

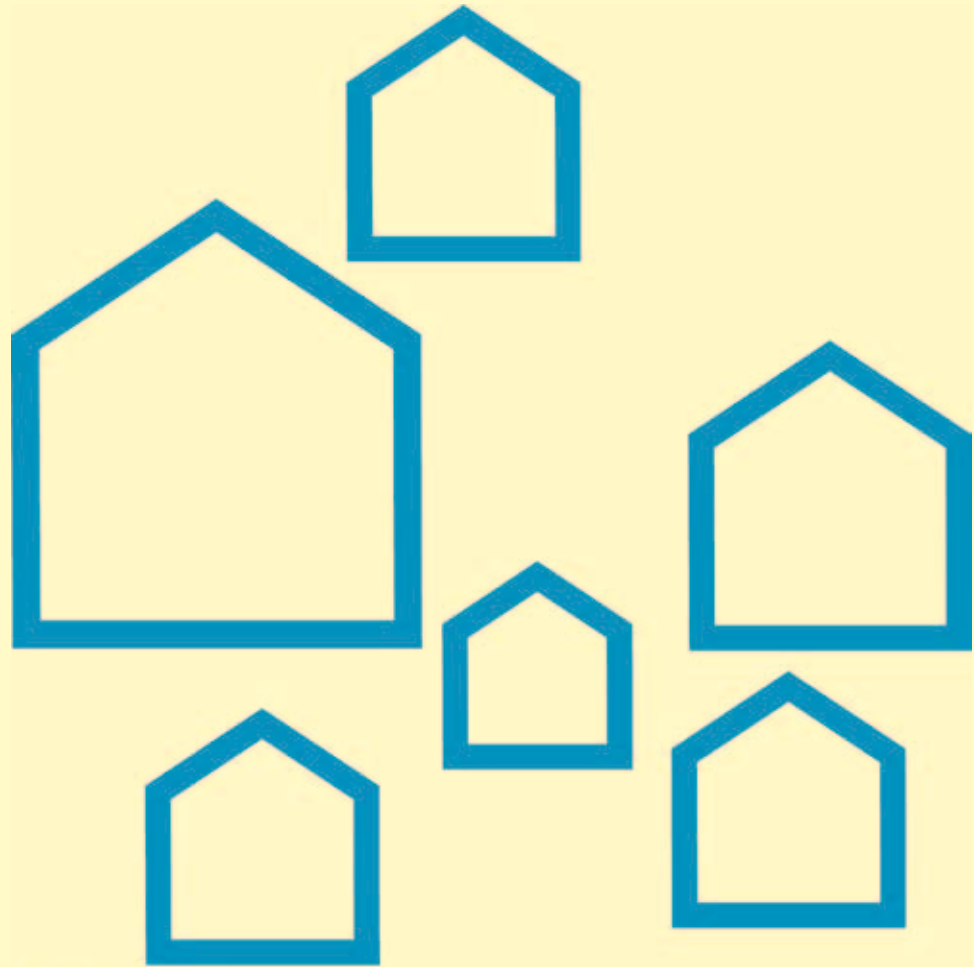


VERSION 8  
19.10.2011

# Scheme User Guide

[www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk)

We let you choose



Harlow

# Homefinder



WELCOME TO

# Harlow Homefinder

helping you find a home in Harlow

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General information

## Harlow Homefinder will

- Advertise most Council homes and Housing Association homes in the Harlow area.
- Allow you to show us that you are interested in living in a property by applying or “bidding” for it. You are able to bid on up to three properties per edition, which match your eligibility
- Let you know what priority you have for homes by placing your housing application in a ‘Band’.
- Give you information about what happens to properties, by giving you feedback on the priority of people being housed in them.
- Offer you greater choice and control over where you would like to live.
- Give you realistic goals. You will be able to see how many properties are available and how many people have applied for them. If you decide that you may not be successful then you can look at other ways to solve your housing difficulties.

The Council welcomes views from all people with an interest in housing in Harlow. We need your involvement to make this successful, ensuring that Harlow Homefinder works for you. For further information, please contact Harlow Council on 01279 446655 or visit the public website [www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk)

POWERED BY



**Harlow Council has a telephone interpreting service called Language Line that provides communication between staff and residents who do not speak English. We can arrange for this document to be interpreted if required. These services are available at all council reception centres.**

**If you require this guide in any other language or format, please call into Contact Harlow at the Civic Centre or telephone 01279 446655 for assistance.**

Bengali	হার্লো কাউন্সিলের ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ লাইন নামে একটি টেলিফোনে অনুবাদ পরিষেবা রয়েছে যার দ্বারা যেসব অধিবাসী ইংরেজি জানেন না তাদের সাথে কর্মীদের যোগাযোগ সম্ভব হয়। প্রয়োজন হলে আমরা এই বিজ্ঞপ্তির অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা করতে পারি। এই সুবিধাগুলি কাউন্সিলের সমস্ত অভ্যর্থনা স্থান বা রিসেপশন পয়েন্টে পাওয়া যাচ্ছে।
Hindi	हार्लो काउंसिल लैंग्वेज लाइन नाम से टेलीफोन अनुवाद सेवा चलाती है जो स्टाफ और अंग्रेजी नहीं बोलने वाले निवासियों के बीच संवाद कायम करती है। अगर जरूरत हो तो हम इस दस्तावेज का अनुवाद करा सकते हैं। ये सेवाएं काउंसिल के सभी स्वागत केंद्रों पर उपलब्ध हैं।
Arabic	تتوافر لمجلس مدينة هارلو خدمة ترجمة فورية عبر الهاتف باسم Language Line (لأنجويدج لاين) تتيح التعامل بين فريق العاملين لدينا وبين السكان ممن لا يتحدثون بالإنجليزية. يمكننا تدبير الترجمة الفورية لهذا المستند عند الحاجة. تتوافر تلك الخدمات لدى جميع مكاتب الاستقبال التابعة للمجلس.
Gujarati	હાર્લો કાઉન્સિલ, લેંગ્વેજ લાઇન નામે ઓળખાતી, એક ટેલિફોન દુભાષિયા સેવા ધરાવે છે જેના વડે અંગ્રેજી નહીં બોલતા રહેવાસીઓ અને કર્મચારીઓ વચ્ચે સંદેશ વ્યવહાર શક્ય બને છે. અગર જરૂરત હોય તો આ દસ્તાવેજના અર્થઘટનની વ્યવસ્થા અમે કરી શકીએ છીએ. આ સેવાઓ કાઉન્સિલના બધાજ સ્વાગત કેન્દ્રો પર ઉપલબ્ધ છે.
Vietnamese	Hội đồng Harlow cung ứng phiên dịch trên điện thoại qua đường Language Line nhằm giúp thông tin liên lạc giữa nhân viên của Hội đồng và cư dân không nói được tiếng Anh trong vùng. Chúng tôi có thể sắp xếp dịch tài liệu này nếu được quý vị yêu cầu. Quý vị cũng có thể yêu cầu giúp đỡ thông dịch tại các phòng tiếp khách của Hội đồng.
Russian	Совет Harlow предоставляет услуги устного перевода по телефону – Language Line. Посредством этой службы сотрудники могут общаться с жителями, не владеющими английским языком. При необходимости мы можем организовать устный перевод данной документации. Такие услуги доступны во всех местах регистрации клиентов совета.
Chinese	哈勞市議會 (Harlow Council) 設有稱為語言專線 (Language Line) 的電話口譯服務，為議會職員與不諳英語的居民之間提供溝通服務。如有需要，我們可以安排口譯解釋這份文件。所有的市議會接待處都可提供這些服務。
Italian	Harlow Council dispone di un servizio telefonico di interpretariato denominato Language Line. L'obiettivo del servizio è quello di garantire un'efficace comunicazione tra il personale e i residenti che non parlano Inglese. A richiesta, possiamo provvedere alla traduzione del presente documento. Il servizio è disponibile presso tutte le Reception di Harlow Council.
Czech	Rada města Harlow má telefonickou překladatelskou službu nazývanou Jazyková linka (Language Line), která umožňuje komunikaci mezi jejími pracovníky a občany, kteří nehovoří anglicky. V případě potřeby můžeme zajistit překlad tohoto dokumentu. Tyto služby jsou k dispozici na všech kontaktních místech rady.
Turkish	Harlow Belediyesi'nin, belediye görevlileriyle İngilizce bilmeyenlerin iletişim kurabilmesini sağlayan Language Line (Dil Hattı) adlı bir tercüme hizmeti vardır. Gerekirse, bu belgenin sözlü olarak tercüme edilmesini sağlayabiliriz. Bu hizmet tüm belediye resepsiyon noktalarında mevcuttur.
Somali	Golaha Harlow wuxuu leeyahay adeeg turjumadeed oo telefoon ah oo la yiraa Khadka Luqada kaasoo loo isticmaalo xiriirinta shaqaalaha iyo dadka degaanka ah ee aan ku hadal af Ingiriisida. Waxaanu kuu habayn karnaa in dukumentigan lagu turjumo haddii aad rabto. Adeegyadan waxa laga helaa dhamaan goobaha soo dhowaynta ee Golaha

# How Harlow Ho

With the Homefinder choice based lettings scheme, instead of the Council allocating you a home, you will look for your own home on the Harlow Homefinder website: [www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk)

**There are five steps for you to follow in choosing your new home:**

## Step 1 – Membership

You are automatically a member of Harlow Homefinder if you are currently registered with Harlow Council for a transfer or you

are a first time homeseeker registered on the Housing Register.

## Step 2 – Registration

Once the Council has accepted you as a member of Harlow Homefinder, you will receive a letter giving you a registration number and telling you what band (1, 2, 3 or 4) you have been placed in and your priority date.

You must keep the Housing Options & Advice Team informed of any changes to your

household, medical condition or housing situation by calling Harlow on 01279 446655.

This is very important as it could result in changing your band, or your eligibility for certain homes. (See page 6 for details of how the priority band and date system works).

## Step 3 – Bidding

Available properties are advertised via the website [www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk)

The adverts give you information about each property available for letting.

Once you have accessed your details via [www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk) you will be able to “bid” for a maximum of 3 properties in each cycle.

**You can bid using any one of these 3 ways:**

**On the internet** – Go to [www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk) and log in with your registration number and surname.

**By telephone** – Call 0845 200 2717 and follow the instructions. (See page 11 for instructions on making your bid by telephone).

**By text** – Call 07781 472726 (see page 10 for instructions on making your bids by text).

**The bidding opens 9:30am every Thursday, your bids must reach us by 1.00am the following Tuesday.**

# Homefinder works

## Step 4 – Offer

All bids received for each property advertised are put in priority order to produce a list of bidders for each property.

The Housing Options and Advice Team will offer from this list after doing eligibility checks.

If you refuse the property, the next person on the “priority list” will be invited to view the property.

Applicants may refuse one offer of accommodation without incurring a penalty. Applicants who refuse a second offer of accommodation will be moved down a band for a period of 6 months.

The exception is in the case of certain categories of applicant subject to time limited bidding and those towards whom the full homelessness duty has been accepted – applicants in these groups are only entitled to 1 offer.

We may invite more than one applicant to view the property at the same time. This helps to speed up the lettings process although the property is always offered to the applicant with the highest priority that attends the viewing.

**People who come top of the shortlist are usually contacted within a week of the bid closing. However, a lot of properties will be advertised some time before they are ready for occupation.**

If a person who was top of the list refuses, the next person who was on the list may be invited to view some time after the closing date.

If you are made an offer you will not be shortlisted for other homes until you have made a decision either to accept or refuse the offer.

## Step 5 – Feedback

The feedback tells you how many people bid for each property, as well as the band and registration date of the successful bidder. All properties that you have made a bid for will be listed in your personalised list.

This helps you to see how long the successful bidders have been waiting.

**It is not possible to notify you individually when your bids have been unsuccessful.**

If you have any questions about how the scheme applies to you or about bidding please telephone Contact Harlow on 01279 446655.



# Priority Bands

**When you register for a transfer or for housing as a homeseeker, your application will be assessed by the council. You will be placed in one of the priority bands described below.**

If you disagree with your priority band, you can ask the council to review the banding decision.

When bids are considered for advertised properties, priority will be given to bids from people in the highest priority band. If people from the same priority band bid for the same property, the person with the earliest priority date will be considered first.

If your priority band is increased at any stage, your priority date will be the date you went into the higher priority band. If you move back to a lower band, your priority date will revert to the date that applied when you were previously in that lower band.

## Deciding priority between and within bands

Highest banding households will be matched first: if more than one applicant from the same band applies then date of registration is the deciding factor (subject

to Local Connection) – Harlow residents will be considered ahead of non-residents within the same band). If nobody in band 1 bids, the Council will look at bidders from band 2 and so on.

## Local Connection

Local connection can be met by the applicant or a permanent member of his/her household.

Local connection is defined as any of the following:

- Resident in Harlow by choice for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years
- Permanent employment in the town
- Close family resident in the town for at least 3 out of the last 5 years
- Other special reason

Close family is defined as parents, adult children and siblings.

**Below is a summary of the bands**

## Band 1 – (Urgent Need to Move)

- Member of the household has a life-threatening medical condition (which has been assessed as 'special' medical priority), which is seriously affected by current housing.
- Harlow Council agrees to a recommendation by Essex County Council Social Care Services that there is an urgent need for the household to be provided with alternative accommodation.
- A tied tenant towards whom Harlow Council has a contractual obligation to re-house upon termination of employment.
- A Harlow Council tenant who needs to move because his/her home is about to be demolished or redeveloped - time limited bidding.
- A household who needs to move to an adapted property based on an assessment by the Council's Occupational Therapist.
- A Harlow Council tenant living in an adapted property who no longer requires adaptations and the property could be used by someone else with such a need.
- A Council or Housing Association tenant of a Harlow property with two or more bedrooms who is willing to move to a one-bedroom home or give up two or more bedrooms.
- A successor to a Harlow Council tenancy who is required to move - time limited bidding.
- An adult son/daughter of a deceased tenant who is identified within the Council's 'Succession Policy' as eligible to an offer of accommodation following a previous succession between parents - time limited bidding.
- A household occupying a property which is subject to a compulsory purchase order and/or Harlow Council has a statutory duty to move them.

## Band 2 – (High Need to Move)

- Homeless household towards whom the full duty has been accepted by Harlow Council – time limited bidding.
  - Homeless household towards whom the full duty has been accepted by Harlow Council and the Supported Housing Provider who has provided the s193 accommodation confirms that the person has independent living skills adequate to manage a tenancy – time limited bidding.
  - Homeless household towards whom the full duty has been accepted by Harlow Council, occupying temporary accommodation in the private sector, and notice has been served (not due to action of applicant) – time limited bidding.
  - Potentially homeless household who has accepted prevention of homelessness via the council's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme, and who are conducting their private sector tenancy to an acceptable standard.
  - The household has an urgent need to move for medical (assessed as 'high' medical priority) or social reasons, as defined by Harlow Council.
  - Household with no security of tenure with dependent child (or children) and sharing facilities within their accommodation.
  - A person or household that has a need to move from care or supported housing and rehousing has been agreed under a special quota scheme.
  - A Council or Housing Association tenant in Harlow who is willing to give up surplus bedrooms but still needs two or more bedrooms.
  - Ex Harlow Council tenant whom the Council, at the time the former tenancy was relinquished, undertook to re-house at a future date.
  - Any applicant who is statutorily overcrowded.
  - A household who, despite making best use of the accommodation, has children of opposite sex, and one is aged 10 or older, sharing a bedroom\*.
  - An occupant of a bed-sit sharing with a dependant child aged 3 or older.
  - An occupant of a one bedroom flat where parent/s have to share their bedroom with a child aged 5 or older.
  - A household who, despite making best use of the accommodation, has 3 or more children sharing a bedroom and all are aged over 1 year\*.
- \* 'best use' will include opposite sex sharing, providing all aged under 10 years.

## Band 3 – (Identified Housing Need)

- A person or household who has a need to move for medical or social reasons (awarded 'moderate' priority by Harlow Council), or because of unsatisfactory housing conditions, such as overcrowding or insanitary conditions.
- Any household with a dependent child/ren, occupying flatted accommodation above the ground floor.
- A person or household who has a need to move as identified by Essex County Council Social Care Services care plan or has been agreed with Social Care as a means of relieving social hardship.
- A homeless person or household that does not qualify for band 1 (a person or household towards whom Harlow Council does not have a statutory housing duty to house under the homelessness legislation).

## Band 4 – (Other Housing Requirements)

- Homeless household towards whom the full duty has been accepted by Harlow Council and currently living in Supported Housing to acquire independent living skills adequate to manage a tenancy.
- All other applicants who do not fall into bands 1, 2 or 3.



# The Adverts

studio flat

H/T AGE 65+ 1-1 1 1 1-1 1-2 1-3 2-3 2-4

RefNo. 142

Location Fairlight Court, Acton Lane, Harlow

















Borough Harlow District Council

Landlord Harlow District Council




Rent £67.87pw

Features Electric central heating and entry phone but no lift. Easy access to shops and transport. Close to amenities.

## Key to advert symbols

-  Available for homeseekers and transferring tenants
-  Available for homeseekers only
-  Available for transferring tenants only
-       
Minimum and maximum number of people who can live in this property
-       
Floor level of property, if flat or maisonette
-  Property designed for people this age or above
-   Lift / No Lift

## MOBILITY LEVELS

-  **Wheelchair symbol 1** - Suitable for wheelchair users for full time indoor and outdoor mobility
-  **Wheelchair symbol 2** - Mobility Group Two – Suitable for people who do not use a wheelchair indoors, but cannot climb steps or stairs
-  **Wheelchair symbol 3** - Mobility Group 3 – Suitable for people who do not use a wheelchair, but have limited mobility

# Which properties can I bid for?

## Things you need to consider before you bid

### Is the property designated for homeseekers/transfers or both?

Your bid will not count if, for example, you bid for a property advertised for homeseekers only and are a transferring tenant. Homeseekers bidding can only bid for properties that are advertised with an H or with both H & T icons. Council and Housing Association tenants can bid for properties that are advertised with a T or both T & H icons.

### Is there an age restriction on the property?

Some properties have a minimum age requirement, for example, in some cases only people over 55 can apply.

Sheltered properties are usually for people over 65. If you are interested in sheltered housing please telephone Contact Harlow on 01279 446655.

### Some properties have a mobility sign:

This is intended to provide a guide to people who have various levels of mobility problems. Unless it

says so on the advert, it does not restrict people without mobility problems from bidding for these properties.

### Pets:

Some landlords will not allow you to keep a dog or a cat unless the property has its own garden. If you have a pet, please check with the landlord.

### Circumstances where you may be excluded from the bidding process:

- You are in rent arrears
- You have been involved in anti-social behaviour
- In exceptional circumstances where the offer would conflict with the council's objectives to ensure offers are sensitively made and that properties are let quickly

Please telephone Contact Harlow on 01279 446655 if any of these circumstances apply to you. You can also ask the council to review the decision to exclude you from the scheme at any time.

# Landlords

## Housing associations with properties in the Harlow area

Please note that the majority of all Housing Association vacancies are offered to applicants on the Council's Housing Register. Not all of the Housing Associations detailed below hold their own waiting lists and, even if they do, they will only

have an occasional vacancy to offer; many also close their waiting lists for periods of time. Housing Association vacancies available to Housing Register applicants are advertised on the Harlow Homefinder website [www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk)

<b>Harlow Council</b>	<b>Anchor Trust</b>	<b>Boleyn &amp; Forest Housing Society Ltd</b>
Civic Centre The Water Gardens Harlow Essex CM20 1WG	Milestone Trust 100 Bolton Road Bradford, BD1 4DH <b>Tel: 01274 381600</b>	The Laurels 197 Balaam Street Plaistow, London E13 8AA <b>Tel: 0208 472 2233</b>
<b>East Thames Housing Group</b>	<b>English Churches Housing Group</b>	<b>HOME Housing Association</b>
East Thames Housing Group 29-35 West Ham Lane Stratford E15 4PH <b>Tel: 0845 6000 830</b>	English Churches Housing Group Couplas Court Haverhill, Suffolk <b>Tel: 01440 702283</b>	2, The Mitre Buildings West Square Harlow, Essex CM20 1DR <b>Tel: 01279 621600</b>
<b>Licensed Victuallers Association</b>	<b>London &amp; Quadrant</b>	<b>MOAT Housing Group</b>
The Granary Park End Barns Swaffham, Bulbeck Cambs CB5 0NA <b>Tel: 01223 813611</b>	10 Grove Crescent Road London E15 1BJ <b>Tel: 0844 406 9000</b>	Mariner House Galleon Boulevard Crossways, Dartford Kent DA2 6QE <b>Tel: 0845 600 1006</b>
<b>Springboard Housing Association Ltd.</b>	<b>South Anglia Housing Association</b>	<b>Swan Housing Association</b>
Springboard House 2A Cloughton Road London E13 9PN <b>Tel: 0208 475 0033</b>	Number One Building The Causeway Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire CM23 2ER <b>Tel: 01279 714714</b>	Pilgrim House High Street Billericay CM12 9XY <b>Tel: 08456124700</b>



# Bidding

## Making your bids on the internet

The quickest and easiest way to bid is through our website [www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk)

Instructions are given on screen but you will need to know your unique Harlow registration number and surname in order to log on. On the website there is an online copy of the Harlow Homefinder freesheet. If you see a property

that you are interested in and meet the stated criteria you can place a bid. If you have made a bid but then change your mind you can remove the bid on the website; as long as the bidding cycle is still open. You can also view your bidding history once you have logged in.

## Making your bids by Telephone

<b>1</b> To begin making your bids dial:	<b>0845 200 2717</b>
<b>2</b> You will hear:	"Welcome to the Harlow Homefinder Property Line, Please enter the number section of your Reference number."
<b>3</b> You should now enter the numerical part of your Reference number only. EG. If your Reference number is HDC54321 you only need to type in '54321'. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear:	"Thank you. Please enter the day number of your birth date <b>e.g.</b> For 16/04/1960 enter 16 or for 08/01/58 enter 08 (you must put a 0 before a single number)
<b>4</b> You should now enter the day number of your date of birth. Once you have entered the correct number you will hear:	"Thank you. Please enter the property reference number for your first bid".
<b>5</b> Once you have entered the property reference number correctly you will hear:	"Thank you if you would like to add an additional bid press one or press the star key to complete your bidding."
<b>6</b> If you have pressed one you will hear:	"Please enter your second property bid number or press the star key to complete your bidding."
<b>7</b> Once you have entered the property reference number correctly you will hear:	"Thank you if you would like to add an additional bid press one or press the star key to complete your bidding."
<b>8</b> If you have pressed one you will hear:	"Please enter the Reference number for your third bid, or press the star key to complete your bidding".
<b>9</b> When you have finished bidding you will hear:	"Thank you for bidding on the Harlow Homefinder Property line."
<b>If you have made errors you will hear some instructions as follows:</b>	
<b>10</b> If you have made an error with your number you will hear:	"I am sorry, the registration number you have entered is not recognised. Please try again."
<b>In this case re-enter your number dialing carefully making sure the number is correct</b>	
<b>11</b> If you make further errors you will hear:	"I am sorry, the registration number you have entered is not found. Please check with your registering partner and call again."

## Making your bids by Telephone

<b>12</b> If you have placed an incorrect birth date you will hear:	"I am sorry the day of birth you have entered does not match the day of birth specified for your reference number. Please re-enter using your telephone now".
<b>13</b> If you have placed an ineligible bid you will hear:	"I am sorry you are not eligible to bid on that property, please try again".

## Making your bids by Text Message

Action	Example
<b>1</b> To begin making your bids:	Open a new text message
<b>2</b> Enter your registration number via keys	HDC12345
<b>3</b> Then followed Immediately by a hash mark:	HDC12345#
<b>4</b> You should now enter the advert reference number of your 1st bid followed immediately by a hash mark:	HDC12345#456#
<b>If you have finished Bidding then send. If not keep following the instructions below.</b>	
<b>5</b> You should now enter the advert reference number of your 2nd bid followed immediately by a hash mark:	HDC12345#456#491#
<b>If you have finished Bidding then send. If not keep following the instructions below.</b>	
<b>6</b> You should now enter the advert reference number of your 3rd bid followed immediately by a hash mark:	HDC12345#456#491#444#
<b>7</b> When you have entered all of your bids send your Text message bid:	Send
<b>8</b> The number	<b>07781 472726</b>

- Most mobile phone companies charge SMS text messages at around 10p per text
- To add numbers to the message keep pressing the keys until you get to the digit and select.
- On most mobile phones to find the hash character first press the star key then select the hash mark.
- You can enter your bids in both upper and lower case
- Check your registration number and bids are correct before sending

# General Information



## **Bid Deadline**

All bids for properties must reach Harlow Homefinder by 1:00am on the closing date shown on the Harlow Homefinder website. Bids received after this time will not be considered eligible.

## **Need Help Bidding?**

Call into Contact Harlow, Civic Centre, or telephone 01279 446655 where someone will advise you how to make your bids and talk you through the bidding process

## **[www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.harlowhomefinder.co.uk)**

You can make your bids on the website at the above address. Please ensure that you enter your registration number, surname and bids correctly.

## **Bidding telephone number**

**0845 200 2717**

To make bids by telephone, use the above number and follow the instructions given over the line or as shown in the Scheme User Guide.

(This is a Lo-Call number)

## **Bidding by text message**

**07781 472726**

To make your bids by text (SMS), follow the instructions shown in the Scheme User guide.