

Your guide to using Keyways



Under the Keyways scheme, finding a home is easier. It gives you greater opportunity to find a home of your choice and it does not limit you to certain areas



Welcome to Keyways

About Keyways

Keyways is the main way of looking for Council and Housing Association properties to rent in the boroughs of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough. Rather than us deciding which housing to offer you, it is now possible for you to decide which properties interest you.

Available properties are advertised each week online at **www.keyways.org.uk** and in the main Council offices throughout the three boroughs. A printed newsletter can be made available to you if you are unable to access Keyways by other means.

You will need to tell us which properties you would like to be considered for, a process known as “bidding”. The bidding process does not mean that you will pay any money and is purely a method of expressing an interest in a property. You can only bid for a property if your housing application has been accepted onto the Keyways housing register.

You can bid for properties in a number of ways:

- Online using the website www.keyways.org.uk
- By visiting our main Council offices
- By contacting Corby, Kettering or Wellingborough Councils direct. (see page 11 for contact details)

You can see what position you are in the queue for a property via your online account. Each week you can see the successful bidders from the previous bidding cycles in order to help give you an idea of how long you may have to wait to be nominated to a property. This information is available both in the newsletter and on the website.

If, after reading this guide, you have any further questions on how Keyways works, you may be able to find the answer by visiting the “Frequently Asked Questions” section of the Keyways website.

Need more help? If you need more assistance please contact the Keyways council where you currently live. If you do not live in the Keyways area please contact the council where you would like to live and have a local connection. Our contact details are on page 11.

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How to use this guide

On pages 2-4 you will find a quick guide describing how to use the scheme. Pages 6-7 describe the different Bands and page 8 describes which properties you will be able to bid for. On pages 9-10 you will find more details on how to place your bids. Each advert use symbols to describe the properties and these are explained on page 5.

visit: www.keyways.org.uk

How to use Keyways

1 Register

How to register

To apply to join the Keyways Housing Register you will need to complete an application form which can be completed online at www.keyways.org.uk or in customer service centres throughout the three boroughs. You must be aged 16 years or over and if you are under 18 years of age you must provide details of a suitable guarantor. If you do not provide this you will not be able to bid for accommodation before your 18th birthday. The application form enables you to apply for a Council and/or Housing Association rented home. It also enables you to see available low cost home ownership properties and accredited private rented properties.

To complete your application you will need the following:

- The national insurance number(s) for all member(s) of your household aged 16 years and over
- If you are not a British citizen, evidence of your right to reside in the UK (e.g. passport and other relevant documents from the Home Office)
- Minimum 5 years address history including telephone contact details for all previous landlords
- Details of any former or current housing related debt
- Details of any criminal convictions and/or any anti social behaviour convictions for you and any other members of your household

If you are not a British citizen, or if you have indicated that you or a member of your household have rent arrears or criminal / antisocial behaviour convictions, we will conduct further verification checks to decide if we can accept you onto the Keyways Housing Register. We will aim to contact you within 5 working days of receiving your application if we need any evidence to confirm your details. We also aim to contact you to confirm if your application has been accepted within 14 days of receiving your completed and signed application, declaration form and any further information that we require.

Before you are offered a property you may be asked to provide further documents to support your application. We will tell you which documents to provide and when to provide them. All documents provided must be originals, up to date and valid.

We will advise you if you have not completed your application in full. We are unable to accept / verify / register any application until we receive a fully completed application form and signed declaration.

What happens once I have registered?

If you are accepted onto the housing register we will write to inform you of:

- Your personal reference number
- The band your application has been awarded
- Your band effective date

You must tell us if there are any changes in your circumstances so that we can reassess your application and if necessary make changes to your band and effective date. You can notify us of any changes by updating your application via your online Keyways account.

If you move to a new address, change telephone number or email address, you will need to inform us.

visit: www.keyways.org.uk

2 Choose

How are properties advertised?

Properties are advertised each week on the website at www.keyways.org.uk, the main Council offices in each borough and the newsletter.

Available properties will be advertised weekly from 0:01am on a Thursday through to 11:59pm on the following Tuesday*. You can place up to two bids during this time on social or affordable rented properties and unlimited bids on both low cost home ownership and accredited private rented properties.

The adverts

The adverts advise you of the landlord, location, size, rent and other features of the property to help you decide which properties are right for you.

The advert also informs you of any special requirements, such as a minimum age requirement that an applicant must meet. Adverts will also state where priority will be given to applicants who have a specific mobility/disability need.

A key to the terms and symbols used in the adverts and on the website can be found on page 5.

The adverts tell you the landlord, location, size, rent and other features of the property to help you decide which properties are right for you

*Advertising and bidding cycles may change at certain times of the year such as Christmas.

Expressing your interest in a property (placing a bid)

You can bid for up to two social or affordable rented properties each week. It does not matter at what time during the advertising cycle you place your bid. Being the first person to place a bid does not necessarily mean you will be offered the property. Please be advised that your position in the queue can change during the advertising cycle as more people place and withdraw their bids. You can express your interest in any of the following ways:

- **On the website**
Visit www.keyways.org.uk and login using your personal reference number and the date of birth of the main applicant
- **In person**
By visiting any of our main Council offices where staff can help you to bid
- **By telephone**
By contacting any of our Housing Options Teams where staff can bid for you (see page 11 for contact details)



visit: www.keyways.org.uk

3 Offer

All bids received will be put in priority order to produce a list of eligible applicants for each property advertised. Please note that due to applicants placing bids on a daily basis and having the ability to withdraw bids during the advertisement cycle, your final position in the queue may be different from when you initially placed your bid. If you are the successful bidder we will contact you by telephone. If you do not respond within 24 hours we will skip you and offer the property to the next eligible applicant(s) on the shortlist. You must ensure that we have the correct contact details for you i.e. home telephone number, mobile, email etc.

If you are the successful bidder, verification checks will be completed such as tenancy references, debt checks, anti social behaviour, medical history and who resides in your household.

The landlord of the property will then contact you to arrange to visit you to verify the circumstances and information we hold about you. They may also undertake further verification checks such as financial affordability.

Providing you pass all verification checks you will be invited to view the property. If you fail the verification checks you will be provided with the reason(s) for this and whether this affects your application. Examples of why you might fail the verification checks are; your circumstances are not the same as you have stated on your application form or you have rent arrears. If an applicant(s) fails the verification checks we will move to the next eligible applicant(s) on the shortlist.

If you decide to refuse the property it will be offered to the next eligible applicant(s) on the shortlist. You may be penalised for refusing a property and should therefore discuss this before making your decision. If after the viewing you decide to accept the property, the landlord will contact you when it is ready to let and arrange to sign the tenancy agreement and collect the keys.

4 Feedback

We publish information about homes that have been let and include the number of bids for the property, the band and band effective date of the successful household. This will give you an

idea of how popular a particular property or area is and how long you could have to wait. You can then decide whether to bid on other property types or areas where you may not have to wait as long. This information is published in the "Recent Lets" section of the Keyways website.



We publish information about homes that have been successfully let. This will give you a better idea of how long you can expect to wait for a property.

visit: www.keyways.org.uk

What do the symbols mean?

The symbols that appear on the adverts are for information about the property or eligible criteria. Below is a sample of the most common symbols. Each advert will have icons and if you place your cursor over them, a pop up box explaining their meaning will be presented.



Types of property

Social or Affordable rented property

Social or affordable rented property provided by Corby Borough Council, Kettering Borough Council, Borough Council of Wellingborough or a Housing Association.

Low cost home ownership property

Please note, a shortlist of the highest bidders for these properties will be sent to the Housing Association. They will contact you with more information about purchasing a share of the property. Therefore, you should only bid for this type of property if you are able to fund the required purchase amount.

Private sector property

An approved property available from a private landlord. Please note, private landlords can offer properties to any applicant that bids for it. They do not have to offer it to the highest bidder.

Mutual exchange

If you are interested in a mutual exchange please visit www.kettering.houseexchange.org.uk for Kettering Borough Council properties and/or www.homeswapper.org.uk for Corby Borough Council properties.

Property details



The number of bedrooms in the property.



This property is only available to people of the minimum age shown.



This property has off road parking.



Pets not allowed at this property



Property is sheltered accommodation.



Property has its own garden.



Property has a communal garden.



Property shares a garden.



Property does not have a garden.



Property can be accessed by a lift.



A: Property has full mobility adaptations



B: Property has a level access shower and possibly an adaptation from C,D and E



C: Property has a stair lift and possibly an adaptation from D and E

D: Property has an external ramp and possibly an adaptation from E

E: Property has minor adaptations e.g. grab rails, lever taps etc.

This information is given as a guide only, please check on viewing.



Property has a level access floor draining shower.

visit: www.keyways.org.uk

How are applications prioritised?



Below is a general list of bands relevant to all partners of Keyways. For a full comprehensive explanation of Bands in each area (Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough), please refer to each Councils full Keyways Housing Allocations Policy which can be found on the Keyways website. All Keyways application forms will be assessed and placed in one of four or five bands below. Within each band applications will be placed in date order. This is the “band effective date”. The application with the oldest band effective date has the highest priority within each band.

Moving between bands

If your circumstances change and you move up a band the date used will normally be the date you moved into that band. If you move down a band the date used will normally be the date that you were previously in that band.

Time limited bands

If your application is placed in Band A there is a time limit. At the end of the time allowed your application will be reviewed and your priority Band may be reduced. Time in Band A is only extended in exceptional circumstances.

Band A: Emergency housing need (4 week time limit)

- You or a member of your household cannot be discharged from hospital to your current accommodation because it has been deemed hazardous to your health and the situation cannot be rectified for you or them to continue to live there.
- You or a member of your household is severely affected by your current accommodation due to a life threatening medical condition.
- You are a serving or former member of the Armed Forces with an urgent housing need and suffered injury, medical condition or disability as a result of service.
- You or members of your household are at serious risk of harm or severe emotional or physical trauma resulting from violence or threats of violence or physical, emotional or sexual abuse in the current accommodation.
- Your private property is found to contain a category 1 hazard and this is assessed by a Keyways Council via the Housing Health and Safety Rating System outlined in the Housing Act 2004 and cannot be resolved within 6 months.
- You need to move because your home is about to be demolished or redeveloped.
- You are a social rented tenant living in the Keyways partnership area who needs to move because your property needs major renovation, extensive repairs or extensive adaptations.
- The Keyways Council has accepted you are ‘statutorily homeless’.
- You have lost your accommodation due to fire, flood or natural disaster.
- You are a social rented tenant underoccupying family accommodation within the Keyways partnership area and have a permanent medical condition which is seriously adversely affected by your current accommodation.
- You are a social rented tenant in the Keyways partnership area and willing to release a property that has major adaptations that are no longer required.
- You are a social rented tenant living in a sheltered complex within the Keyways partnership area and need to move within the same complex due to a severe medical condition.

visit: www.keyways.org.uk

Band B: Urgent housing need

- You have:-
 - ❖ children of different genders (one child must be at least 10 years old) sharing a bedroom, or
 - ❖ children of the same gender with an age difference of 10 years or more (one child must be at least 16 years old) sharing a bedroom, or
 - ❖ three or more children sharing a bedroom, or
 - ❖ you are sharing a bedroom with your child
 - ❖ And there is no other bedroom available to resolve the overcrowding.
- You have sole parental responsibility of a child/children living in the UK who is/are unable to currently live with you because of your accommodation.
- You or a member of your household has a permanent medical condition which is seriously adversely affected by your current accommodation.
- You or a member of your household need to give or receive ongoing essential care and support that is substantial and cannot be provided in your current accommodation.
- You or a member of your household need to move in order to take up or continue permanent employment for 16 hours or more and avoid hardship.
- You are living in supported housing within the Keyways partnership area and have been accepted as ready to move on to independent living.
- You are under occupying socially rented family accommodation (comprising of 2 bedrooms or more) within the Keyways partnership area by 1 bedroom or more.
- You are a 'successor' or 'non-statutory successor' of social rented accommodation, approved for an offer of alternative suitable accommodation.

Band C: Non Urgent housing need

- You have been assessed as "non-statutory homeless"
- Your current landlord has served a genuine and legal Section 21 notice for a reason or situation not caused by you and the tenancy cannot be prevented from ending.
- You are a household with at least one dependant or a pregnant household member sharing accommodation with your family or another household.
- You need more bed spaces than your current accommodation can reasonably provide.
- You or a member of your household has a non urgent medical condition which is made worse by your current accommodation.
- You or a member of your household need to give or receive ongoing essential care and support that cannot be provided from or in, your current accommodation.

Band D: No housing need

- You or a member of your household is over 55 years of age and interested in a sheltered complex. (Does not apply to Wellingborough applicants)
- You have made a homeless application and awaiting a decision or private rented sector offer.
- You are a household without dependants sharing with family or another household. (Does not apply to Wellingborough applicants)

Band E

- You are adequately housed. (Corby applicants only)

This band may be available in Wellingborough for applicants with a local connection to certain villages. Please contact the Housing Options Team at the Borough Council of Wellingborough for more information.

What property will you be able to bid for?

You are given preference only for properties that match your household needs; however you may be permitted to bid on larger properties in certain circumstances.

Please note:

- If a household's circumstances do not fit any of the criteria outlined in this matrix below then the Housing Options Manager at each Council will decide what type of property a household is eligible to bid for.
- 'Household' includes single adult or couple.
- 'Couple' includes same sex couples.
- Sheltered accommodation will be offered to elderly households in the highest band. Each council has their own allocation criteria and you should refer to individual policies. In some cases applicants may be refused sheltered accommodation if their needs are assessed as being too great for such housing.
- *Households expecting a child will have an additional entitlement to a house/bedroom from the 3rd trimester (27 weeks)
- The number of bedrooms that a household with children can be considered for is also dependent on the age and gender of the children, not just the number. For example only certain households with 3 children will be able to bid for a 4 bedroom property. Refer to the councils individual policies for more information.

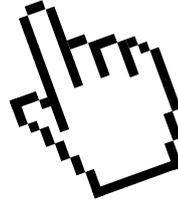
Bedsit
 1 bedroom bungalow
 1 bedroom flat
 1 bedroom house
 2 bedroom bungalow
 2 bedroom flat (without own garden)
 2 bedroom flat (with own garden)
 2 bedroom house
 3 bedroom bungalow
 3 bedroom flat or 3 bedroom maisonette
 3 bedroom house
 3 bedroom parlour type house
 4 bedroom flat or maisonette
 4 bedroom house

Single person	*	*	*	*	*	*													
Couple without children		*	*	*	*	*													
Household expecting first child *						*	*	*											
Household with 1 child						*	*	*											
Household with 2 children						*	*	*	*	*	*	*							
Household with 3 children									*	*	*	*	*	*					
Household with 4 children									*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			
Household with 5 or more children													*	*	*	*			

visit: www.keyways.org.uk

Bidding on the website

The website address to use when placing a bid is
www.keyways.org.uk



What you need to bid

In order to bid you will need:

- Your personal reference number
- Your memorable date (this is the date of birth of the main applicant on your housing application)
- The property reference number(s) that you want to bid for

On the website you can find full details of the Keyways scheme including everything in this document. You can search for properties that meet your needs and see the full details of those properties. You can also place a bid, withdraw a bid, and find out what you are allowed to bid for and what your current queue position is for a property.

You can only bid for properties which match your housing needs.

For example, if the advert states that the property has one bedroom; households needing more than one bedroom will not be able to bid.

Don't be worried about the word 'Bid', you do not need to pay any money. This only means that you are actively interested and wish to be considered for the property and/or properties you are applying for.

- 1** Type **www.keyways.org.uk** in the address bar of your internet browser.
- 2** Click the **Login/My Account** button and enter your personal reference number, which you have received by post. Also enter the memorable date. This will be the date of birth of the main applicant and should be entered in the following format; DD/MM/YYYY. On this screen you will see your personal account details (see Diagram 1).
- 3** Click the **Property Search** option to look for current available properties (see Diagram 2).
- 4** A list of properties matching your search request will be displayed. If you are allowed to bid for a property an **Apply Now** button will show. If you bid for a property your queue position for that property will also be shown. Please note that your queue position can change during the bidding cycle if other bids are received. If you are not allowed to bid for the property the reason will be displayed.
- 5** Bidding is a 2 stage process. Please ensure you complete both stages. After clicking the **Apply Now** button you will be asked if you wish to be considered for the property. After confirming this you will be told that your request has been recorded.
- 6** If you decide that you want to remove your bid you can click on the **Login/My Account** button and select the button called **My Bids**. You can withdraw a bid by following the on-screen instructions. Your withdrawn bid is then confirmed and you can re-use that bid for another property.

visit: **www.keyways.org.uk**

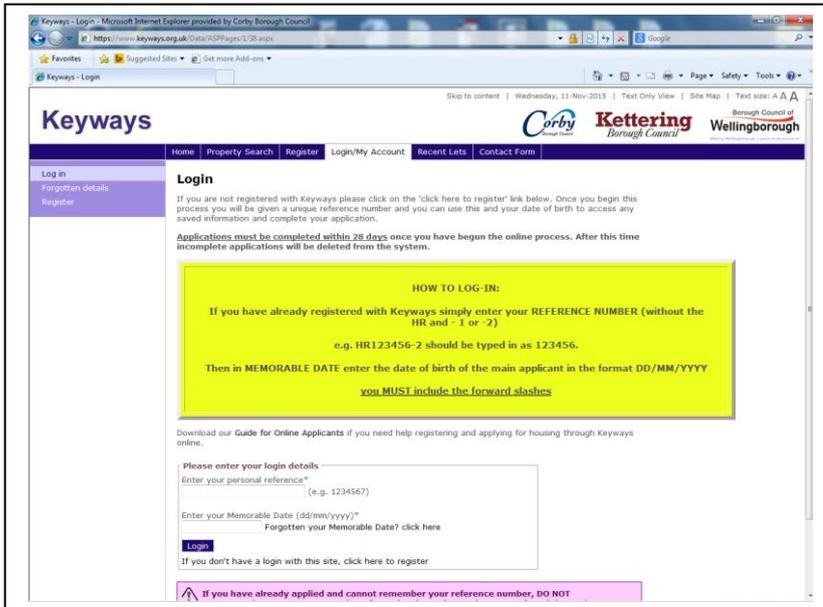


DIAGRAM 1

Login/My Account website page
This is the screen you will see when you press the Login/My Account button. To login you will need to enter your personal reference number and your memorable date in the following format DD/MM/YYYY and should include the forward slashes (/).

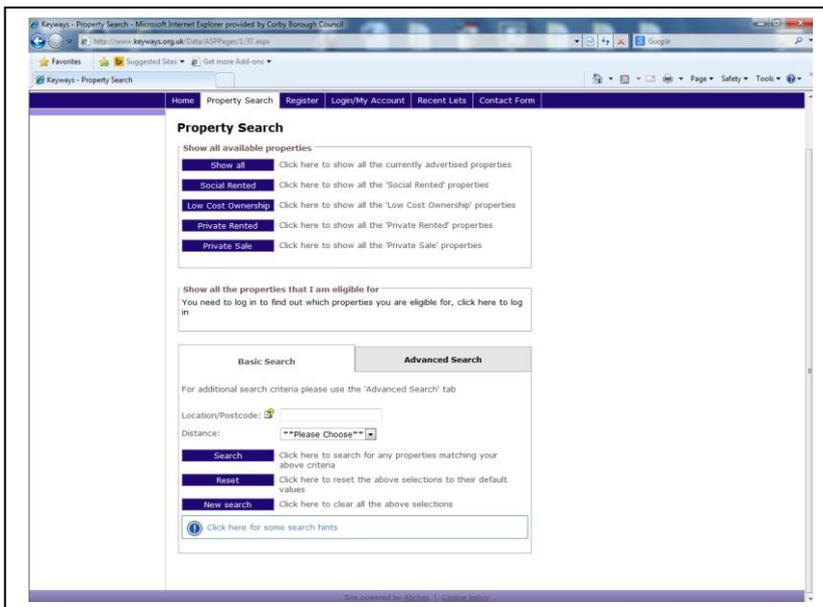


DIAGRAM 2

Property Search website page
This is the screen you will see when you press the Property Search button. You can use the Property Search to look for properties that you would like to bid for.

Landlords participating in Keyways

The vast majority of social landlords with properties in the Keyways partnership area have agreed to advertise their properties through Keyways. A full list of participating social landlords and their contact details can be found on the Keyways website at www.keyways.org.uk The social landlords with the largest amount of stock in the Keyways partnership are listed below.

LANDLORD	WEBSITE
Corby Borough Council	www.corby.gov.uk
bpha	www.bpha.org.uk
emh homes	www.emhhomes.org
Guinness Partnership	www.guinnesspartnership.com
Home	www.homegroup.org.uk
Kettering Borough Council	www.kettering.gov.uk
ASRA	www.asra.org.uk
Metropolitan	www.mhp-online.co.uk
Orbit Heart of England	www.orbit.org.uk
Places for People	www.placesforpeople.co.uk
Riverside	www.riverside.org.uk
Spire Homes	www.spire-homes.org.uk
Wellingborough Homes	www.wellingboroughhomes.org

Information provided in this guide has extracts from the Keyways Housing Allocation Policy of all Council partners of Keyways. Contact details for the three partners of Keyways can be found below. To view the full policies of each council, please visit: www.keyways.org.uk

Contact details

Corby Borough Council
One Stop Shop
The Corby Cube
Parkland Gateway
Corby
Northamptonshire
NN17 1QG

Tel: 01536 464000

Email:
housing.options@corby.gov.uk

Website: www.corby.gov.uk

Kettering Borough Council
Municipal Offices
Bowling Green Road
Kettering
Northamptonshire
NN15 7QX

Tel: 01536 410333

Email:
ketteringkeyways@kettering.gov.uk

Website: www.kettering.gov.uk

Borough Council of Wellingborough
Swanspool House
Doddington Road
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN8 1BP

Tel: 01933 229777

Email:
keyways@wellingborough.gov.uk

Website: www.wellingborough.gov.uk

visit: www.keyways.org.uk