

MyBristolHousing User Guide

A step-by-step guide on how to use Bristol City Council's digital housing service for applicants

For Engage 4.0.6

Document control

Software Version	Document Status	Document Revision	Issue Date	Reason for Change
4.0.6	Published	Revision 3	07/09/2026	Initial publication

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Introduction

The HomeChoice Bristol service has changed

The HomeChoice Bristol website has been replaced with a new online service called MyBristolHousing.

MyBristolHousing is already available for Bristol City Council tenants but is now open to social housing applicants.

What we've changed

MyBristolHousing brings key housing services together in one place.

If you're a **resident** who's looking for social housing accommodation, you'll be able to:

- check if you're eligible
- complete a rehousing application form.

If you're an **applicant**, you'll be able to:

- update your existing application
- view properties being advertised
- bid for properties and view offers made to you.

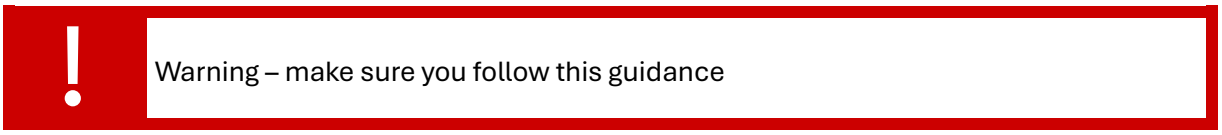
If you become a **Bristol City Council tenant**, you'll now also be able to:

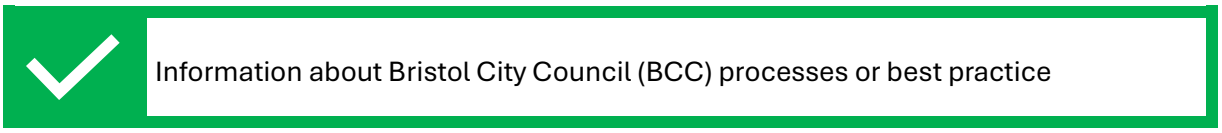
- check your rent account, including payments and balances
- view your gas safety certificate
- contact the housing team directly.

Note: The screenshots in this guide are from a test version of the website. The live version may look slightly different.

Conventions in this guide







Registration process

The registration guidance is aimed at **main applicants**. The details used to create an account on MyBristolHousing must be that of the main applicant on HomeChoice.

If there is someone supporting you with the registration process, they need to make sure they use the applicant's details.

Stage 1 - Create a Bristol Account

You need to have a Bristol Account before you can start using MyBristolHousing. The Bristol Account is a system we use for many other council services such as waste and street cleaning.

To fully register on MyBristolHousing, you'll need:

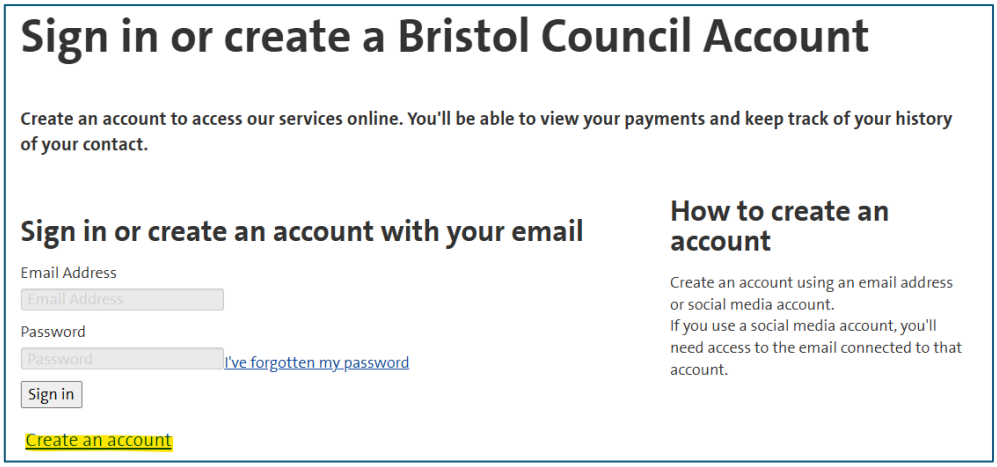
1. An email address
2. Your mobile number
3. Your Application Reference number.
   You may have received an email or text message with this number. If you have not, call us on 0117 922 2400 and we'll provide it. Without an Application Reference, you'll be able to register but not connect your HomeChoice application.

1. In a web browser go to the MyBristolHousing sign in or register page.

If you already have a Bristol Account, enter your **email address** and **password** and select **Sign in**.

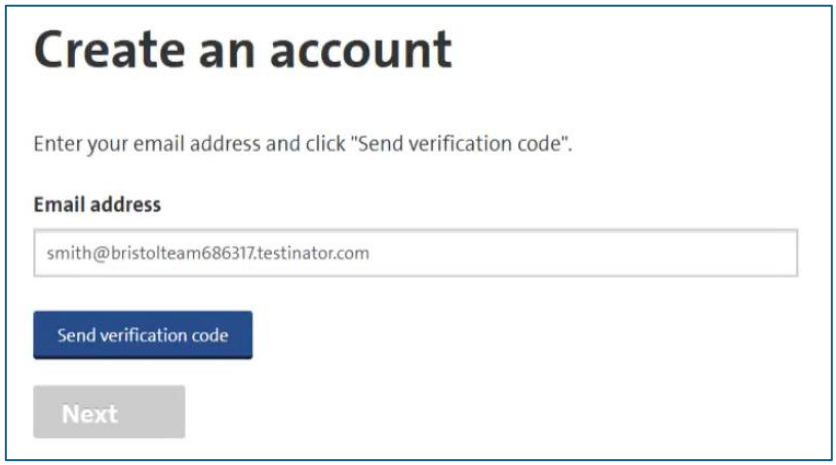
It may be that an error message advises that you already have a Bristol Account. If this is the case, you'll need to reset your password. To do this, enter your email address and select the link **I've forgotten my password**.

If you do not get an error message, proceed to step 2.

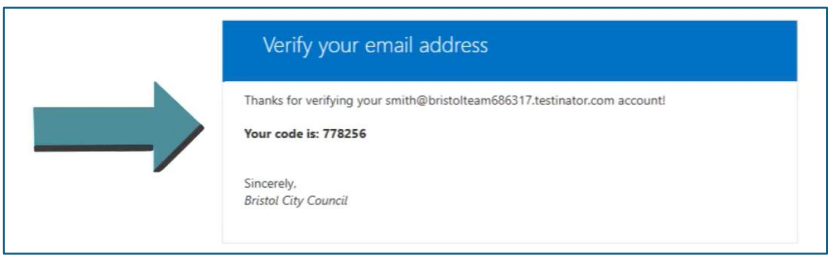


2. Select **Create an account**.

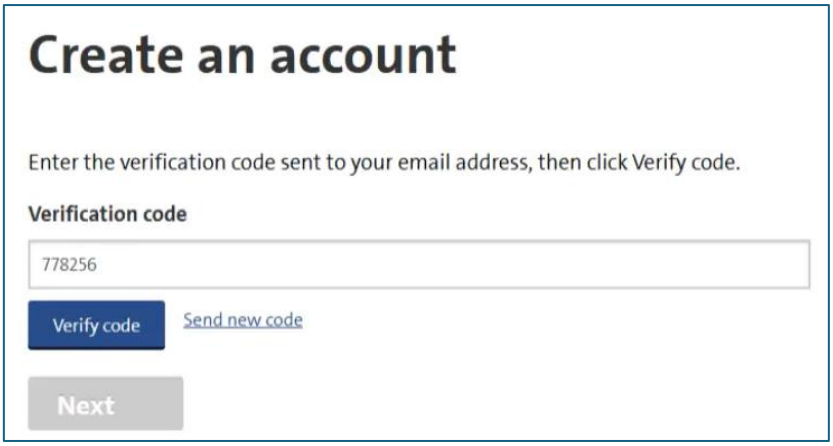
3. Enter your **email address** and select **Send verification code**.



4. You'll receive an email with a **Verification code**.

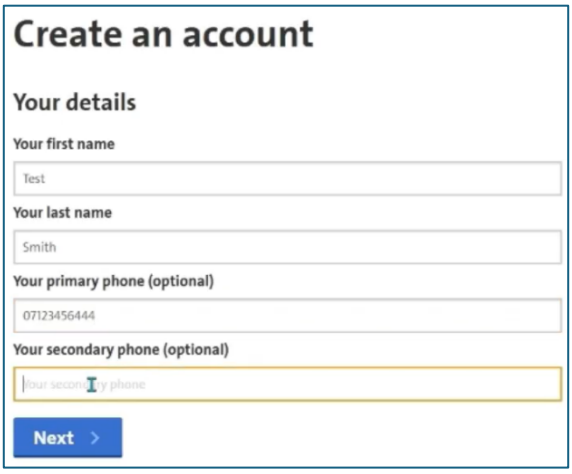


5. Go back to the Bristol Account creation page and enter the **Verification code** you've received in the email. Select **Verify code**.



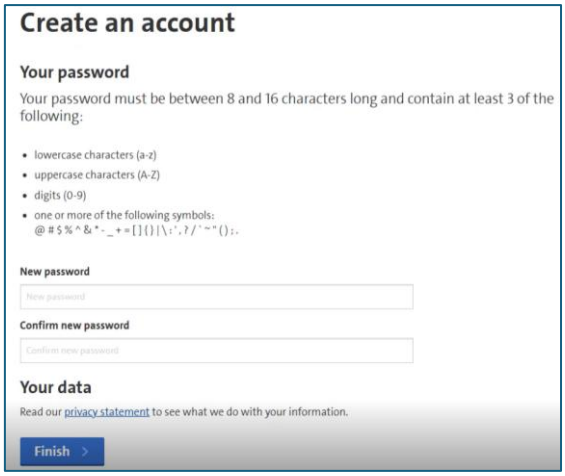
6. Now enter your **first name**, **last name** and if desired, your **primary phone number** and select **Next**.

> **!** If you're supporting someone with the registration process, the first name, last name and the primary phone number must be that of the applicant.



7. Now create your **password**. Your password must be between 8 and 16 characters long and contain at least 3 of the following:
    - lowercase characters
    - uppercase characters
    - digits (0-9)
    - one or more of the following symbols: @ # $ % ^ & * - _+ = [ ] { } | \ : ‘ , ? / ` ~ “ ( ) ; .

and select **Finish**.

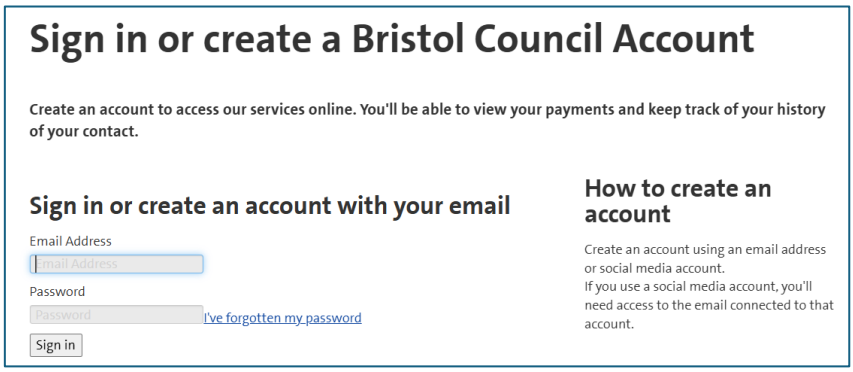


Make sure you pick a password that you'll remember

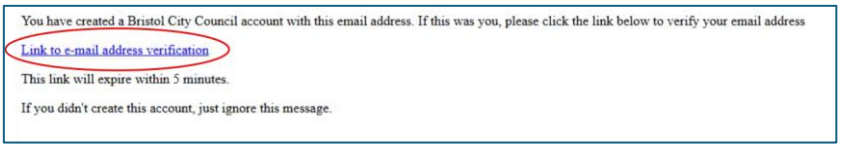
You'll need to enter your email and password every time you log in. if you forget your password, you'll have to set up a new one.

Stage 2 - Register on MyBristolHousing

1. In a web browser go to the MyBristolHousing sign in or register page.
2. Enter your **email address** and **password** for your Bristol Account. Then select Sign in.



3. You'll receive an email with a confirmation link. Select the link to **email address verification** in the email.



If the email doesn't appear in your inbox, check your Junk mail folder.

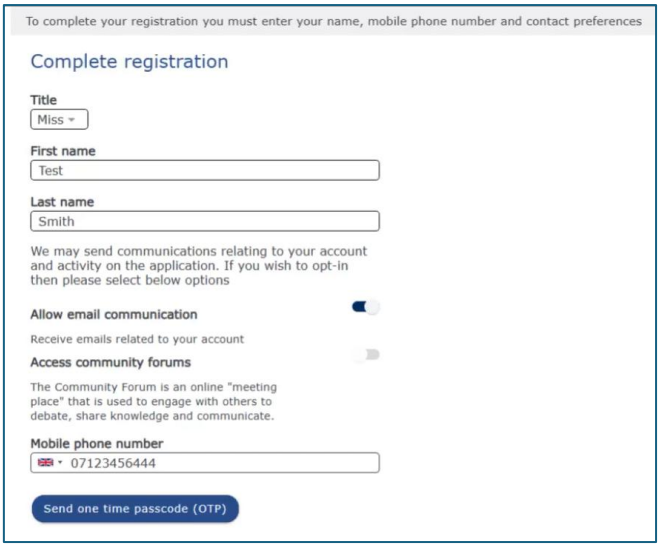
If the link doesn't work, copy and paste the link into a web browser.

The verification link is only valid for 5 minutes. If the link expires, you'll need to sign in again.

For this next step, you'll need to have access to a **mobile phone** so we can send you a **One-Time Passcode**.

4. Enter your **title**, **first name**, **last name**, **mobile phone number** and **choose if you want to receive emails from us.** This is recommended as it allows us to send you important updates about your account.

   Now select **Send one time passcode** (OTP).



5. You'll then be asked to verify your mobile number by entering the 4-digit code that was sent to your phone by text message.



6. You can now complete your registration and choose whether you want to connect your existing HomeChoice application with your new MyBristolHousing account. You'll need your Application Reference number to complete this step.



7. If you know your Application Reference number, select **Yes** and follow the next step. Otherwise select **No**.

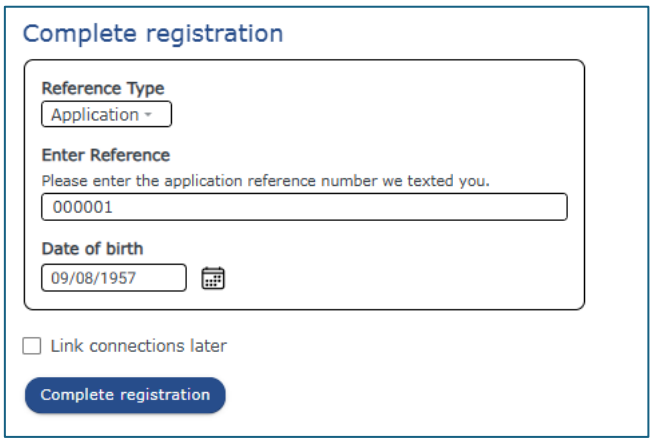
You can connect later if you don't have the reference number you need by going to the User Profile area.

You may have received an **email** or **text message** from us with a **unique reference number**, depending on your connection with us.

Enter the number and if you're an **existing applicant**, select **Application Ref.**

If you have not, call us on 0117 922 2200 and we'll provide it.

6. Select the **reference type** you want to use to connect with. Enter the **reference** and your **date of birth** using the format DD/MM/YYYY (or use the date picker). Select **Save**.



The system will run some security checks to ensure that your **title** such as Mr or Mrs, **first name**, **last name**, **date of birth** and **reference number** match the information on our housing management system.

If the information is missing or doesn't match the information on our housing management system, you'll get an error message.

Please contact us on 0117 922 2400 if you have problems with this.

If you've already registered on the new system, you might see a message saying: '**User profile exists with the same reference**.'

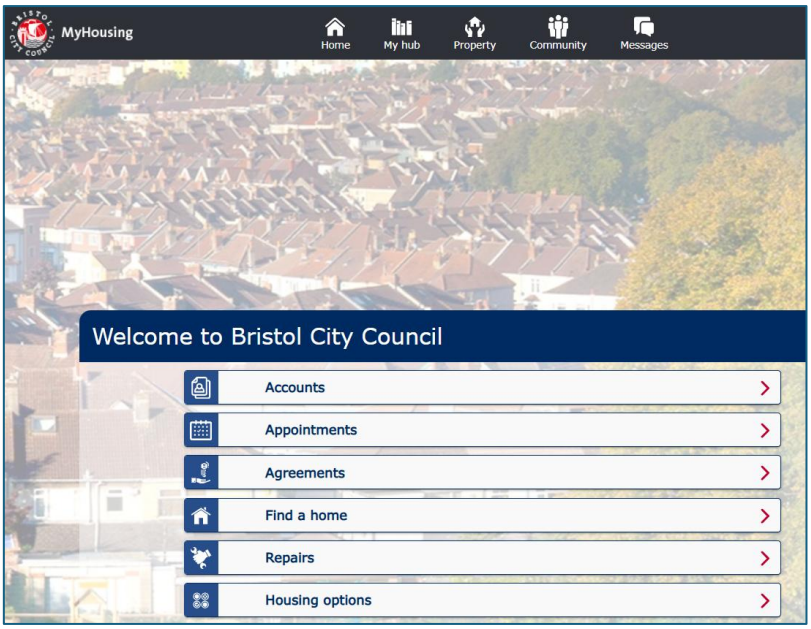
This means you may have used a different email address before.

Try logging out and signing back in using the email you used last time.

If this doesn't work, reset your password.

8. You can now navigate to the different sections of your account using the menu in the banner at the top or on your home page.

   If you're using a mobile phone, the banner displayed at the top of the page will show at the bottom of your screen.



If you decide not to connect your online account at this stage or you do not have an active rehousing application, only the **Find a home**, **Links**, **Housing Options** and **FAQs links** will be available.

How to connect after you've registered

If you already have an **active** HomeChoice Bristol application but don't know your Application Reference number, you'll be able to create a connection after you have registered by going to the user profile area.

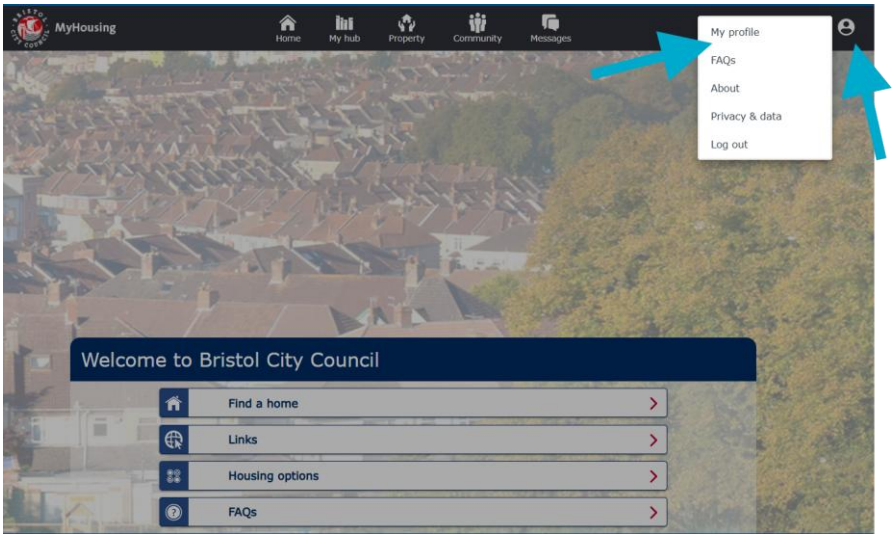
You'll only be able to connect if the **first name**, **last name**, **date of birth** and **reference number** you entered **match the information on your application form** on our housing management system.

If the information is **missing** or doesn't match the information on our housing management system, **you'll get an error message**.

You can call us on 0117 922 2400 if you need help to resolve this.

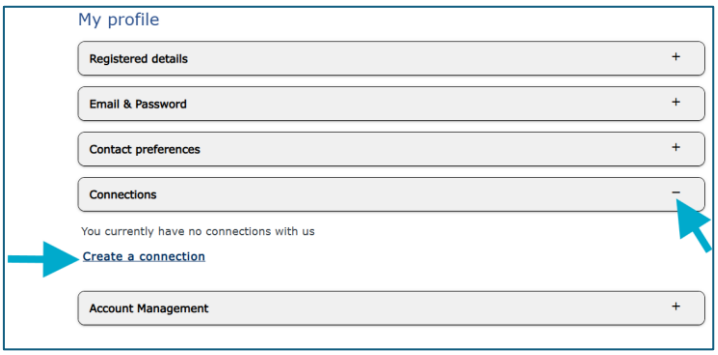
If you don't have an active rehousing application with Bristol City Council, this step doesn't apply to you.

1. First, select the **person icon** (which looks like a head and shoulders in a white circle) on the top right of the screen and then select **My profile** from the dropdown menu.



Open the **Connections** section by selecting the plus symbol on the right of the bar it's in.

Select the **Create a connection** link.

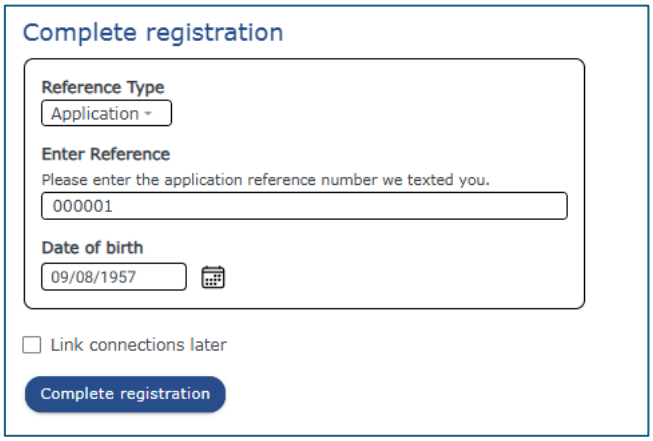


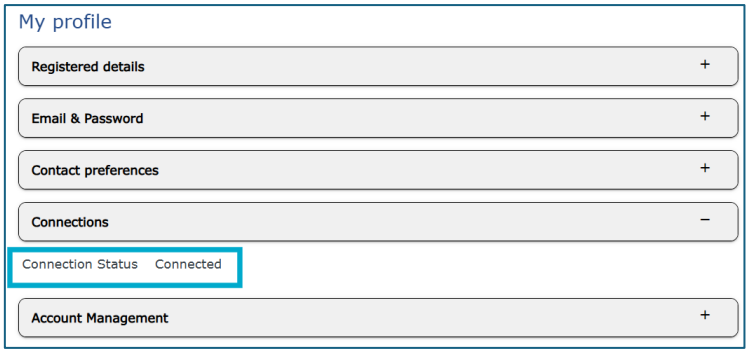
You may have received an **email** or **text message** from us with a **unique application reference number**, depending on your connection with us.

If you have not, call us on 0117 922 2400 and we'll provide it.

Select **Application** from the Reference Type dropdown menu to continue.

2. Select the **reference type** you want to use to connect with. Enter the **reference** and **your date of birth** using the format DD/MM/YYYY (or use the date picker). Select **Save**.





Further information about creating a connection

You need to be on our system to be able to connect

Having a HomeChoice application or being a current or former Bristol City Council tenant is a connection.

Your data is important

During the connection process, we check 3 pieces of personal data against our records:

- first name and last name
- date of birth
- reference number (such as an Application Reference).

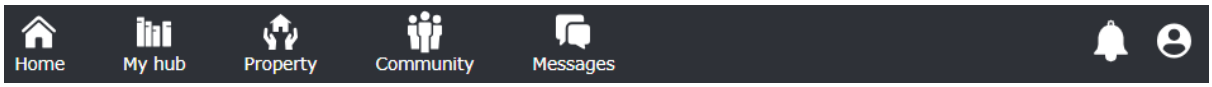
Name changes

If your name is different from what we have (for example, you've changed your name), you'll need to give us proof, and we'll then update our system. You'll need to call us on 0117 922 2400 to do this.

Names with apostrophes (such as O'Connor) and double-barrelled names

You'll need to type your name exactly how it would appear in our records and watch out for extra spaces that might cause errors. Call us on 0117 922 2400 if you need help with this.

Home page menu



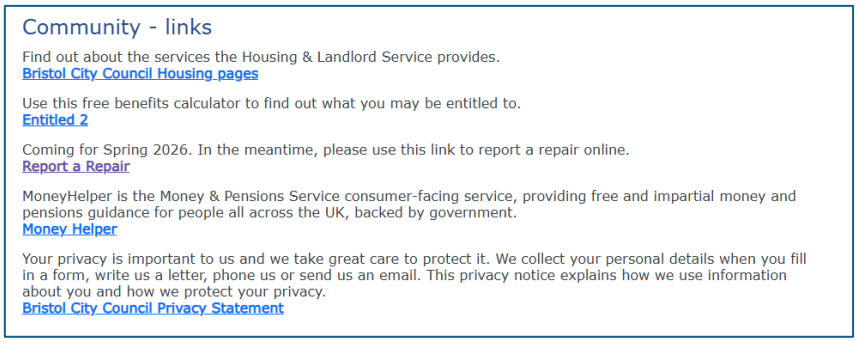
If you're using a computer, the menu will be at the top of your screen. If you're using a smartphone, the menu bar will be at the bottom.

Home	**Home** will take you back to the homepage.
My hub	**My Hub** shows you the agreements and accounts you have with us. Some functions such as Surveys and Appointments will be added later.
Property	**Property** gives you access to find property adverts.
Community	**Community** has links to other online resources such as our housing pages, a benefit calculator and Money Helper.
Messages	The **Messages** section is not available yet.
	Notifications - we may send you notifications from time to time. Unread notifications will be flagged here.
	My Profile has the following sections: **Registered details** – the details you used to create your account. If you change your mobile number, you'll be sent a new One Time Password to validate it. **FAQs** – Frequently Asked Questions **Email and Password** – this shows the information you used to create your account. **Contact Preference** – we recommend you enable emails. Community forums are not available. **Connections** – shows whether this account is connected to one you already had. **Account Management** - you can delete your online account using the Delete my Account button

Links

The **Community** menu item has several links to useful information on the Bristol City Council website or from other sources. Select Links and then the relevant link (blue text underlined)



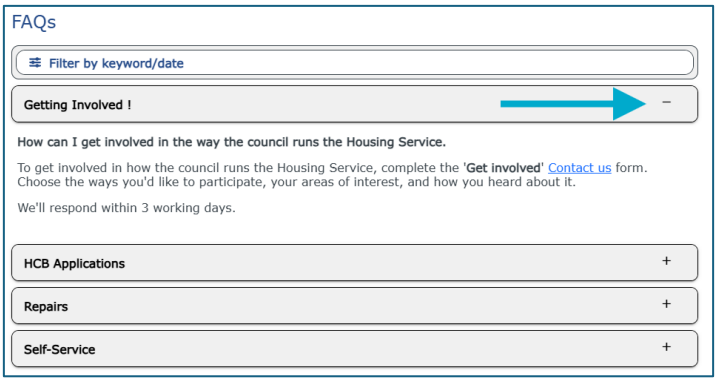


Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. The FAQs section can be accessed from **Your Profile** or the main menu if you have not created a connection

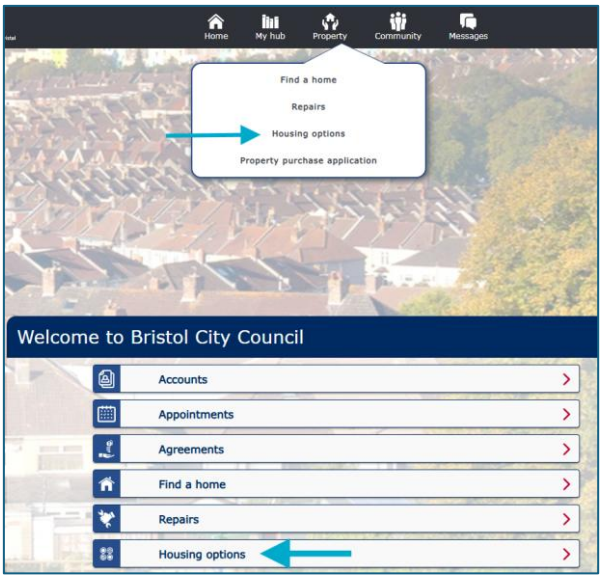


2. The questions are **arranged by subject**, which are shown as grey bars. Select a bar with a **+ (plus) sign** on the right-hand side of a section to show the content.



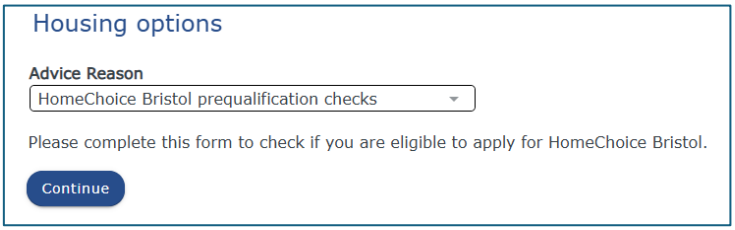
Find out if you can apply for council housing

1. Select the **Housing options** from the Property menu at the top of the screen or on the main menu.

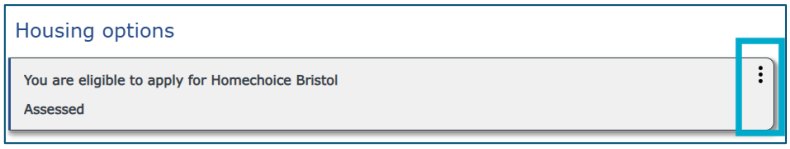


2. Select the **Generate housing options** link and choose 'HomeChoice Bristol prequalification checks' from the **Advice Reason** dropdown menu to open the questionnaire. Fill in the answers accurately and select **Save**.





3. You'll be advised if you can apply for social housing based on your answers. If you receive an approval message, you can choose to fill in an application form.



If you don't have a rehousing application yet:

- Select the **3-dot menu** on the grey bar that shows your housing option result.
- Select **Create a Housing application**.

If you already have an application and want to review it:

- Select the **My hub** icon at the top of the screen.
- Go to **Applications**.
- Select the **3-dot menu** and choose **Change of circumstance** to update your form.

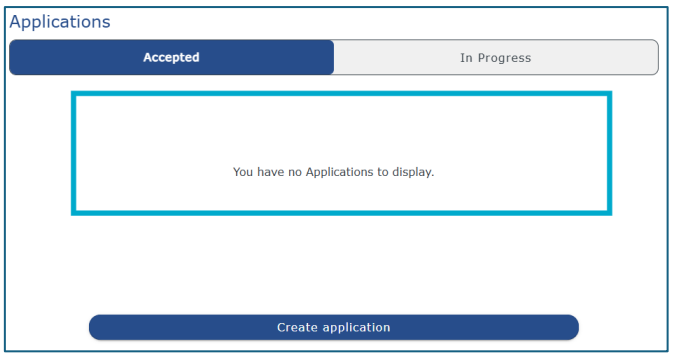
Start a housing application

1. You can create a housing application on the Housing options area of the portal or directly on the **Applications** option in **My hub** menu.



2. If you already have an active application, it will be displayed in the middle of the screen. The example below shows an account without an active rehousing application.

   Select **Create application**.



If you're connected but cannot see your existing application, refresh the screen you're on for the data to appear.

1. **Google Chrome**
   - Windows/Linux: Press **Ctrl** + **R** or **F5**
   - Mac: Press **Command (⌘) + R**
2. **Mozilla Firefox**
   - Windows/Linux: Press **Ctrl** + **R** or **F5**
   - Mac: Press **Command (⌘) + R**
3. **Microsoft Edge**
   - Windows/Linux: Press **Ctrl** + **R** or **F5**
   - Mac: Press **Command (⌘) + R**
4. **Safari (Mac)**
   - Refresh: **Command (⌘) + R**
5. **Mobile browsers**
   - iOS / Android: Usually pull down the page (swipe down) to refresh.

3. You'll be required to complete the **Declaration** before you start answering the questions.

When you're in the process of filling in an application, we recommend you select **Save and Exit** after each page to make sure your responses are saved.

Joint and Household members answers will only save once the entire section has been completed.

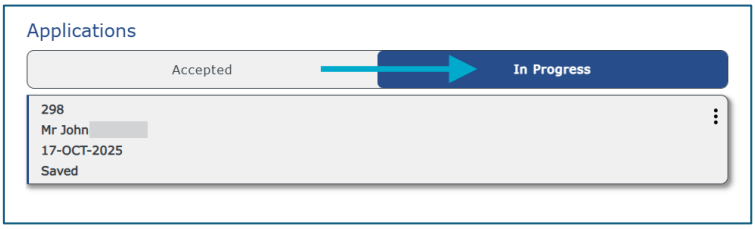
You'll find your saved application in this section in **In Progress**.

If you're an applicant with an application that has been or is in the process of being assessed by the HomeChoice Bristol team, it will show in the section **Accepted**.

If you have never applied, you'll see the message '**You have no Applications to display**' as above.

Finish your housing application

1. You'll find your partly completed application in the **In Progress** section. Select the **3-dot menu**, and **Complete application** option.



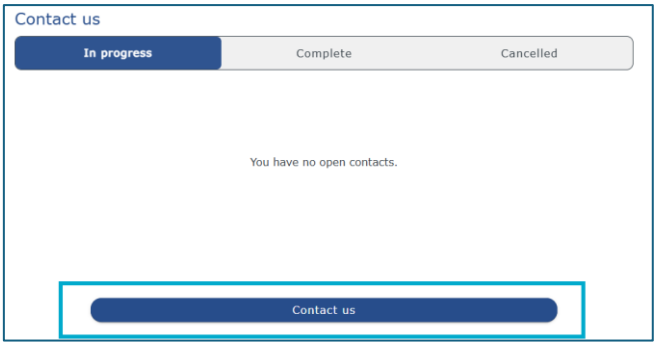
Tell us about changes to your application

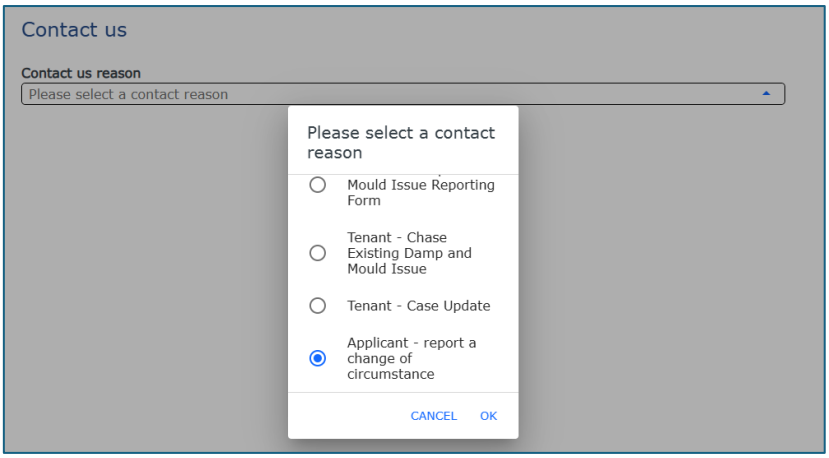
If you need to make changes to your application, use the **Contact form**.

2. Select the **Contact Us** option under **My hub**

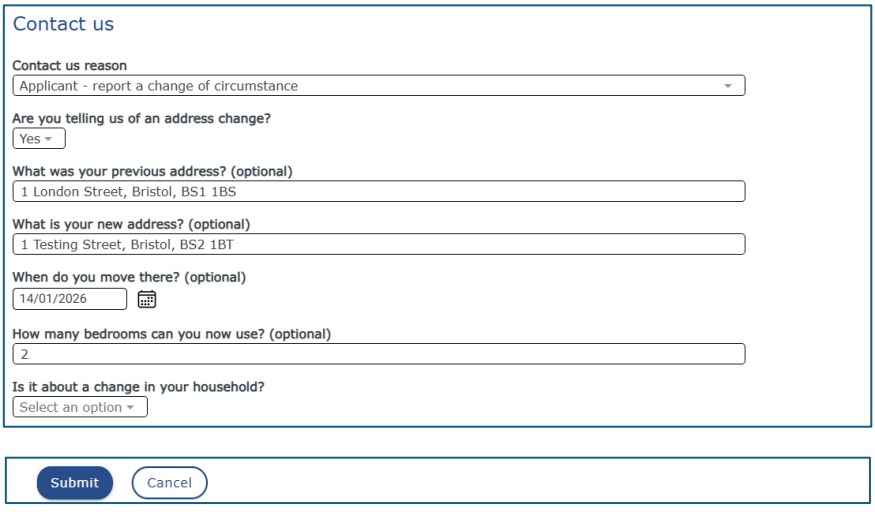


3. Then select the **Contact Us** button bar. A list of contact forms will be shown. Select the **Applicant – report a change of circumstance** option and select **OK** to open it.

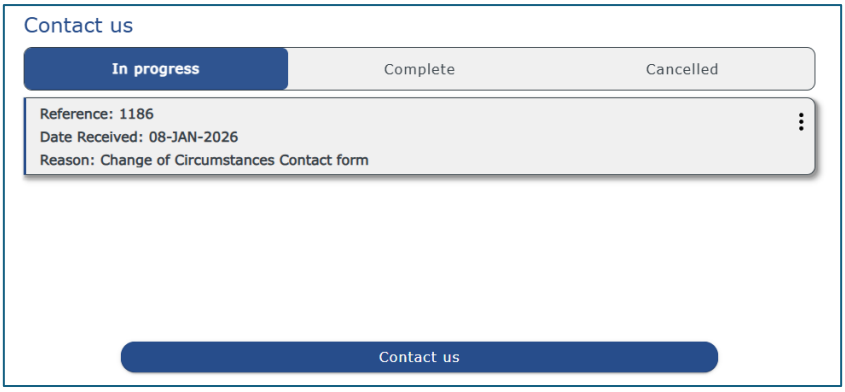




3. Complete the form as accurately and completely as possible, especially if you have responded yes to a key question such as **'Are you telling us of an address change?'** or **'Is it about a change in your household'**?
4. Once you have answered the questions, select the **Submit** button at the bottom of the form.



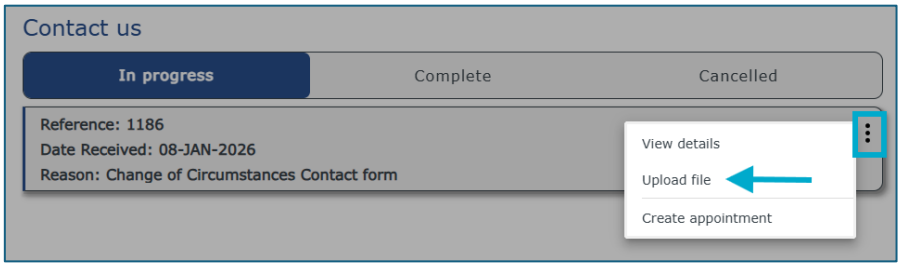
5. The system will automatically create a record of the form you have completed with a reference number and the date you submitted it.

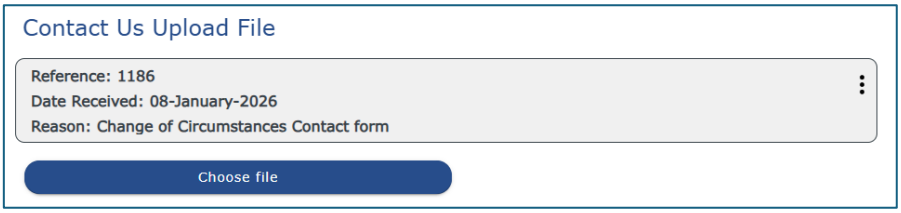


Attach a document to the contact form

If you are asked to provide some evidence of the change – for example evidence of a pregnancy, you can upload a photo of the document with the contact form.

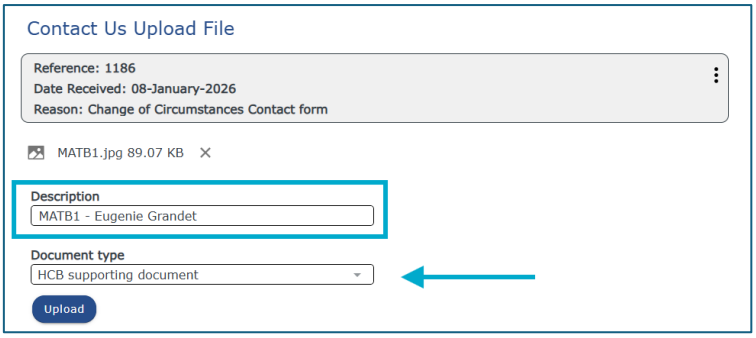
6. Once you have created a contact form, you can upload files by selecting the **Upload file** option from the 3-dot menu on each record. Next, select the **Choose file** button.



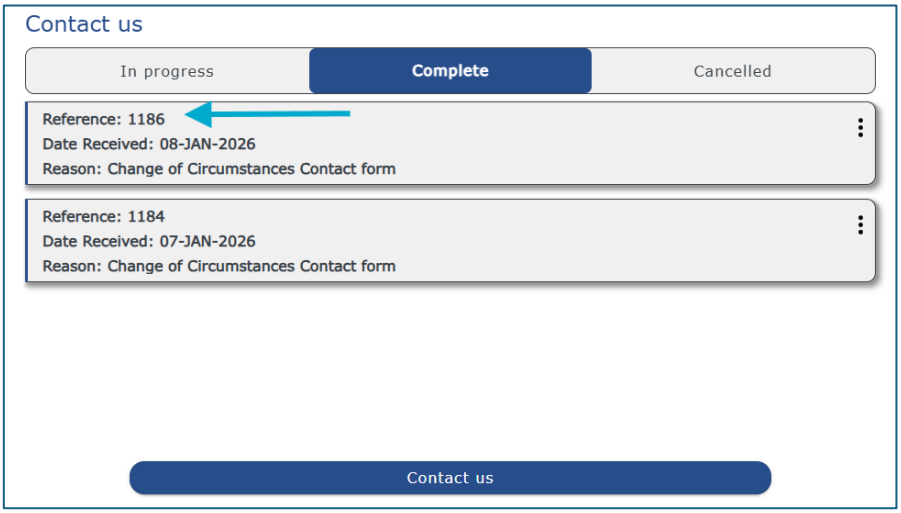


7. Select the file you want to upload and add a title for it in the Description field. Select the option most appropriate for your file from the **Document type** dropdown menu. Select **Upload**.

   If the upload has been successful a confirmation message will be shown.



The HomeChoice Bristol team will receive a notification that you have contacted us. Once your application has been updated with the changes you reported, the Contact will be completed and appear under the Complete area of Contact us.



Application statuses

Your application will show different statuses. Here's what they mean:

- **SAVED** – You've started an application but not finished it.
- **PENDING** – You sent your application. We're checking it.
- **COMPLETED** – We've checked your application. It's waiting to be assessed.
- **CURRENT** – Your application is checked and assessed. You can bid now.
- **REJECTED** – Your application was checked and assessed but not accepted.

Find a home and view property adverts

You now need an account to see homes available for rent.

Before, you could look at homes without logging in. Now, to see the homes available to rent, you must create and log in to a MyBristolHousing account.

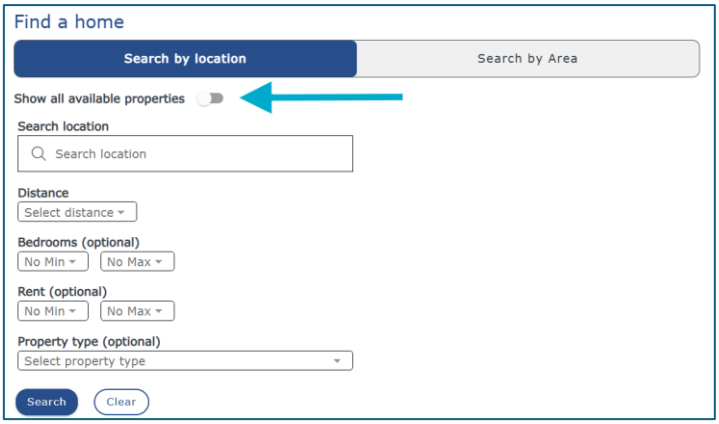
1. Once you've registered and logged in, select the **Find a home** option, available from the **main menu** above or located under **Property** on the top menu.



1. Select **Find a home** to search for a property.



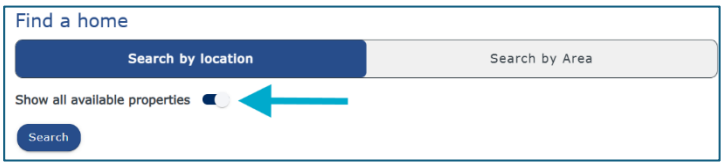
2. The property adverts search engine opens.



We recommend you select the **Show all available properties** toggle switch to view the full list of properties available and open for bids.

Once the property list is displayed, you'll be able to sort the list using a number of criteria such as highest / lowest rent or older / newest advert posted.

3. Once you've selected the **toggle switch**, it will move to the right and all the filter options displayed before will disappear. Select **Search**.



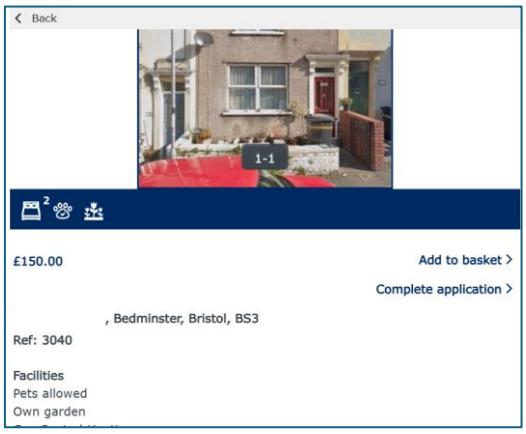
4. Use the **Sort By** dropdown command to organise the adverts by different preference order.



The property listing will provide you with **key information** about the property such as weekly rent, address, property size and bidding dates.

Icons under the main photo indicate such things as the number of photos available for the property, the number of bedrooms, whether pets are allowed or whether the property has a garden.

5. Select anywhere on the advert to show more **property details**. There, you'll find more information about charges, the landlord, rent costs, heating and other useful information.



Who can apply for a home?

You can only bid for a property if you have an active HomeChoice Bristol application. The website will let you know if you can apply.

To apply, you must:

- live in the UK
- not be in prison
- have an immigration status that allows you to get public help
- be 16 or older.

If you don't meet these rules, your application will be rejected.

If you meet them, select **Complete application** to start your form.

Add a property to your basket

1. If you'd like to place a bid for a property, select **Add to basket**.



We recommend only adding properties to your basket that suit your assessed needs.

This will reduce error messages and make the process quicker and easier for you.

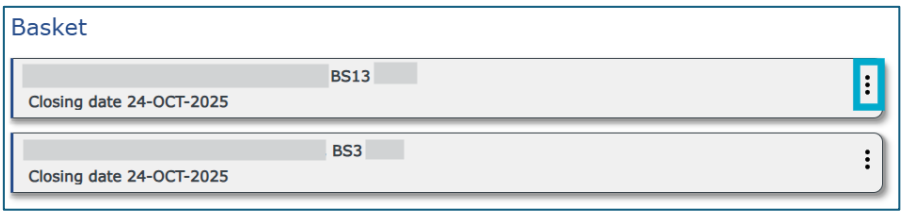
If you're not eligible to bid for a property, the system will display a **message** saying, '**You are not eligible to bid for this property'**.

2. Each property you select will be added to the basket. To review your choices and submit your bids, select the **basket** icon.



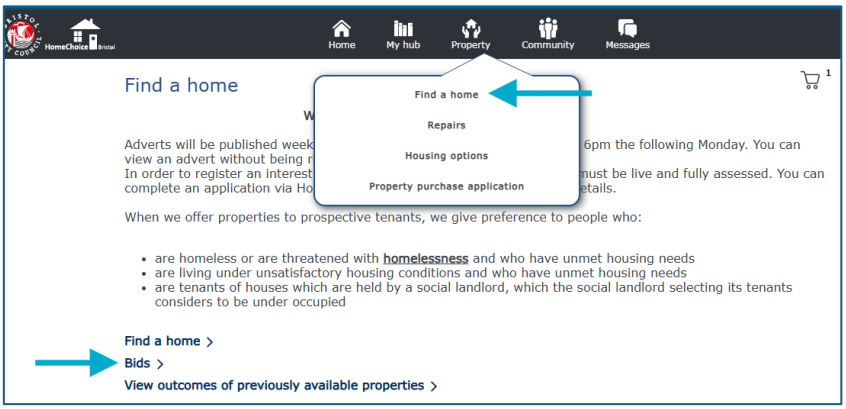
Place a bid for a property

1. To place a bid, select the **3-dot menu** and then the **Submit a bid** option. If you're no longer interested in bidding for the property, then use the other option available: **Remove from basket**.

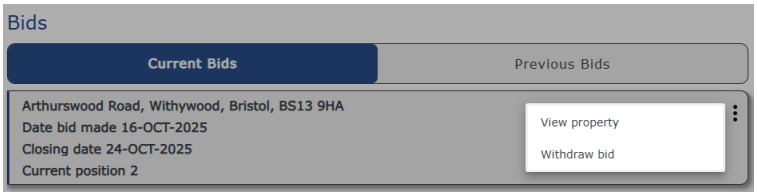


2. Once you've submitted a bid, the property will be removed from the basket and will appear in the **Bids** section in **Find a Home**.

   You'll also find a link showing you the **outcomes of previously available properties**.



3. You'll be able to view the property until it has been offered to an applicant.

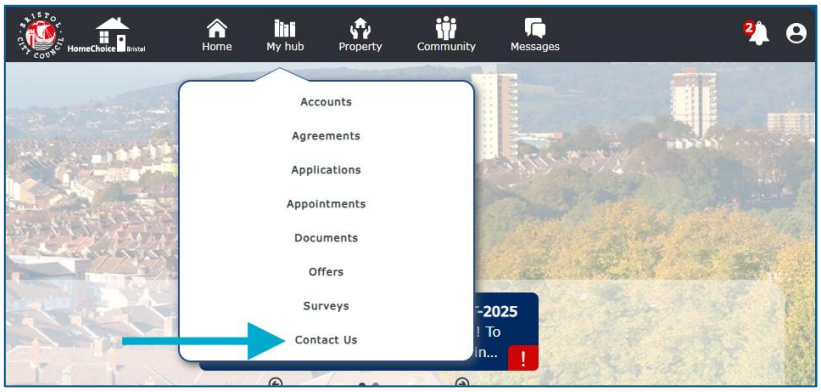


You can only bid for 3 properties in each cycle.

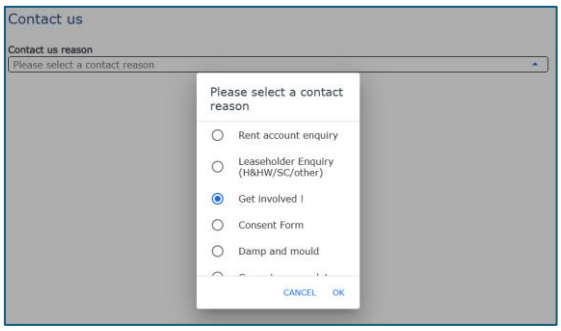
Contact us

1. You can get in touch with the housing service by using the **Contact Us** option, located under **My hub**.

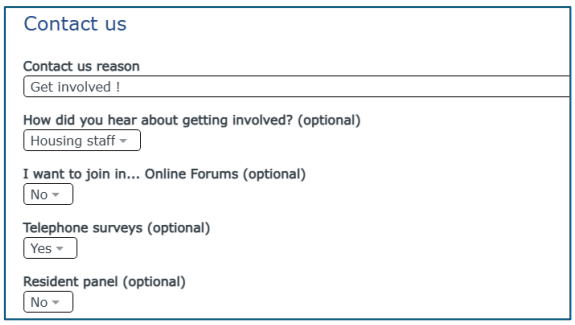
   Options are currently limited, but we're looking to add more in the future.



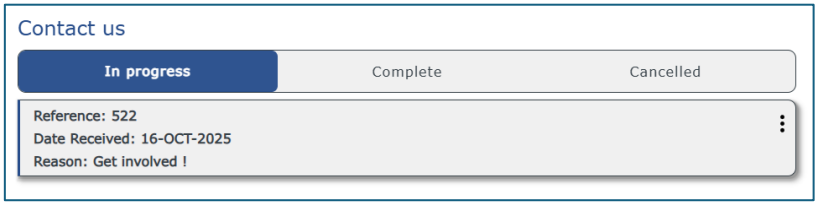
2. To access our contact forms, go to **My hub** and select **Contact us**. Select a reason from the list displayed and select **OK**.



3. Complete the form and select the **Submit** button. Once submitted, the form will appear in the main Contact us section.



4. The **3-dot menu** on each contact record provides you with a couple of options: **View details** (which will hold your responses) and **Upload file**.



The form is directly linked to our administration system.

You can track progress by selecting **In progress**, **Complete** or **Cancelled** from the menu bar directly above the list of contact records.

Some of our forms are still available on our website but as we improve the service, these will be moved progressively.

Note that at present, you won't be able to follow the progress of calls made to the call centre or forms completed on our website in your MyBristolHousing account.

Upload a file to a contact

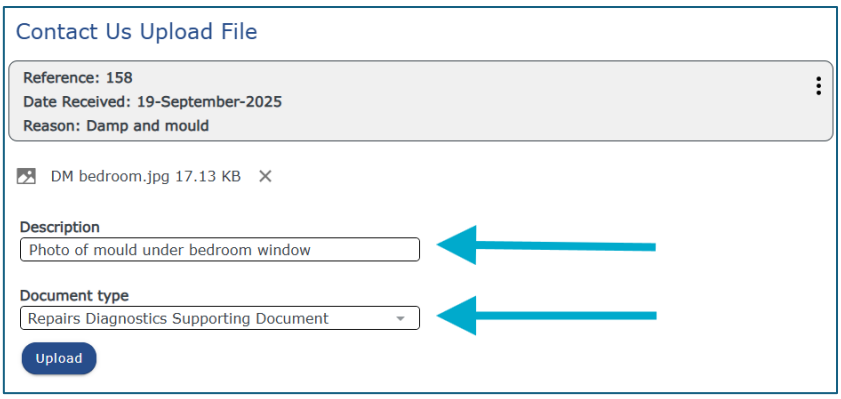
1. Once you have created a contact form, you can upload files by selecting the **Upload file** option from the 3-dot menu on each record. Next, select the **Choose file** button and select the file you want to upload.



You can only upload one document at a time. There are also restrictions in the file size and file types that can be uploaded which is limited to JPG, PNG, or PDF

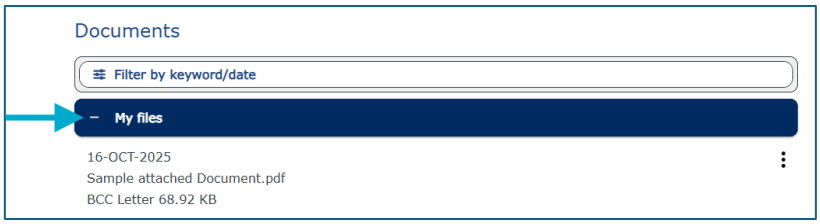
2. Once you've selected your file, the **Contact Us Upload File** form will open.

3. Type in the **description** of your file and select the **Document type** that fits your file from the dropdown list. Finally, select the **Upload** button.
   A message will confirm it has been uploaded successfully.



View documents

1. The document section is accessed through **My hub**. Select **Documents**.



Any new document uploaded by Bristol City Council staff will be available in this area.

2. Select the **+ sign** in front of **+ My files** to view any document attached.

   Once you have selected this, you can choose to **View** or **Download** the document the **3-dot menu** to the right of the document record.

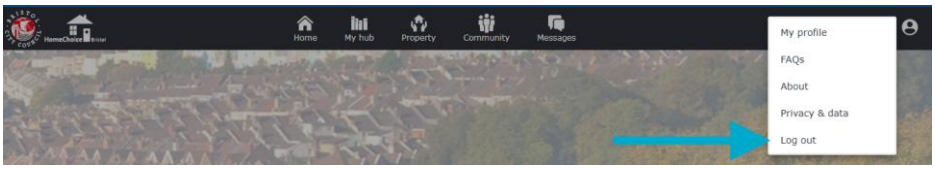


Appointments (not available)

This area of the system is not yet enabled.

Log out

1. To log out of the portal, select the **User Profile** icon in the top menu on the right and select the **Log Out** option. This will end your session securely and take you back to the Bristol Account login screen.



MyBristolHousing – Glossary of Terms

Account details: Screen showing details for a selected account, including Gross Rent and account status.

Account balances: Colour-coded balances showing credits (green plus +) and arrears (red minus –).

Agreements: Your tenancy, licence or lease records with Bristol City Council.

Agreement reference: A unique ID linked to each tenancy, licence or lease.

All charges: A filterable view of all rent-related charges by keyword and date.

Appointments (not available): Future feature for booking appointments related to agreements.

Bristol Account: Your main council login required to access MyBristolHousing.

Community menu: Provides links to external resources such as housing pages and budgeting tools.

Connection: The link between your online account and council records, verified using your details.

Contact Preference: Your chosen communication method, managed in My Profile.

Contact Us forms: Forms used to contact the housing service or submit requests and evidence.

Documents (My files): Area where documents uploaded by you or BCC staff can be viewed or downloaded.

Download (transactions): Button to export transaction history to a spreadsheet.

FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions grouped by topic, accessible via My Profile or menu.

Find a Home: Menu link available pre-connection; functionality varies for tenants.

Gross Rent: Total weekly charge for your tenancy, shown in Account details.

Housing management system: BCC's internal system used to match your identity before connecting.

Make a payment: Takes you to BCC's payment portal; requires a payment reference number.

Messages (not available): A future communication feature not yet enabled.

My Hub: Main dashboard showing Agreements, Accounts, Documents, and Contact Us.

My Profile: Area for managing your account details, preferences and connections.

One-Time Passcode (OTP): 4-digit passcode sent to your phone to verify your identity.

Party Ref or Person Reference: Reference number used to connect your online account to housing records.

Payment reference: Number used when paying rent online.

Payment schedules (not available): A planned feature not yet enabled.

Property menu: Provides access to view Right to Buy applications.

Registered details: Personal details used when creating your account.

Repairs (coming in 2026): Future functionality for reporting non-emergency repairs.

Three-dot menu: Options menu found throughout the system with actions like View, Upload or Payment.

Transaction details: List of payments and charges, including running balances.

Under Notice: Agreements currently within a notice period.

Upload file: Function allowing you to attach evidence to a contact form in jpg, png or pdf format.