



CLOCH HOUSING
ASSOCIATION LIMITED



ICHR

Inverclyde Common Housing Register

ICHR REACHES FIVE YEAR MILESTONE



The Inverclyde Common Housing Register (ICHR) is now half a decade old! Our first 5 years have been a very busy period with lots of changes and improvements being made to our service.

Our team members have stayed the same but our service has undergone some changes. Initially we developed a website that allowed our applicants to view our available properties and email any bids through to our team. As all of our applicants and partners adapted to using a Choice Based Letting system (CBL) we felt that our computer software needed to be more user friendly.

With this in mind we changed to a complete CBL computer package which gives our applicants more control over their bids.

Alongside this we also rebranded with a new ICHR Logo and website which we think looks great. We have had lots of positive feedback about our new system and applicants are generally finding it easy to use.

During these 5 years we have also launched our Twitter account so make sure you follow us for all the latest news and to see what properties we have available. Other services we have introduced include a direct line telephone number, bidding app, applicant messaging service and online chat facility. More details on all of these services are included in this newsletter.

We hope you find this update useful and that you keep it somewhere handy for future reference.

Meet the Team



The Inverclyde Common Housing Register is a partnership between Cloch Housing Association, Oak Tree Housing Association, Larkfield Housing Association and Link Housing Association. Both Cloch and Oak Tree have been advertising and allocating their properties through the ICHR since January 2012. The ICHR Team maintain the housing register for all four associations and advertise any available properties through our website www.inverclydechr.org.uk

We are based in Oak Tree Housing Association's Offices at 41 High Street, Greenock (next to the entrance to the Oak Mall). You can speak to our staff in person, by telephone on our direct dial number, 01475 807011 or by e-mail on info@inverclydechr.org.uk. The office hours are Monday (9.00-5.00), Tuesday (9.00-6.00), Wednesday (12.00-5.00), Thursday (9.00-5.00) and Friday (9.00 – 4.00).

We are a small and friendly team of 4 who work on a part time and job share basis. The team is made up of our Senior Officers, Louise Carlin and Tracey Dargan and our Housing Assistants, Ronnie Bennett and Patricia Broom. Louise and Ronnie work Monday –Wednesday (am) and Tracey and Patricia work Wednesday (pm) – Friday.



Applying for Housing with the ICHR



- Register online at www.inverclydechr.org.uk
- Keep a note of your application ID and password which will be given on the completion page of the online form.
- Once you receive an email advising your application has been activated, you will be able to bid for available houses. Check the position of your bids by logging into your account.
- You can bid for 3 properties each week.
- Withdraw your bid before the closing date if you change your mind.

If you need assistance completing the online registration please contact our team who will be happy to help.

How to Bid

If you see a property that you are interested in and want to bid on this (express an interest) there are several ways that you can do this.

- **Accessing our website**
www.inverclydechr.org.uk
and logging in using your ID number and password.
- **In person at any of our landlords' offices in the Inverclyde area.**
- **Using the bidding app on your smartphone.**
- **If you require any help with bidding please contact the ICHR team.**





Forgotten Your Login Details?

If you have forgotten your login details there is no need to worry as you can re-set these quite easily.

Please contact the ICHR team and we will then send an e-mail with a link that will allow you to re-set your password. Please contact the team on 01475 807011 or info@inverclydechr.org.uk

You will then be asked to choose one of two options:

- **Enter the e-mail address you used when completing the form.**
- **I cannot remember my user ID and do not have an e-mail address.**

From there you should follow the instructions and you will be able to re-set your password.

If you have no access to an e-mail address and no internet access then please contact the ICHR team directly and we can help you to find your details.

Keeping your Details up to Date

Once you're on the ICHR housing register it is your responsibility to tell us if your circumstances change. For example if you have a new child or move home. Changes in your circumstances can affect your priority on the housing register or the type of housing you can be considered for.

We may email you from time to time asking you if you still want to be on the housing register. Your name may be removed from the register if you don't reply.

If you have a small change like a new telephone number or email you can call the ICHR team who will amend this for you. We are developing a short online change of circumstances form which will let you change these details easily yourself, so check our website for an update on this.

For more detailed changes mentioned above you will be required to complete an online change of circumstances. A link to the change of circumstances form can be found on the "How To Apply" section of our website.

If you are unable to complete this yourself the ICHR team can assist you with this.



NOW AVAILABLE!



DOWNLOAD OUR APP TODAY!

- Search for "Homeconnection" on Google Play or the App Store and download for free. Scan the QR codes below for quick download.
- Choose the ICHR portal, log in with your Applicant ID and Password/PIN.
- View and bid for all ICHR properties easily with just a few taps.

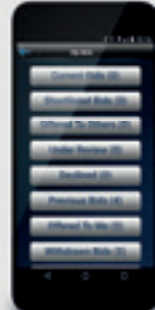
Contact the ICHR team if you need assistance on 01475 807011, email info@inverclydechr.org.uk or in person at our offices c/o Oak Tree Housing Association, 41 High Street, Greenock.



PLACE BIDS



VIEW PROPERTIES



CHECK BID STATUS

GOOGLE PLAY



APP STORE



HOUSE EXCHANGE TIME TO GET SWAPPING!

If you are a tenant of one of our partner organisations another option for moving could be through a mutual exchange which is basically a house swap with another social housing tenant.

You could swap homes with any council tenant or Housing Association tenant in the UK. Our partner landlords use an online service called House Exchange which is free for their tenants to join. If you are not a tenant of Oak Tree, Cloch, Larkfield and Link Housing Associations then there is a charge for using House Exchange.



How to Join

To join House Exchange you can register via www.houseexchange.org.uk. When you register you will complete some personal details, create a username and password and provide information about your current home and what you are looking for. This will allow the website to help to match you with potential swaps. It's also useful to include photographs of your property both externally and internally.

Download the App

House Exchange now has an App that is available for both iPhone and Android phones. Just search for "House Exchange" on the App Store or Google Play and find the logo.

Needing Help

If you require any help with registering with House Exchange then please contact the ICHR team at our office on 01475 807011 who will be happy to assist.

Some ICHR Statistics

We won't baffle you with lots of facts and figures but we wanted to just give a brief summary of how the first year has gone with our new online system.



1st September 2015 – 31 August 2016

Applications Processed	2273
Properties Advertised	234
Total Bids made	5162
Average Bids per property	22
Applications made active within	1.5 day average over last quarter

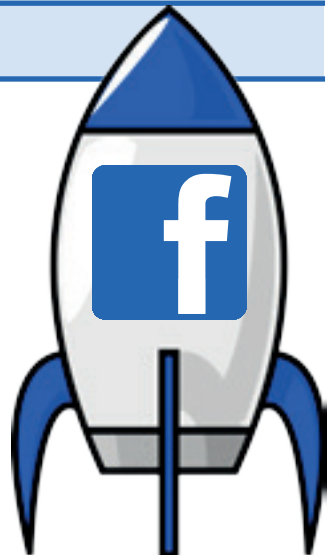
FACEBOOK LAUNCH

The ICHR is constantly looking to improve on ways we can communicate with our customers, we also want to make sure that you see all of our available properties. We have been using Twitter now for almost a year but we now realise that a lot of our customers prefer using Facebook.

We have decided to dive into the facebook world with our own ICHR page. The page will advertise our available properties and allow you to make contact with our team.

We are proposing to launch our Facebook page early in 2017 so check our website for the latest news.

Our page will only be monitored during our office hours which are detailed on the back page of this newsletter.



Inverclyde Common Housing Register (ICHR) – Frequently Asked Questions



Q. In the past, I applied for housing and was placed on a Waiting List, will this be the same for the ICHR?

A. No, the ICHR is a points-based Choice Based Letting (CBL) scheme. In short, this means that available properties will be advertised and the onus is on applicants to bid for properties that are of interest and which meets their requirements. More information is provided in a further question regarding the term, 'bid'.

Q. I am already registered with River Clyde Homes, do I still need to register with the ICHR?

A. River Clyde Homes are not part of the ICHR, therefore if you want to bid for a house through the ICHR you must also register with us.

Q. What information do I need to apply?

A. Before you complete the online registration you will need to have an email address for yourself and the joint applicant if there is one. You will also need your last 5 years addresses with postcodes as our online form uses an automatic postcode lookup facility.

Q. I don't have an email address but I would like to be able to register and use the new website?

A. Don't worry, we can help you set this up. Our friends at Future Skills can make an appointment with you, they will set you up an email address, they will show you how to log in and use the new system. Let us know and we will contact them for you.

Q. I don't know how to use a computer and I don't want to use one either, can I still bid for houses?

A. We want to make sure that everybody who wants access to our housing can get access. We want to try and get as many people using our website as possible but we also understand that this may be difficult for you. This is why we will still help you to register and place bids for you. You can call our team on 01475 807011 to do this.

Q. When I completed my online application a note came up giving me my reference and pin number. When I tried to log in your website it wouldn't work, what am I doing wrong?

A. You aren't doing anything wrong, you won't be able to log in with these details until we activate your application. We have 10 working days to activate your application and when we do this you will receive an email from us letting you know you can now bid.

Q. I registered with the ICHR and was informed that my application has no points but other people who I have spoken with who also applied do have points. I also recall having points when I had an application before the ICHR started, why is this?

A. Prior to the ICHR starting, the individual housing associations maintained their own waiting lists and there were numerous categories where points were awarded. However, the ICHR has a much reduced amount of circumstances where points are awarded, the most frequent being in respect of over-crowding, under-occupation and for medical reasons. Over half of all applicants currently on the ICHR have zero points so you are not at any particular disadvantage when bidding.

Q. What if I disagree with how my application has been assessed?

A. All applications are assessed in line with the ICHR Joint Policy. If you disagree with how we have dealt with your application, please ask for an explanation in the first instance and we will be able to discuss the matter further; this may result in your rehousing assessment being revised. If we still think that we have dealt with your application properly, then you may seek an appeal by writing to the Senior ICHR Officer setting out the reasons for your appeal.

Q. How long will I have to wait to be rehoused?

A. We cannot give any applicant an accurate timescale regarding rehousing as this can be affected by a number of factors. The allocation of properties via the ICHR is based on need so if you are deemed to be currently adequately housed then securing a tenancy may be a long-term, or even remote, prospect.

That said, housing can attract different levels of interest taking account of location and property type and it is not unknown for applicants with no points to secure a tenancy. Additionally, a percentage of properties advertised by each association will be prioritised to their own current tenants meaning those applicants will be placed ahead of all other applicants even where they have points or more points.

By signing into your application via the ICHR website, you are able to see your final position for bids placed. This can be a useful tool in tailoring future bids to areas where you are more likely to be successful in obtaining a tenancy through the ICHR.

Q. What other rehousing options are available to me?

A. If you are already a tenant of one of the housing associations participating in the ICHR, then you may be able to arrange a mutual exchange with another tenant of the same, or a different, housing association. You can even apply to exchange tenancies with council and housing association tenants outwith the Inverclyde Area. You can register for free via the website: www.houseexchange.org.uk

New Messaging Service from ICHR



The ICHR team has introduced a new way for applicants to contact us with the launch of our new messaging feature. You may have noticed that you have a new inbox when you log into your ICHR account, this is your own personal inbox which will allow the ICHR team and our partner landlords to send you messages direct. You can also send the ICHR team messages using this new feature.

Make sure you check your inbox for any new messages.

Please note that the ICHR team will only check our message inbox during office hours.

You can also still contact us by telephone: 01475 807011, email: info@inverclydechr.org.uk or in person at 41 High Street, Greenock.

Live Chat with the Team

The ICHR has launched a new online chat service, this means you can contact our team without having to pick up the telephone. You may have already experienced live chat when you have been online with your phone provider, insurance services or even booking a holiday. Now the ICHR is delighted to be able to offer you this service.

To chat online with a member of the ICHR team you simply need to visit our website www.inverclydechr.org.uk. You will see a chat box at the bottom right hand side of the screen, simply type in your message and click send, the message will come through to our team who will be able to answer your query.

The online chat facility will only be available during office hours and when a member of the team is available. If we are not online when you want to chat simply send us a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

We hope you find this new service easy to use so please feel free to give us your feedback.

New Homes Coming Up

Our partner organisations, Cloch Housing Association, Oak Tree Housing Association, Larkfield Housing Association and Link Housing Association have between them a housing stock of 3731. However some of the organisations have plans to increase their stock through their development programme.

Currently Oak Tree Housing Association has a new build site in development at Garvald Street with 45 properties being built. These properties are a mix of one, two, three and four bedroom properties. They are expecting these to be completed early in 2017. They also have plans to develop a site at Shore Street in Gourrock and this is likely to begin work in the spring of 2017. The development comprises a block of 8 flats. Oak Tree will also be building 38 properties at their Auchmead Road development.

Cloch Housing Association has plans to develop a site at Kilmacolm Road, Greenock. This development will provide approximately 50 cottage style properties and building should start around October 2017 with completion around February/March 2019.

Link Housing Association are also looking at a site in Braeside, Greenock. Once built, these properties will be managed by Larkfield Housing Association.

Make sure you check our website, Facebook and Twitter for all the latest news on these developments.

Are you Ready to Move?

If you make a bid (express an interest) for a property this means that you are telling us you want the property. Once a bid is placed and the property closes you cannot withdraw your bid. If you are well placed for the property the landlord will arrange a home visit to check your circumstances and may offer you the property.

If you are made an offer and you refuse the property this will count as a first refusal. You will be sent a letter advising of this. If you were to refuse another property within the next six months you will be suspended from the ICHR housing register for a year and will not be able to bid for any properties.

When you accept a tenancy there are costs involved, this includes council tax, a month's rent payment in advance, gas and electricity costs and other utilities. If you are making a claim for Universal Credit you could be waiting for 6 weeks before any payment is made to you, if you need any further information or advice about Universal Credit contact Advice First on 01475 715299.

Please remember to only bid for properties which you are really interested in and are willing to move into. If you are unsure about the property please speak to the ICHR Team who will be able to give you more information.



Give us your Feedback



Your opinions really matter to us and we want to hear what you think of our service whether it is good or bad. We also want to make sure that our staff have been helpful to you. Please go to the “Your Feedback” section of our website and complete the box with your comments. If you would prefer to complete a paper copy of this survey you can collect this from our office.

Follow us on twitter @inverclydechr for our Feedback Friday feature where we report back on comments we receive, good or bad!

Remember our team are here to help!

**Email us at [inverclydechr.org.uk](mailto:info@inverclydechr.org.uk) or
telephone us on 01475 807011.**

Contact Us

Address:

c/o 41 High Street, Greenock, PA15 1NR

Tel: 01475 807011

Fax: 01475 807022

Email: info@inverclydechr.org.uk

Twitter: @InverclydeCHR

Opening Hours:

Monday 9.00am to 5.00pm

Tuesday 9.00am to 6.00pm

Wednesday 12noon to 5.00pm

Thursday 9.00am to 5.00pm

Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm

