

Housing needs software

Integrated with all third-party systems



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Our story

Home Connections set out with a vision to transform the relationship between home seekers and housing authorities. We sought to put the home seeker in control by giving them the information and digital tools to take decisions in obtaining a new home – via a service known as choice-based lettings. The choice-based lettings pilot we led was the largest in the UK and laid the foundation for a nationwide change to social housing allocations to the extent that over 80% of housing bodies in the UK used this approach by 2010. The success of our approach was recognised when we won a European Award for transforming the relationship between the citizen and local authorities in 2005 in Porto.

Since then, Home Connections has specialised in delivering bespoke and feature-rich software to the social housing sector. We are a not-for-profit software house with a mission to deploy IT tools to prevent and relieve homelessness, to help people understand their housing options, and to help them secure the home of their choice.

Since 2001, we have been at the forefront of many of the latest technology innovations. Wholly owned and controlled by local authorities, our solutions combine years of social housing expertise with cutting-edge technology to deliver high quality, fully bespoke software.

Bespoke to your requirements

- ✓ Built to meet your needs
- ✓ Fully configured to your service requirements
- ✓ Standard API's already functioning for most system providers
- ✓ Housing needs software that can be integrated with any third-party systems

Trusted supplier

- ✓ Non-profit
- ✓ Owned by local authorities and housing associations
- ✓ Cloud based
- ✓ ISO certified
- ✓ Supplier of choice to over 100 local authorities and housing associations.



Choice-Based Lettings: 20 years of choice

Since the first bid was placed through our Choice-Based Lettings system (CBL) in 2001, nearly 30 million bids have been processed. Our bespoke CBL systems represent a more transparent, auditable, and fair allocation process, while empowering home seekers with choice.

Key features

- Over 100 modules available – the most feature-rich solution on the market
- Fully automated and integrated approach to online estate-agency style property advertising
- Integration to registrations, mutual exchange and housing management systems
- Built-in reporting tools and full audit options
- Intuitive property dashboard updated in real time & full visibility of your entire letting process
- Intelligent autobid routines – in line with your housing policy
- Automatic notifications to customers for available properties that meet their needs.

Available add-ons

- Bid on the go – CBL has its own smartphone app, the only CBL app in the sector
- Integration to voice assistant devices such as Alexa, Siri and Google Assistant
- Virtual tours to provide contact-free property viewing with 24h access.



Flexible & configurable

Our bespoke design is ready to accommodate any changes in ways of working. The system allows flexible bid cycles, different property and advert streams and easily adjustable built-in nominations policies.

Why choose our CBL?

Our CBL offers automation for the business and self-service for the customer. It provides greater transparency and at the same time, it helps to better manage expectations. CBL allows you to manage properties more efficiently, lowering costs and increasing value while reducing customer refusals and waiting times.

CBL smartphone app

Allow customers to bid on the move through our Choice-Based Lettings app, the first and only smartphone app dedicated to bidding. Applicants can view properties on a map, navigate and search by advert number, bedroom size, chosen area and a range of filters. They can also place or withdraw a bid, access their bidding history, set preferences and see estimated bid position. The CBL app ensures people seeking social housing have the same quality of access to services as those considering accommodation in the private sector. Available for iOS and Android.



Housing waiting list management with Unity

Based on a simple customer self-service model, our intelligent Housing Register system, Unity, transforms the management of housing waiting list for the better. It starts with an application form that matches your housing policy, with a built-in real-time eligibility engine that reduces ineligible applicants applying for housing.

Key features

- Auto-renewal & auto-prioritisation according to your allocation policy
- Improved service through 24/7 availability
- Full overview of housing applications
- Simplified administration via automated processes
- Change of circumstances form available
- Report builder functionality – all questions from the application form can be used as fields for reporting
- Integrated with CBL, **hope** and with all leading housing management systems
- Real time conversations with your housing applicants through MyMessages.

Flexible workflows

Unity is designed to accommodate changes in business processes for no extra costs through highly configurable workflow settings.



Configurable renewals module

The renewals module allows you to manage your housing list better, ensuring that your applicants remain active whilst in need of housing and with the correct priority allocation. The renewals process can be managed manually or automatically monthly, quarterly or on an ad hoc basis. Done on a rolling basis, the module makes managing annual renewals less labour intensive for housing teams by only including applicants whose renewal dates (application/ last renewal date + 1 year or as set in policy) are captured in each batch. Notifications via email, letter and the customer portal guide the applicant down an effortless process to confirm their place on the housing list or cancel their

Business Intelligence

This BI reporting tool combines data extracted nightly from Home Connections' Housing Register, **hope** and Choice Based Lettings modules into one reporting area. The tool provides standard central government returns which local authorities are required to provide. Furthermore, it also offers the flexibility for users to create their own reports, which can be saved and re-run when needed. An option to export into Excel for further editing is available.

Easy to configure

Reports can be easily created by users with no scripting proficiency as the tool works on a drag and drop basis. The business intelligence tool offers scheduled reports, that can be set to run regularly.



Homelessness case management software



hope was introduced as a response to England's Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) in effect since April 2018. **hope** is built to guide the housing officers through the legislation aspects, helping local authorities to stay compliant. As the user progresses through a homeless case, the system will check in real time if each stage is HRA compliant. Through our partnership with Housing Reviews, **hope** is constantly updated to reflect the changes on legislation that might affect eligibility rules.

Case study – Westminster

To deliver the key aspects of their homelessness strategy, Westminster City Council needed a fit-for-the-future homelessness system with bespoke features that would support the efficient delivery of the Homelessness Reduction Act. **hope** was the software chosen to help the council deliver its holistic approach to homelessness. Uniquely to Westminster, the system was configured for use with their key partners, The Passage and Shelter.

Live since April 2018, Westminster's **hope** processed nearly 10,000 housing advice and over 5,000 homeless applications. Approximately 800 cases have been referred through the Duty to Refer. Westminster's system benefits from real-time message functionality, a suite of letters provided by Housing Reviews, tailored status, interactive dashboard and more. A Westminster representative chairs our Solution Design Group, leading the way for **hope** improvements based on user feedback.



Features

- Ability to transfer legacy data
- Can be integrated with all third-party systems
- Intuitive dashboard with due actions, appointments calendar and cases overview
- Configurability of all aspects of the system
- 56 days indicator to help with compliance
- Automated H-CLIC compliance checks and reporting to DELTA
- Single unified applicant record
- Smartphone app for homelessness advice.

Placements & rent accounts management

You can now manage all your property placements and rent accounts through Unity's enhanced property manager module, which can be linked to payment and benefit interfaces, as well as external payment providers. The data is displayed in a user-friendly and intuitive dashboard. You can also:

- Manage rent arrears, create alerts and tasks
- Publish rent statements and letters that can be accessed by the applicant through their customer portal
- Record property data such as inspections, facilities and upload documents
- Use a selection of reports to keep on track with placement and cost information.

Going beyond the HRA

Although geared to HRA compliance, **hope** can be repurposed and support housing associations and local authorities outside of England & Wales in assessing homeless cases, recording, providing advice as well as automated output of statistical returns (such as HL1, HL3 and PREVENT1 in Scotland).



Housing Options Wizard

Want to triage your applications and reduce ineligible applicants? The Housing Options Wizard can be used to assess applicant's housing need and eligibility while pointing them in the direction of suitable services. A housing list is not the right option for every person who applies. An options wizard presents applicants with alternative housing solutions and services – mutual exchange, the private sector, homelessness or money advice.

Why implement a Housing Options Wizard?

- Provide a range of unbiased, personalised housing advice
- Bespoke form to match your workflow requirements
- Add useful links for signposting
- Google translation option is available
- Applicants can download housing options plan.



Move-on options for the homeless

Homefinder UK is the only national mobility scheme offering case management services to social housing applicants of member organisations. Since being established in 2013, the scheme has successfully rehoused over 900 homeless households into permanent social housing across the country. The key to its success is a unique case management team that engages directly with home seekers in order to broker the move.



Our trusted partners

Home Connections delivers bespoke housing software to over 100 local authorities and housing associations including:





Contact us to find out more:

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