

Common Housing Register From the Scottish Executive

What is a common housing register?

A common housing register [CHR] is where a group of landlords (for example councils, housing associations and housing co-operatives) develop a single application form and a single register of applicants who have completed this form. Applicants looking for housing in their area then complete the form advising where they would like to be housed and the type of housing they need. The landlords participating in the register then select applicants from their waiting own list, held within the register using their own lettings policies.

The Scottish Executive supports the development of CHRs in Scotland as they make applying for housing much easier for the applicant who no longer has to visit various housing landlords in order to register their housing need.

The Scottish Executive launched a National Framework for CHRs in March 2001, encouraging landlords to develop a CHR in their local area. The Executive's commitment to this initiative has been supported by the award of £684,962 under the Modernising Government Fund to six local authorities across Scotland, the very recent announcement of an additional £3m Executive funding and the employment of a National Co-ordinator and a National Development Officer on a full time basis to support CHR development. The local authorities are expected to work in partnership with other landlords to develop CHRs for their area, whilst considering their local needs, the needs of the applicants applying to them and how their CHR would operate with other services they deliver.

In particular, the Scottish Executive is asking landlords to consider the provision of housing advice to their applicants and that they include this in their CHR development plan. It is essential that applicants are advised of what housing is available, where that housing is available and that any housing offered by the landlords would indeed meet the needs of the applicant. It is preferable that this advice is offered *before* the applicant's name is added to the register thus ensuring the applicants needs and expectations are met.

There are already four CHRs operating across Scotland - Aberdeen, Perth & Kinross, Edinburgh and Renfrewshire. A further four are likely to be introduced by the spring of next year, at least on a trial basis. All other local authority areas in Scotland are actively developing CHRs; some are more advanced than others. This demonstrating the commitment by landlords across the nation to improve access to housing for those who need it most!