these details in the correspondence address section, however we will always contact you by email rather than post if you provide an email address.

Enter your contact details. Provide an email address if possible, and all telephone numbers that we can contact you on. The main telephone number is mandatory.

If you are successful in bidding for a property, we will contact you via email and your online account message – if we are unable to contact you in time to notify you what documentation you need to provide, the offer maybe withdrawn and offered to the next person shortlisted but will still be counted as one of your offers. Therefore it is very important for you to keep your contact details up to date and wherever possible, ensure that we have an email contact for you. Once you have registered our household you can login and update your email and telephone contact details from your My Account page.

Applicant Monitoring

In this section you need to enter details of:

- Date of birth
- Gender
- Ethnic Origin
- Religion
- Nationality
- Marital Status
- Pregnancy (if applicable) and when baby is due
- Disability
- If feel that you have a medical condition that makes your current home unsuitable OR a medical need for a particular property type, e.g., ground floor/shower, if rehoused.
- If you currently receive care
- If you have always lived in the Borough.

Financial Details

This section requires information regarding your income/savings.

Income includes all benefits received including council tax and housing benefit. Savings include all bank/building society accounts, premium bonds, National Savings, Isa's, Stocks & Shares and Unit trust certificates

- Confirm your total gross annual income rounded to the nearest pound, do not include pennies
- Confirm what your total savings rounded to the nearest pound, do not include pennies
- Confirm if any savings includes a lump sum compensation from the Armed Forces as we will discount this amount

Employment Details

This section requires confirmation if you are working or not - dependant on how many hours you work, you could be awarded additional priority regarding your effective date in band.

If you have answered yes to employment – then complete rest of the section. State how many hours and if you have been employed continuously for 12 months or more.

Property Details

In this section you are required to confirm:

- If you own or part own any property (this includes caravans, mobile homes or houseboats). If yes, confirm how many you own including any that you do not reside in.
- The address of each property
- The total value of your share of the property/s

Other Details

In this section you are required to confirm:

- Which language you prefer using
- If you moved here from abroad
- Your immigration status

Medical Assessment

If you have selected 'Yes' to the 'Do you feel that you have a medical condition that makes your current home unsuitable OR there is a medical need for a particular property type, e.g., ground floor/shower, if rehoused?' question previously in the form, you will need to complete the medical assessment questions, (these will not show if you did not state you had a medical need to move).

You must enter:

- Name of illness or disability
- List of medication
- How your health problems affect your life
- Your mobility needs
- Details of your current home
- Doctors name, address and contact number
- Details of any treatment received i.e. counselling, psychiatrist etc.
- Type of heating in your home
- Details how your current home affects your health
- Details of whether your health problem is affected by anything else in or near your home
- Whether any adaptations could make your home suitable

Medical Declaration and Medical Consent statement

By completing the declaration and the consent you are certifying that the information you have provided on the medical form is correct, and that you consent for any healthcare professional to release information to the Council in relation to your application if necessary.



Login Details

You will be required to set a memorable date – this will be required each time you wish to login to your account once you are registered therefore it is important that you keep a note of it for future use. You will also be required to set a password this must include at least 2 uppercase letters, 2 lowercase letters and 2 numbers. Symbols and punctuation are not allowed.

When you have entered a memorable date and password then click 'Submit Form'

Please note-some sections are mandatory and if not completed, the pink highlighted text will advise you what sections need to be completed before you can submit the registration form. You can see what areas are highlighted by scrolling down the page.

Once you have completed this form you will be given a unique Login Reference number, which you will need to enter along with your memorable date and password when you next login to your account online.

Joint Applicant and Other Household Members

You can add additional household member's on this page, you will then be asked to choose whether you wish to add the person as a joint applicant or additional household member.

Please note that Joint applicants in most cases are considered as husband/wife/partner/civil partner/fiancé living in the same property. If you are a Basildon Council or HA transferring tenant, only the other current joint tenant may be added as a joint applicant. Any other relationships would need to be entered as 'household member'

All persons added will be required to complete the same questions as the Main applicant, National Insurance numbers are mandatory for all persons aged 16+ and in addition they will be required to confirm:

- What relationship they are to the main applicant the member is i.e. partner, son, daughter etc.)
- If their address is different to the main applicant, enter the address detail, the date they moved in and the reason why they live apart

When you complete page for each person click 'Save Joint Member' or 'Save Additional Member' you can then add another person or go to the 'Next Page'

Section B – Qualification

Age Qualification-

- Answer all questions Yes/No

Local Residence and Local Residence exceptions

- Answer all questions Yes/No

Financial Limits

- Total gross income-this is automatically calculated and represents the total gross income of all household members based on previous answers
- Total household savings-this is automatically calculated and represents the total savings of all household members based on previous answers minus any Armed Forces compensation amount entered.
- Own or part-own a residential property in Basildon or elsewhere? This is automatically calculated based on previous answers.
- Total properties value own or part owned (£)-this is automatically calculated and represents the total value of all household members property shares based on previous answers.
- Is this property unsuitable for medical reasons?- If any household member has stated that they own or part own a property you must answer Yes/No

Click 'Next page' to save your answers and continue

Section C - Housing Need

Current bedroom details

- State the total amount of bedrooms in the property including any used by people who will not be moving with you
- State how many you and anyone moving with you has use of

e.g. If you live at home and share a bedroom with a sibling (brother/sister) and they are not part of your household moving with you, then you do not have sole use of a room and so you should enter 0. If you do not share a bedroom, you would have the sole use of a room so you would enter 1.

- You must then confirm who sleeps in each room (including those not moving with you). You must list the names, ages of all persons and their relationship to the main applicant

Main and Joint applicants (or household members who are partners) are expected to sleep in the same room unless there are medical reasons why this is not the case.

Household Need

- Answer all questions Yes/No

If you are living with family/friends or in lodgings in a shared house, you need to confirm if you share kitchen/bathroom facilities with people that are NOT moving with you, e.g. if you live with your parents who are not part of your application then answer Yes to the question 'Do you share kitchen or bathroom facilities with anyone NOT considered as part of the housing application, e.g., living with family/friends/renting a room etc.?'

Click 'Next Page' to save your answers and continue

Section D - Your Present Home

- You must choose your current housing situation from the dropdown options
If you choose 'Other' you must explain your situation in the textbox below the question.
- You must confirm your tenancy type and landlord details, if you are not a tenant then choose 'Other'.
- You must confirm you property type, floor level, whether the property has a lift and whether it has a gas fire with a back boiler in the living room.

If you reside in a house—choose ground floor as houses are considered ground floor for the purpose of the Homeseeker register.

Landlord details

Only complete this section if you are renting from a landlord i.e. private renting, council, housing association etc.

Living with family/friends

Only complete this section if you are living with family or friends

- Enter the main householder's name
- Enter their address and a telephone contact number, and email address if possible

Reason for move

- You must choose all reasons that apply, you must choose at least 1
- If you choose 'Other' then specify in the text box below the question

Pets

- You must answer Yes/No to the question 'Do you have any cats or dogs that will be moving with you?'

Some properties do not permit pets and so if you have answered 'Yes' you will not be able to bid for properties that have this restriction

- If you have any other pets you must list them in the text box below the question

Click 'Next Page' to save your answers and continue

Section E -Past Addresses

- You must enter 7 years address history for each person aged 16 or over.

Moving in and out dates must not overlap, you are allowed a maximum of 14 days between the date that you moved out of a property and moved into the next property. You cannot enter any date in the future.

Click 'Next Page' to save you answers and continue

Section F- Eviction/Anti-social Behaviour

Checks will be undertaken so it is essential you answer truthfully, you are at risk of your application being cancelled if it is established you have deliberately given incorrect information.

Eviction details

- Eviction from a tenancy includes accommodation in the private sector. If the answer is 'Yes' then you must complete the rest of the section, if 'No' then move to:

Conviction details

- If the answer is 'Yes' then you must list the name and dates of each conviction, if 'No' then move to:

ASB details

- If the answer is 'Yes' then you must give details of any current or previous ASBO/ASBC, if 'No' then move to:

Click 'Next Page' to save your answers and continue

Section G – Housing Related Debt

Checks will be undertaken so it is essential you answer truthfully – you are at risk of your application being cancelled if it is established you have deliberately given incorrect information.

Current housing related debt

- If the answer is 'Yes' to 'Do you or a member of your household currently owe any housing related debt?' you must then give details of your weekly rent, the outstanding debt, whether a payment arrangement is in place and if so when it was made.
- If 'No' then move to:

Previous landlord outstanding debt

- If the answer is 'Yes' to 'Do you or a member of your household owe any money to a previous landlord?' You must then complete all questions in this section to give full details of the tenancy, landlord, debt and any payment arrangement.

Click 'Next Page' to save your answers and continue

Section I – Community Contribution

Main applicant - community contribution

- Answer questions Yes/No

- If you have answered 'Yes' you must state how many hours per week that you contribute

Joint applicant - community contribution

If there is no joint applicant click 'Next Page' to save your answers and continue

Section J - Your Preferred Areas

You can choose as many areas of preference as you wish but you must select at least 1.

- To select an area start typing it in the text box, the area will appear directly below and you should click on it to add it to your selection
- Alternatively click 'Browse for locations' and select areas from the dropdown. If you choose Basildon you will see a further choice of Central, Laindon, Pitsea, and Vange. Tick each one that you wish to add, then click 'Add selected areas' You may amend your choices using the 'Delete' buttons

Click 'Next Page' to save your answers and continue

Section K – Additional Information

Other contacts

If you would like us to discuss all aspects of your application with someone else, please provide their details here.

Other details

If you, or a member of your household or wider family is, or is related in any way to, an elected member of Basildon Council, an employee of the Council or any partner Housing Association, a board member of any partner Housing Association or employed by another company engaged in delivering services for the Council or its partners, you must give full details in this section.

Click 'Next Page' to save your answers and continue

Section L – Supporting Information

Please advise in this section if there is any additional information you would like to tell us.

Important – Review you answers now

Please now read and check all information you have provided throughout the application form by clicking on the 'Previous Page' buttons at the bottom of each page.

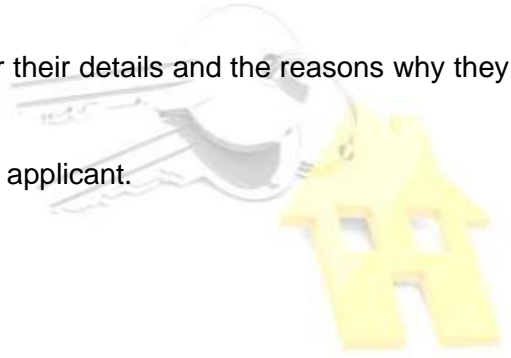
If you have included any persons 18 years and over within your application, they must also read, check and be in agreement that all the information provided is correct and true to the best of their knowledge as you will each be required to read the consent and declaration section on the next page before accepting the statement and submitting your application form.

Once you click 'Next Page' at the bottom of this page, you cannot go back and check any details you have provided on previous pages, therefore if you are not ready to submit your application at this point you should logout and continue to edit your application when you next login.

When you have checked your answers and wish to submit your application Click 'Next Page' to save your answers and continue

Completing the form on behalf of someone else

- If the form has been completed by someone else, enter their details and the reasons why they have completed the form.
- Also confirm if this person has power of attorney for the applicant.



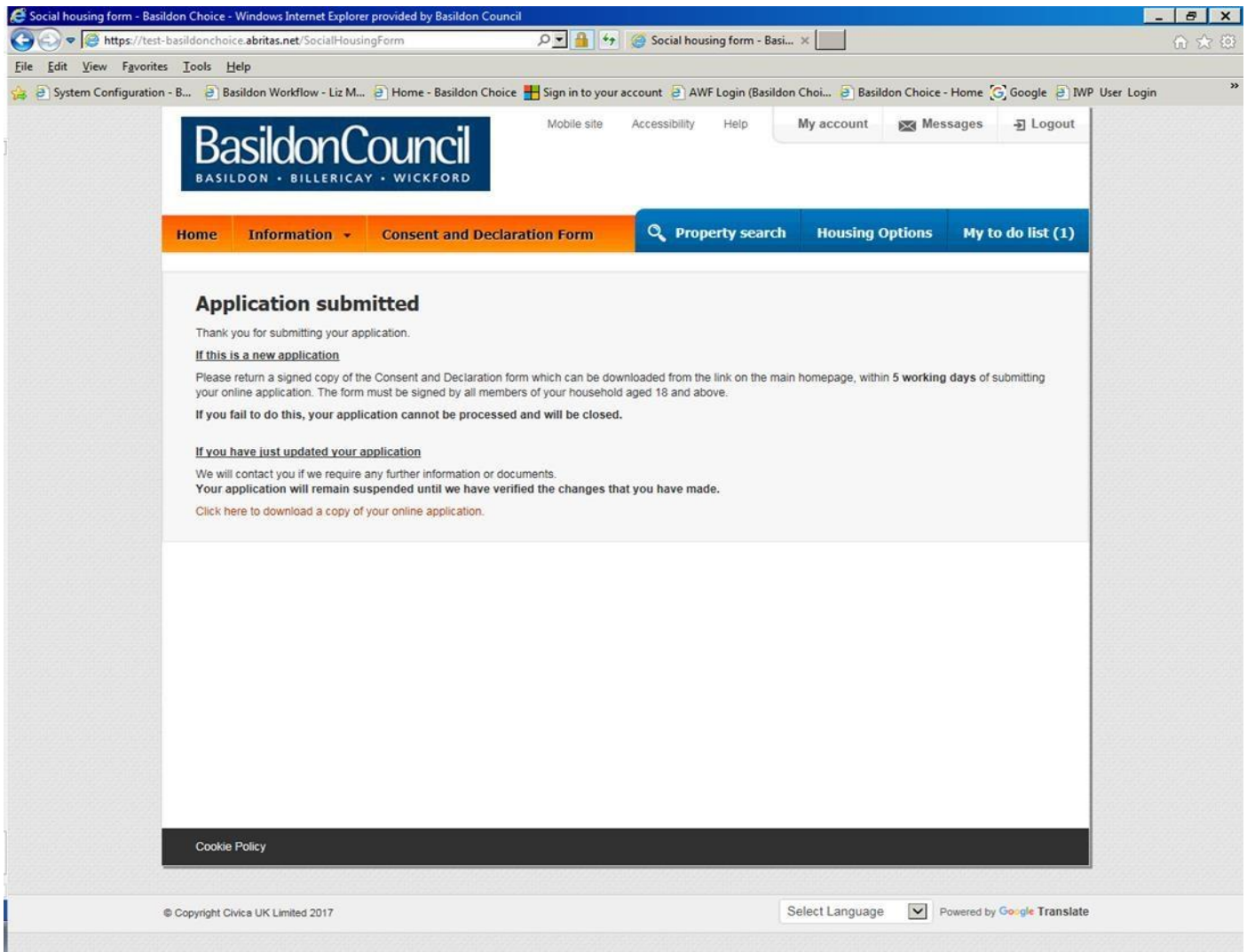
Consent & Declaration

All persons aged 18 and over who are included on the application and will be moving with you should read the Consent and Declaration.

By clicking 'Yes' to 'I accept the above statement' you are confirming that all the information you have entered on the form is correct.

Enter your 'Declaration Date' and then click 'Submit form' if you wish to submit your Homeseeker application.

WHEN YOU HAVE SUBMITTED YOUR APPLICATION YOU WILL THEN SEE THE FOLLOWING SCREEN:



PLEASE NOTE - It is very important that you now download a Consent and Declaration form from the orange Consent and Declaration link on the page. This needs to be signed by all members of your household aged 18 and above who are included on your Homeseeker application and will be moving with you, and returned to us within 5 working days from the date that you submitted your application online.

Once we receive the signed form we will contact you to request more information/document required to assess your application.

If you fail to do this, your application cannot be processed and will be closed.

On this screen you are also given the option to download a copy of your online application form. If you want to save a copy then you should do this now as you will not be able to do this once you leave this screen.