

The Settled Homes Scheme

A NEW WAY TO PERMANENT HOUSING

CityWest Homes, a company owned by Westminster Council, is buying around 200 homes in Westminster. These homes will be rented to homeless people. If you are fed up with living in temporary accommodation, a settled home could be just what you are looking for. Here's why.

Along with standard council and housing association properties, we are now advertising settled homes through Choice Based Lettings. Settled homes are for people living in temporary accommodation only. If you successfully bid for one it will eventually become your permanent home. That'll mean no more temporary accommodation, no more moving around, no more uncertainty about where you'll be living. You'll have a permanent home with the security and stability that brings; it'll be a great opportunity to put down roots, plan for the future and start living your life to the full. What's more, if you are a single person registered to bid for a studio flat, you'll be able to bid for any one bedroom properties advertised under this scheme.

Sounds good; what's the catch?

There are no catches; but there are important differences between

settled homes and standard council tenancies. The most obvious difference is the rent. CityWest Homes are buying these properties on the open market and this is expensive. To help cover purchase costs, for the first four years the rent will be higher than we charge for standard council tenancies—rents will be similar to those charged for temporary accommodation. If you are eligible for full housing benefit, your benefit will cover the rent. But even if you don't get full housing benefit, this could still be an affordable option. After four years your rent will go down to the same level as a standard council or housing association rent and future rent increases will be regulated. The second major difference concerns the type of tenancy you will get. You will not be a Westminster council tenant. However, your property will be managed by CityWest Homes and as long as you don't break the tenancy agreement

you won't be evicted. To begin with, you will have an assured shorthold tenancy. When you have lived there for four years, you will be granted an assured tenancy which will give you the same security as a housing association tenant. From then on, if you want to move to another property you will be able to join our tenant transfer list and bid for council or housing association properties as they become available. Finally, there's one small difference which is actually a big plus: unlike standard council properties, settled homes are newly decorated and have carpets, curtains, cookers and fridges. Applicants near the top of the housing register might not go for settled homes as they will have enough points to successfully bid for standard council properties. With those people not bidding, if you are lower down the list you may be in with a chance of getting a settled home. So check every week for these properties, and get bidding.

For families living in temporary accommodation the average wait for a standard council or housing association property is nine years!

If you normally have too few points to successfully bid for properties, then bidding for a settled home could be your best chance of getting out of temporary accommodation.

WAITING FOR A **PERMANENT HOME?**

For more information about settled homes contact:

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OUR SETTLED HOMES SCHEME COULD BE JUST WHAT YOU NEED