

# Homefinder Somerset Quarterly Monitoring Report July 2020

## Introduction

This report provides the latest key information from Homefinder Somerset.

## Households registered with Homefinder Somerset

The number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset increased by 2.4% (250 households) between 1 April and 1 July 2020. This is perhaps unsurprising given the impact of the Coronavirus. Mendip, Sedgemoor and Somerset West & Taunton saw increases in the quarter to 1 July, whilst South Somerset saw a fall of 47 households.

The proportion of households in Gold Band varies from 5% in Mendip to 10% in South Somerset. It can be seen that the proportion of households in the Silver Band is identical in 3 of the 4 local authorities (36%), whilst Mendip has a higher proportion (47%). The proportion of households in Bronze Band ranges from 48% in Mendip to 58% in Sedgemoor.

**Table 1: Number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset by local authority and Band as at 1 July 2020**

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mendip	0	0%	84	5%	733	47%	749	48%	<b>1,566</b>	<b>15%</b>
Sedgemoor	0	0%	158	6%	933	36%	1,481	58%	<b>2,572</b>	<b>25%</b>
Somerset West & Taunton	7	0%	313	7%	1,560	36%	2,423	56%	<b>4,303</b>	<b>41%</b>
South Somerset	12	1%	207	10%	736	36%	1,089	53%	<b>2,044</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>3,962</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>5,742</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>10,485</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: The percentages refer to the proportion of households who are in that Band (e.g. 7% of all households are in Gold Band). The percentage given for the total refers to the proportion of all households registered with a particular local authority (e.g. 25% of households are registered with Sedgemoor DC).

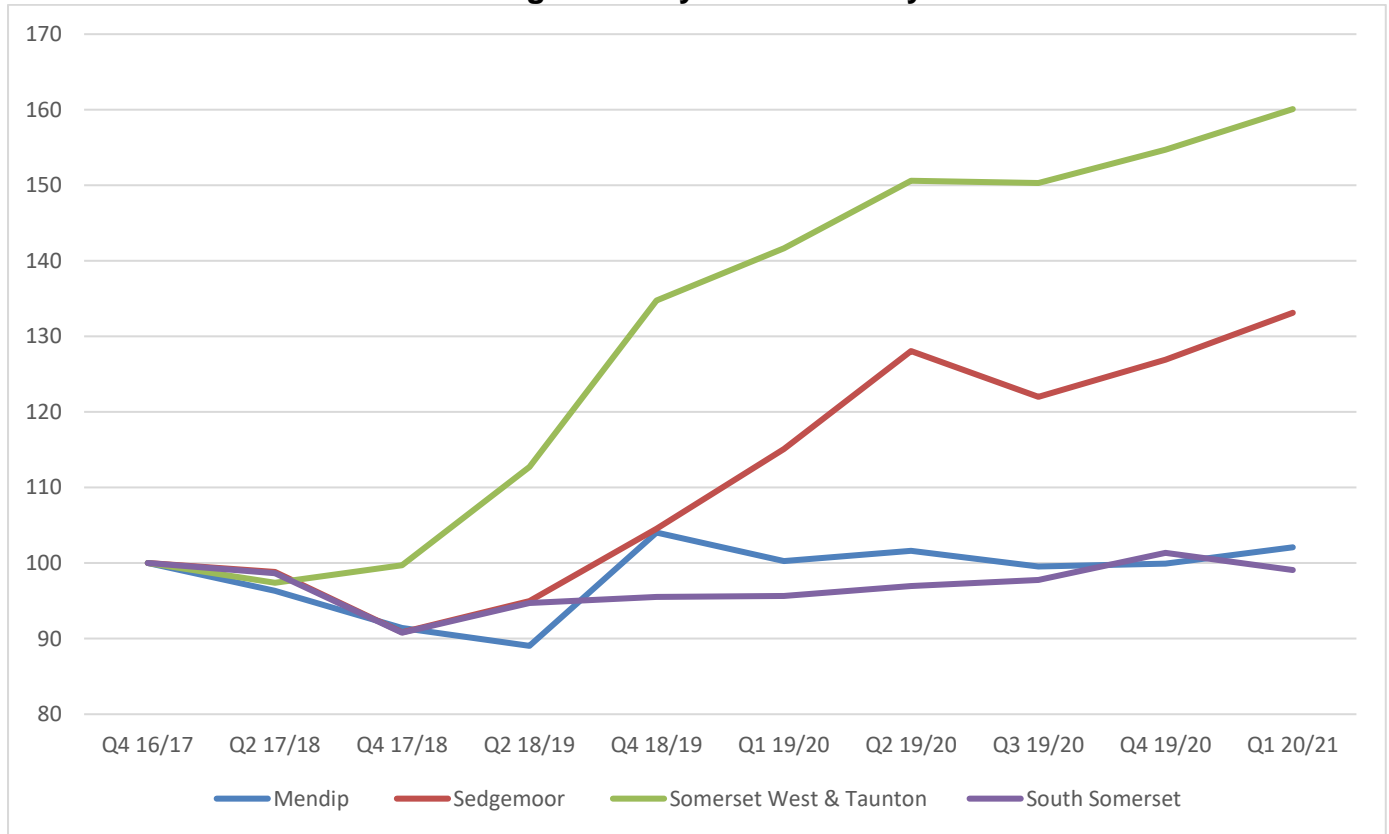
It can be seen from Table 2 and Chart 1 that the number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset has increased by 28% since Q4 2016/17. However, as previously reported this increase is largely due to the growth in the register in Somerset West & Taunton, which has increased by 60% during this time. This increase is due to the local authority being unable to undertake the renewals process due to transformation and merger of the 2 local authorities. .

**Table 2: Number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset by local authority**

	Q4 16/17	Q2 17/18	Q4 17/18	Q2 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20	Q3 19/20	Q4 19/20	Q1 20/21
Mendip	1,534	1,478	1,402	1,366	1,596	1,538	1,559	1,527	1,533	1,566
Sedgemoor	1,932	1,909	1,755	1,835	2,020	2,224	2,474	2,357	2,452	2,572
Somerset West & Taunton	2,688	2,618	2,680	3,030	3,622	3,808	4,048	4,040	4,159	4,303
South Somerset	2,063	2,035	1,873	1,954	1,971	1,973	2,000	2,017	2,091	2,044
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,217</b>	<b>8,040</b>	<b>7,710</b>	<b>8,185</b>	<b>9,209</b>	<b>9,543</b>	<b>10,081</b>	<b>9,941</b>	<b>10,235</b>	<b>10,485</b>

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**Chart 1: Number of households registered by local authority. Q4 2016/17 as the base**



Just over half of all households (51%) registered with Homefinder Somerset need a 1 bed home, whilst just under a third (31%) need a 2 bed home.

**Table 3: Size of home needed. Households registered as at 1 July 2020**

	1 Bed		2 Beds		3 Beds		4+ Beds		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	775	49%	515	33%	211	13%	65	4%	1,566
Sedgemoor	1,241	48%	834	32%	377	15%	120	5%	2,572
Somerset West & Taunton	2,291	53%	1,269	29%	561	13%	182	4%	4,303
South Somerset	1,012	50%	614	30%	326	16%	92	5%	2,044
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,319</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>3,232</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>1,475</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>10,485</b>

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**Bidding Analysis**

Between 1 April and 30 June 2020 a total of 21,254 bids were placed by 7,801 households on homes across Somerset. This is significantly down from the normal number of bids due to the impact of the Coronavirus and the huge reduction in the number of homes advertised during April and May (see below). The number of bids made in the last quarter was 56% lower than the corresponding quarter last year.

The number of households bidding was also significantly below normal in both April and May. The number of bids and households bidding each month returned to more normal levels in June.

97% of bids made during the quarter were placed via the website.

**Table 4: Number of bids and bidders 1 April 2019 – 30 June 2020**

	No. of bids	No. of bidders
<b>2019</b>		
April	9,100	2,733
May	13,600	3,055
June	10,392	2,903
July	11,585	2,796
August	11,540	2,932
September	10,823	2,775
October	12,819	3,093
November	11,276	2,945
December	10,215	2,788
<b>2020</b>		
January	11,668	2,987
February	13,567	2,970
March	9,884	2,686
April	4,468	1,546
May	5,073	1,881
June	11,713	2,684
<b>Average</b>	<b>10,515</b>	<b>2,718</b>

Table 5 below shows the proportion of households by local authority and Band who are considered to be inactive (e.g. they have not bid or logged onto the Homefinder Somerset website during the last 6 months, and are not on autobid). This analysis excludes those households who have only registered in the last month and may not have had the opportunity to bid or login to the website.

It can be seen that a third of households registered with Homefinder Somerset can be considered as inactive. The proportion of inactive households varies by Band and local authority. The proportion of inactive households increases as priority reduces. The proportion of inactive households in Gold Band ranges from 7% in South Somerset to 38% in Somerset West & Taunton. The higher proportion of inactive households in Somerset West & Taunton will be affected by the fact that the renewal process has not run for some time, as detailed above.

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**Table 5: Percentage of households who have not bid or logged onto the Homefinder Somerset website during the last 6 months, and are not on autobid as at 1 July 2020 (excluding those households who have registered in the last month)**

	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Mendip	n/a	10%	13%	22%	<b>17%</b>
Sedgemoor	n/a	15%	29%	35%	<b>32%</b>
Somerset West & Taunton	33%	38%	39%	51%	<b>45%</b>
South Somerset	13%	7%	8%	17%	<b>13%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>32%</b>

Table 6 reveals that an average of 76 bids were placed for the 297 homes advertised between 1 April and 30 June 2020. This represents a 43% increase in the average number of bids per property compared to that seen in 2019/20. This is due to the fact there was a significant reduction in the number of homes advertised in the last quarter so there were fewer homes for applicants to bid on (see the Homes Advertised section below).

The average number of bids varied considerably between local authority areas and property type/size. The average number of bids for houses (118) was much higher than for flats (48).

The average number of bids for homes advertised during the quarter ranged from 56 bids in South Somerset (74 homes advertised) to 105 in Somerset West & Taunton (70 homes advertised).

**Table 6: Number of homes and average number of bids by type, size and local authority (1 April – 30 June 2020)**

	Mendip		Sedgemoor		Somerset West & Taunton		South Somerset		Total	
	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids
<b>Bungalow</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>73</b>
1 Bedroom	14	94	6	92	11	94	14	32	45	74
2 Bedroom	3	83			4	103	11	55	18	70
<b>Flat</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>48</b>
1 Bedroom	13	48	49	53	14	70	15	40	91	53
2 Bedroom	5	31	14	50	12	32	7	21	38	37
<b>House</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>118</b>
1 Bedroom							1	98	1	98
2 Bedroom	5	108	16	151	15	210	16	101	52	148
3 Bedroom	5	75	17	87	12	110	7	72	41	90
4 Bedroom	1	25			1	64	2	51	4	48
5 Bedroom					1	11			1	11
<b>Maisonette</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>					<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>
2 Bedroom			1	61					1	61
3 Bedroom			2	8					2	8
<b>Studio flat</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>57</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>46</b>
Studio	1	36	1	57			1	44	3	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>76</b>

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88 homes (29%) advertised during the last quarter received over 100 bids. The highest number of bids received was 259, for a 2 bed bungalow in near Langport.

**Rejection Reasons**

During the last quarter landlords set a total of 296 bids to match or offer rejected. This is significantly down on the normal levels due to the much smaller number of homes advertised in the quarter (see below).

228 households were match or offer rejected (as some households were match or offer rejected for more than 1 property) by landlords for 114 homes (as more than one household was match or offer rejected on some homes).

Table 7 shows that 20% of households were rejected because they were considered unsuitable due to arrears/debts (13%) or ASB/ convictions (7%). The other most common rejection reasons were: 'Applicant no longer wants to be considered', 'Applicant did not respond', 'Applicant states area is unsuitable' and 'Applicant states property not suitable'. Together these reasons accounted 59% of all rejections during the quarter.

Given the low number of rejections this quarter the variations between landlords can be affected by a very small number of cases, and as such no analysis of these variations is presented.

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**Table 7: Match or Offer Rejection reasons used by landlords (1 April – 30 June 2020)**

	Aster		HiS		LiveWest		Magna		Stonewater		Somerset West & Taunton		Yarlington		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of total
Applicant considered unsuitable due to arrears/debts	6	10%			4	6%	5	20%	10	29%	6	19%	5	19%	1	9%	<b>37</b>	<b>13%</b>
Applicant no longer wants to be considered	5	9%	4	11%	16	22%	1	4%	1	3%	2	6%	5	19%	3	27%	<b>37</b>	<b>13%</b>
Applicant did not respond	2	3%	4	11%	15	21%	1	4%	6	18%	1	3%	3	12%			<b>32</b>	<b>11%</b>
Applicant states area is unsuitable	2	3%	8	21%	2	3%	5	20%	2	6%	8	25%	2	8%			<b>29</b>	<b>10%</b>
Applicant considered unsuitable due to ASB/Convictions	11	19%	1	3%	2	3%			3	9%			4	15%			<b>21</b>	<b>7%</b>
Applicant states property not suitable			5	13%	5	7%	5	20%			1	3%	1	4%	2	18%	<b>19</b>	<b>6%</b>
Landlord_Property not suitable for applicant	1	2%	2	5%	4	6%	3	12%	3	9%			3	12%	1	9%	<b>17</b>	<b>6%</b>
Landlord_Offer withdrawn by landlord	3	5%	6	16%	5	7%									1	9%	<b>15</b>	<b>5%</b>
Landlord_Change of circumstances identified	2	3%	2	5%	4	6%	3	12%					1	4%			<b>12</b>	<b>4%</b>
Landlord_Location deemed unsuitable	5	9%	4	11%	1	1%			1	3%			1	4%			<b>12</b>	<b>4%</b>
Applicant doesn't want to move					2	3%	2	8%	4	12%	1	3%			1	9%	<b>10</b>	<b>3%</b>
Landlord_Requires ground floor	1	2%	1	3%							6	19%	1	4%			<b>9</b>	<b>3%</b>
Applicant did not complete verification	2	3%							3	9%	1	3%					<b>6</b>	<b>2%</b>
Landlord_Adapted housing required	4	7%			1	1%					1	3%					<b>6</b>	<b>2%</b>
Applicant state unable to afford rent in advance					5	7%											<b>5</b>	<b>2%</b>
Applicant states bedrooms too small											4	13%					<b>4</b>	<b>1%</b>
Landlord_Doesn't meet agreed local lettings Plan	2	3%													1	9%	<b>3</b>	<b>1%</b>

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**Table 7 (continued): Match or Offer Rejection reasons used by landlords (1 April – 30 June 2020).**

	Aster		HiS		LiveWest		Magna		Stonewater		Somerset West & Taunton		Yarlington		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of total
Landlord_Ground floor not required	3	5%															3	1%
Landlord_Sensitive let applicant unsuitable	2	3%			1	1%											3	1%
Applicant states they can't afford to move					2	3%											2	1%
Landlord_Applicant is on autobid	2	3%															2	1%
Landlord_Does not require supported housing	1	2%	1	3%													2	1%
Landlord_Property is adapted & applicant has no requirement for adaptations	2	3%															2	1%
Applicant feels property isn't affordable															1	9%	1	0%
Applicant states condition of property not satisfactory					1	1%											1	0%
Landlord unable to make contact with applicant – Inform LA					1	1%											1	0%
Landlord_Equal Bid given greater priority									1	3%							1	0%
Landlord_Fails to meet housing needs	1	2%															1	0%
Landlord_Health Reasons prevent applicant from moving.					1	1%											1	0%
Landlord_Pets – No/type incompatible with property	1	2%															1	0%
Landlord_Tenancy Support not available											1	3%					1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** Percentages for each landlord refer to % of total rejections for that landlord (e.g. 16% of households rejected by Aster were due to arrears/debts)

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**Homes Advertised**

The impact of the Coronavirus on Homefinder Somerset can be seen by the significant reduction in the number of homes that were advertised in the last quarter, particularly in April and May. Table 8 reveals that only 297 homes were advertised. This compares with 641 homes in the same quarter last year. This represents a reduction of 54% in the number of homes advertised compared to the same quarter last year.

**Table 8: Homes advertised by month (1 April – 30 June 2020)**

	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mendip District Council	11	23	21	<b>55</b>
Sedgemoor District Council	38	27	45	<b>110</b>
Somerset West & Taunton	4	33	53	<b>90</b>
South Somerset District Council	17	15	46	<b>78</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>333</b>

**Homes Let**

322 homes across Somerset were set to let<sup>1</sup> in the last quarter. Unsurprisingly given the significant fall in the number of homes advertised (see above), this represents a 38% reduction compared to the same quarter last year (when 516 homes were let).

Tables 9 and 10 set out the profile of the homes set to let in the last quarter by size, local authority and landlord. 44% of homes let between 1 April and 30 June 2020 were 1 bed homes and 40% were 2 bed homes. South Somerset again accounted for the highest number of homes let (94).

**Table 9: Homes let between 1 April and 30 June 2020 by property local authority**

	<b>Studio</b>	<b>1 Bed</b>	<b>2 Bed</b>	<b>3 Bed</b>	<b>4 Bed</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Mendip	1	38	19	5	2	<b>65</b>	<b>20%</b>
Sedgemoor	0	34	40	13	0	<b>87</b>	<b>27%</b>
Somerset West & Taunton	0	25	34	14	3	<b>76</b>	<b>24%</b>
South Somerset	3	44	36	11	0	<b>94</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>% of total</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

<sup>1</sup> These homes were set to Offer Accepted



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Homes in Sedgemoor (18%), Somerset West & Taunton (18%), Aster (14%), Yarlington (13%) and LiveWest (12%) together accounted for 75% of homes let in the last quarter.

**Table 10: Homes let between 1 April and 30 June 2020 by landlord**

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Total	%
Aster	1	26	16	1		44	14%
Curo		1		1		2	1%
Falcon Rural			1			1	0%
Habinteg		1	1			2	1%
Hanover		2				2	1%
Hastoe HA			2			2	1%
Homes in Sedgemoor		32	14	11		57	18%
LiveWest		18	11	8	2	39	12%
Magna Housing		2	13	2		17	5%
Sanctuary HA	2		3			5	2%
Selwood Housing		5	4	1	2	12	4%
SHAL			4			4	1%
Somerset West & Taunton	1	31	18	7		57	18%
Southwestern Housing Society			3			3	1%
Stonewater		6	16	4	1	27	8%
Tamar Housing			2	3		5	2%
Yarlington		17	21	5		43	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100%</b>

Tables 11 and 12 show that 44% of homes were let to households in the Gold band. This compares with 36% of homes let to households in the Gold Band during 2019/20. The proportion of homes let to households in the Gold Band varied from 34% of homes in Mendip to 54% of homes in Somerset West & Taunton.

43% of homes were let in the last quarter were let to households in the Silver band. This ranged from 36% of homes in Somerset West & Taunton to 60% in Mendip.

**Table 11: Homes let between 1 April and 30 June 2020 by property local authority and Band**

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	1	2%	22	34%	39	60%	3	5%	65
Sedgemoor	1	1%	33	38%	36	41%	17	20%	87
Somerset West & Taunton	1	1%	41	54%	27	36%	7	9%	76
South Somerset	4	4%	46	49%	37	39%	7	7%	94
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>322</b>

The proportion of homes let to applicants in different Bands also varied by landlord (Table 12). Amongst the 5 landlords who let the most homes in the second quarter, the proportion of homes let to households in Gold Band ranged from 32% for Aster to 53% for Somerset West & Taunton.

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**Table 12: Homes let between 1 April and 30 June 2020 by landlord and Band**

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Aster			14	32%	26	59%	4	9%	<b>44</b>
Curo					2	100%			<b>2</b>
Falcon Rural							1	100%	<b>1</b>
Habinteg Housing	1	50%			1	50%			<b>2</b>
Hanover					2	100%			<b>2</b>
Hastoe HA					2	100%			<b>2</b>
Homes in Sedgemoor	1	2%	24	42%	19	33%	13	23%	<b>57</b>
LiveWest			20	51%	17	44%	2	5%	<b>39</b>
Magna Housing			8	47%	7	41%	2	12%	<b>17</b>
Sanctuary HA			5	100%					<b>5</b>
Selwood Housing	1	8%	2	17%	9	75%			<b>12</b>
SHAL			2	50%	1	25%	1	25%	<b>4</b>
Somerset West & Taunton	2	4%	30	53%	22	39%	3	5%	<b>57</b>
Southwestern Housing Society					2	67%	1	33%	<b>3</b>
Stonewater	1	4%	15	56%	9	33%	2	7%	<b>27</b>
Tamar Housing					2	40%	3	60%	<b>5</b>
Yarlington	1	2%	22	51%	18	42%	2	5%	<b>43</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>322</b>

90 homes were let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief between 1 April and 30 June 2020, representing 28% of all homes let. This is above the proportion seen in 2019/20, when 15% of homes were let to homeless households in Gold Band and Silver Under Relief. This will reflect the increased number of homes advertised with a preference to homeless households as a result of the Coronavirus. The proportion of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief ranged from 34% in Somerset West & Taunton to 17% in Mendip – see Table 13.

**Table 13: Homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief between 1 April and 30 June 2020 by property local authority**

	No. of homes let	No. of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief	% of all homes let
Mendip	65	11	17%
Sedgemoor	87	27	31%
Somerset West & Taunton	76	26	34%
South Somerset	94	26	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>28%</b>

Amongst the 5 landlords who let the most homes in the last quarter the proportion of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief varied from 38% of homes let by LiveWest to 16% of homes let by Aster – see Table 14.

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**Table 14: Homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief between 1 April and 30 June 2020 by landlord**

	<b>No. of homes let</b>	<b>No. of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief</b>	<b>% of all homes let</b>
Aster	44	7	16%
Curo	2	1	50%
Falcon Rural	1	0	0%
Habinteg Housing	2	0	0%
Hanover	2	0	0%
Hastoe HA	2	0	0%
Homes in Sedgemoor	57	15	26%
LiveWest	39	15	38%
Magna Housing	17	8	47%
Sanctuary HA	5	1	20%
Selwood Housing	12	2	17%
SHAL	4	0	0%
Somerset West & Taunton	57	16	28%
Southwestern Housing Society	3	0	0%
Stonewater	27	11	41%
Tamar Housing	5	0	0%
Yarlington	43	14	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>28%</b>

Over 30,000 homes have been let through Homefinder Somerset since 2009. The total number of lets per year by size is shown in Table 15.

**Table 15: Number of properties let**

	<b>Studio</b>	<b>1 Bed</b>	<b>2 Bed</b>	<b>3 Bed</b>	<b>4 Bed</b>	<b>5 Bed</b>	<b>6 Bed</b>	<b>Total</b>
2009	41	927	1,063	477	42	2	0	<b>2,552</b>
2010	41	926	1,078	576	52	4	1	<b>2,678</b>
2011	48	933	1,381	635	56	6	0	<b>3,059</b>
2012	46	944	1,358	717	55	3	1	<b>3,124</b>
2013	50	969	1,264	588	49	8	0	<b>2,928</b>
2014	54	935	1,148	547	48	4	0	<b>2,736</b>
2015	40	1,031	1,294	605	36	4	2	<b>3,012</b>
2016	43	832	1,065	446	31	3	0	<b>2,420</b>
2017	37	847	953	365	27	2	0	<b>2,231</b>
2018	35	866	791	333	34	1	0	<b>2,060</b>
2019	32	905	913	376	38	2	1	<b>2,267</b>
2020 to 30 June	14	390	439	202	14	1	0	<b>1,060</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>10,505</b>	<b>12,747</b>	<b>5,867</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>30,127</b>

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