



Applying for an **Accessible Property**

Make your home in Monmouthshire



Version 2 | September 2025



www.monmouthshirehomesearch.co.uk



Thank you for registering with **Monmouthshire Homesearch**. You have indicated mobility and access needs in your application. This booklet will explain what to expect next with regards to ensuring we offer your household a suitable property to meet your needs.

How we allocate adapted and accessible properties

Community Landlords in Monmouthshire aim to allocate homes that are best suited to the current needs of the Homesearch applicant and their household. Please ensure that you only place bids on properties that are advertised as suitable for your current access and mobility requirements.

If you have indicated that you have a medical need to move, we will ask you to provide supporting evidence from qualified professionals, and additional information to explain how moving from your current home would improve your circumstances.

Our Homesearch officers will then assess and place your application into a 'priority band' that reflects your current circumstances and unmet housing needs.

Our Allocations Policy can be found on our website www.monmouthshirehomesearch.co.uk/choice/default.aspx

A list of acceptable professional evidence is also available via the website under the help page.

www.monmouthshirehomesearch.co.uk/choice/help

Your Monmouthshire Homesearch application

Before a Community Landlord offers an applicant an accessible home, we work very closely with Occupational Therapists' (O.T.'s) at Monmouthshire County Council to ensure we are clear on the type of property and adaptations you require in your new home. To do this, we will request an assessment from an O.T. practitioner.

The O.T. can often complete this assessment quickly if they are already aware of your needs because you have been working with their service, but if not, they will get in touch with you and arrange to complete the Homesearch O.T. assessment and send it to us.

This assessment will be saved to your Homesearch journal so that our Community Landlords can access it easily, to check if a property you have placed a bid on is suitable for your household. If the property does not match the access and adaptation needs stated on your O.T. assessment, then the Landlord will overlook you for the property.

Please note:

If you are living outside of Monmouthshire but have a local connection to the area, we will contact your local council to request an O.T. assessment. If you are already working with an Occupational Therapist in your current council or local health service, it is useful if you can give us their contact details on your medical application form so we can contact them directly. If the Local Council will not, or cannot, complete an assessment for us we may ask you to contact them directly to request one. This is because any housing access and mobility needs that you have indicated on your Homesearch application must be confirmed by a qualified therapist.

Advertising our accessible and adapted homes

Every property on Homesearch is advertised for a minimum of 8 days. This means that if you check the Homesearch website once a week & on the same day, you will not miss any adverts for homes that are suitable for you.

Advert information will include the priority criteria, property accessibility and any adaptations that are already in the property.

This helps applicants to make an informed decision, before placing a bid, that the advertised property meets their household needs.

Sadly, there are more Homesearch applicants who require accessible and adapted properties than there are available properties to meet these needs; this means that applicants are required to wait for a suitable property.

You must place a 'bid' on any advert that you are interested in applying for and that is suitable for your household. Placing a bid is an expression of your interest and tells us that you wish to be considered for the property.

Please be advised:

You cannot be considered for a property if you do not place a bid on it before the advert closes.

You cannot be considered for a property that does not meet your access and adaptation needs.

Many of our accessible and adapted properties will have a mobility rating given on the advert, which will be summarised by one of the following icons:

Mobility Levels:



Level 1 - Suitable for people who are full-time wheelchair users



Level 2 - Suitable for people who do not use a wheelchair indoors but cannot climb stairs or steps



Level 3 - Suitable for people who do not use a wheelchair but have limited mobility

Assisted bidding

We understand that some applicants will need assistance from Homesearch with finding suitable accommodation using our on-line service. This includes applicants who have no internet access, and applicants with disabilities and/or vulnerabilities that means they cannot read our property adverts or use the Homesearch website.

If you find it difficult to use our website to make bids on Homesearch adverts you can request our 'assisted bidding' service.

Please contact Homesearch on **0345 900 2956** and ask to talk to someone about assisted bidding. We will discuss your housing needs and location preferences to build a preference list for you to ensure bids are automatically placed on suitable properties, and community landlords only get in touch with you to offer you suitable homes.

It is important that you phone and tell us if your housing or location preferences change right away. This is to ensure that you are not offered a property that you then refuse, as this can affect your priority band on your application.



Shortlisting Homesearch adverts

When the property advert closes, a list of eligible applicants who have placed a bid is automatically produced. Shortlisting can take up to 2 weeks to begin; please do not contact Homesearch or the Community landlord about this, as responding to enquiries from applicants can delay the shortlisting process further. You can track the progress of the allocation when you log into your account and can see if an advertised property has been offered to another applicant.

If you have children and your household requires an accessible home with 2 bedrooms, the Community Landlord will not usually consider you for a house. This is because there are a number of 2-bedroom bungalows and ground floor apartments regularly available in the county that are more suitable for your someone with mobility needs.

However, if you have children and need an accessible home with 3 or more bedrooms, the Community Landlord may consider adapting a house that already has some accessibility features. For example, if a property already has a wet room, they may consider installing a stair-lift - provided you are able to use one and funding is available. This is due to the limited availability of larger, ground-floor, adapted, and accessible properties in the county.

If you are at the top of the shortlist the Landlord will check if you have indicated there are any mobility/ accessibility requirements. They will try to ensure that the property you have placed a bid on matches your household's mobility/ accessibility needs, from the information you have submitted and the O.T assessment. They will only proceed with a provisional offer to you if you are at the top of the list and there is a mobility/ accessibility match.

A further assessment with the OT may be required before a provisional offer is made to you, for example to check the property is suitable for your long-term needs, or if any additional minor adaptations are required inside the property.

If there is not a match between the property and your household needs the Landlord will 'overlook' your bid, and move on to the next suitable applicant on the shortlist who has placed a bid. For example:

- If there are 4 steps to the front door of the property and the O.T. assessment says you can only manage 1 or 2 steps, then the property will not be a match for you, and will not be offered it.
- If the door frames in the property or the turning circles in the hallway are not wide enough for someone in your household who uses a wheelchair indoors, then the property is not a match for you, and you will not be offered it.

- If the property has a shower over the bath, and your O.T. assessment says that you require a wetroom, then the property is not a match for you, and you will not be offered it.
- If the apartment building has a lift, the residents will still be required to exit the building using the stairs in an emergency; if the O.T. assessment says you cannot descend stairs independently, then the property is not a match for you, and you will not be offered it.

This is why it is important that you only place bids on advertised homes that meet your mobility/ accessibility needs, and you tell us about any changes to your household needs right away.



Making a provisional offer

If your Occupational Therapist assessment confirms that the property is suitable for your needs, the Community Landlord will be in touch with you to make a provisional offer and arrange their pre-contract checks.

The Landlord may ask the Occupational Therapist service to visit the property to check it meets your needs if it is not clear from the assessment that you match the property, or if your household has complex access needs.

Following the pre-contract assessment service, if everything is satisfactory, your housing offer will be confirmed by the Community Landlord.

As soon as the landlord has information about when the property will be ready to let, they will contact you to offer you a viewing & sign-up appointment. It is important that you make yourself available for this appointment and do not delay the letting.

Please do not visit the property unless you have permission to do so.

After your new occupation contract begins

Once you have moved in, it is unlikely that the Landlord will carry out any further adaptations to your property for a minimum 12 month period. This is because the property should be suitable for your current household needs at the time of the allocation, as stated on your application and on the Occupational Therapist assessment.

However, if your situation does change during this time, please contact your Landlord for guidance and support.

Please note further adaptations and accessibility changes to communal areas, including in sheltered housing, are generally not available.



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