

Solihull Proposed 'Do It Yourself Shared Ownership' Scheme

A. Personal Eligibility Criteria

1. Age – Above 18
2. Have a Local Connection to Solihull, demonstrated by one of,
 - Residence in borough – see Annex 1 below
 - Family connection to borough – see Annex 1 below
 - Employment in the borough – see Annex 1 below
 - British Armed Forces – see Annex 1 below.
3. Not own/ have an interest/be on the title deeds of another property
4. Be First time buyers & second time buyers where there has been a break (e.g. sale of a property following relationship breakdown)
5. Pass a financial viability & suitability (income and capital) test. All applications assessed by an IFA. The assessment will avoid selling to people who do not require the assistance or who are likely to struggle to afford to service the mortgage and rent
6. Have a household income of less than £50,000
7. Be able to fund a 10% deposit of the share they purchase
8. Have a mortgage and savings to fund at least 35% of the purchase price
9. Agree to a requirement to use as main home (i.e. cannot use as second home or as rental property).

B. Priority Criteria of Eligible Applicants

First Priority: Solihull Council tenant. For the first 6 months of the pilot applications shall only be received from Solihull Council tenants. If after 6 months there are less than 10 approvals or completions the pilot will be widened as follows,

- Households who the Council has a duty to re-house under homelessness legislation
- Other social housing tenants in Solihull
- On the Council's Housing Register
- Regular service personnel of the British Armed Forces
- All other eligible applicants.

Council and other social housing tenants in Solihull will be expected to demonstrate that they have paid their rent on time, looked after their homes and gardens and not caused a nuisance to neighbours.

If an applicant meets these criteria they will be approved to search for an eligible property. Eligible properties are defined in C. below.

C. Property Criteria

1. Freehold in the Council's area

2. A property may not be a flat or a retirement home due to already being subject to a lease
3. Not have a purchase price above £250,000 (to be reviewed annually)
4. Not be a new build or less than 12 months old
5. Not have attracted any previous shared ownership grant funding
6. Be in good mortgagable condition, confirmed by a satisfactory Homebuyers report
7. The proposed property must not be of a size that would make the household statutorily overcrowded
8. The Council will have the right to reject a property under the Scheme if there are any specific concerns relating to longer term asset value.

Extract from Council's Housing Allocation Scheme

Local Connection – Social Housing eligibility

The applicant must be able to prove that they meet at least one of the following:

- a) Is currently resident in the borough and has been for the two years immediately prior to their application in accommodation that was of their own choice;
- b) Has lived in the borough of Solihull for at least three of the last five years in accommodation that was of their own choice;
- c) Has close relatives who have been living in the borough for at least five years (close relatives means parents, adult children or brothers and sisters);
- d) Has employment in the borough (meaning the actual physical place of work rather than, for example, the location of the employer's head office) and which is ongoing and regular and has been for at least the last 6 months;
- e) Special circumstances – a close association established on these grounds is likely to be exceptional e.g. the need to be near special medical or support services which are available only in the Solihull area; able to demonstrate that they or their family face life threatening crisis and require immediate rehousing as a consequence of fire, flood or a child protection emergency.

Exemptions

The following classes of persons are exempt from the local connection qualifying criteria:

- a) Persons who are serving in the regular forces or have done so in the five years preceding their application for an allocation of housing accommodation;
- b) Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where their spouse or partner's death is attributable (wholly or partly) to their service and the bereaved spouse or civil partner's entitlement to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation then ceases;
- c) Seriously injured, ill or disabled reservists (or former reservists) whose injury, illness or disability is attributable wholly or partly to their service.

Final decisions on applicant priorities where non-standard circumstances occur will be taken by the Chief Executive of Solihull Community Housing in consultation with Solihull Council.