



LEAVING HOME?

a few home truths

1 LEAVING HOME?

This booklet has been produced by young people, for young people, to provide information and advice if you are thinking about leaving home or find yourself unable to stay there.

Try to discuss this with someone who has experience of leaving home, and make plans, as it is a decision that could affect the rest of your life.

You may be finding things difficult at home, but leaving home may not be the answer as it could very well create different problems.

Make sure you get **GOOD ADVICE** on what's the best action for you. *East Lothian Housing Education Partnership* arranges the lessons which link to the content of this booklet, presented by experts on leaving home safely.

Benefits rules are complex and changing. For up to the minute advice visit: www.eastlothian.gov.uk/benefits

Refer to pages 20 & 22 for some useful numbers to help with your enquiries.

WHY PEOPLE LEAVE HOME

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- To be independent
- To get a job/go to college
- Lack of space
- Financial pressures
- Family arguments
- Parents disapprove of lifestyle
- Being abused

These are some of the most common reasons.

Situations

I am 4 months pregnant, my parents have kicked me out and the rest of my family have disowned me. I have nowhere else to go.

AMY, 16

I live at home with my parents, but I want to move out because I'm always arguing with them.

PAUL, 17

My father abuses me. I've had enough, I want to move out.

CARLY, 16

3 IN AN EMERGENCY.....

If you become homeless and need a place for the night, the best idea might be to stay at a friend or relative's house for a night or two.

Remember! This would only be a temporary arrangement, until you get things sorted out.

You don't want to outstay your welcome as this can be stressful for all involved.

THINGS TO TAKE

- National Insurance card
- Birth certificate
- Medical card
- Bank/Building Society details
- Change of clothes

*forgot your national insurance number?
To get advice
telephone 0300 200
3500*

COLLECT LATER

- Valuable items
- MP3 player/TV etc

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

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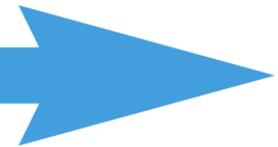
East Lothian Homelessness Service (based in Musselburgh) will be able to help you, if you have been asked to leave home.

Step One: Phone Homeless Hotline 0800 169 1611 or East Lothian Homelessness Service 01620 827536

Step Two: Interview with an officer to explain your situation

Step Three: You may be housed in emergency accommodation. This is likely to be in Bed and Breakfast if you are a single person.

Unfortunately, you may not be situated in your home town. Even if you are pregnant, you might still be accommodated in bed and breakfast. However, this should not be for longer than 14 days.



If you want to stay on at school but find yourself homeless you might have to face problems such as:

- Getting to school from emergency accommodation eg from Dunbar to Tranent
- Homework - is there peace and quiet and a suitable study area?
- If you're away from your home town, will you still be able to see your friends?
- Who do you speak to if you're lonely or down?
- Will you miss out on after school activities? eg hockey or football, drama or music
- Not having enough money to buy lunch time snacks and feeling embarrassed in front of your friends.

If stuck, the school can help - get advice from Pupil Support staff. Remember to ask your school about an education maintenance allowance and about benefits entitlements.

You may be able to claim benefits to help with housing and living costs when you leave home.

First, you need to apply for Universal Credit ...



For help call the Council on 01620 827827 or...

Citizens Advice Bureau	01620 824471 (Haddington)
Council Welfare Rights Team	0131 653 2748 (Musselburgh)
	0131 653 5230 (Musselburgh)

For a full explanation of Universal Credit, please download a leaflet at: <http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/universalcredit>

If you have left home, you may be able to claim benefits and still stay on at school.

7 YOUR HOUSING OPTIONS COUNCIL AND HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

Council Housing

You can apply by calling into any East Lothian Council Office and filling out an Application Form. Ask for help if you aren't sure how to fill it in. An interview can be arranged to discuss your situation. It is a good idea to put your name on the **Council's housing list** when you reach 16. However, except in certain circumstances, it may be a while before you can be offered a house.

Remember! Increase your chances of being offered a house by listing all the areas you'd consider staying.

Housing Associations

These are independent organisations which offer affordable rented houses and flats and may be able to help you.

You will need to fill in an application form for each association and you should ask about their letting policy/procedure to check if you can apply.

East Lothian Housing Association 01620 82 5032
Castle Rock/Edinvar Housing Association 0800 432 0007
Homes for Life, Haddington 01620 82 9300

8 YOUR HOUSING OPTIONS PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION

Private renting is expensive in East Lothian and most landlords ask for a *Returnable Deposit* and *One Month's Rent in Advance*.

This could be more than £1000 up front and then over £500 every month. If you share your place then the costs will obviously be more manageable.

Details of available property can be found in lettings agents, local shops, in newspapers, on the Internet or by word of mouth. Useful websites include www.gumtree.com, and www.flatmaterooms.co.uk.

Depending on your income, Housing Benefit (sometimes called Local Housing Allowance) may help with your rent but is unlikely to cover the full amount. This is now a component of Universal Credit.

Be Aware!

- 1 Landlords seek references from people who can state your reliability.
- 2 You must sign a tenancy agreement with your landlord.
- 3 It is illegal to be asked for more than a returnable deposit and one month's rent up front. Landlords **must** lodge deposits in a secure government scheme.
- 4 Take the gas/electric meter readings upon entry so that you're only charged for what you use!
- 5 Landlords prefer tenants who are older and it can be difficult proving you're really able to manage.

If you leave home and don't feel ready to cope, this option may be for you.

You'll have your own room, but share the kitchen, bathroom and living room with other young people.

Staff will be on hand to offer advice and guidance on matters such as budgeting, cooking, health, benefits and employment /education.

Supported accommodation staff will also help you to move into your own tenancy when you are ready.

**To find out more contact the
Homelessness Response Team
on 01620 827 536.**

First Steps

Make sure that, at the very least, you have:

- a sleeping bag or duvet and something to sleep on
- knives & forks, cups, plates and a kettle
- lightbulbs and a portable electric heater

Also check that the property is wind and watertight. Report any leaks or draughts.

Later

- *Introduce yourself to neighbours (Good advice in case of emergencies)*
- *Find out more about your local neighbourhood*
- *Get settled in before you think about having a party*
- *Don't allow visitors to outstay their welcome. Remember, **you** are responsible for the behaviour of guests!*

REMEMBER! Money needs to be set aside for all this!



You can get help to furnish your home from Recycling First, see page 20

- 1- "If you're pregnant you can get a house straight away."
- 2- "You choose which house you get."
- 3- "The Council must provide you with furniture if the house doesn't come already furnished"
- 4- "You're provided with money to decorate your house."
- 5- "You only need to pay rent when you have money."
- 6- "You can have lodgers to help pay rent."

Living in your own place is a costly business - *even if you're sharing!*

Suddenly you're responsible for everything that's been provided for you at home.

Look at how much everything costs for a week!

Electricity & Gas	£20.00
Food	£30.00
Household Items	£10.00
TV Licence	£5.00
Rent	£40.00 - £100.00
Council tax	£18.00
Household Insurance	£3.00
Total	per week £120 - £180

Remember Benefits would only provide you with a limited income.

You may get help with your rent though Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance, and if you are over 18, with your Council Tax.

Here are some of the things that could happen to you if you get into debt.

You may lose your home if you don't pay your rent
AND

Your power supply could be cut off if you don't pay your bills
AND

You could end up with a large fine for not having a TV licence

Try to plan what you need to spend each week to avoid getting into debt.

If you are struggling to pay bills get help from either

Citizens Advice Bureau,
Haddington 01620 82 4471
Musselburgh 0131 653 2748

or

Changeworks
0131 555 4010



Handy Tips

- Energy** - To avoid getting into debt it is important to check your bills and to phone in accurate readings, if your bill has been estimated.
There are a number of payment methods. Choose the method that is best for you.
You can choose the fuel supplier that provides your fuel. Changing supplier could save you money.
For information on cutting your fuel bills contact Changeworks on 0131 555 4010 and see page 17.
- Food** - Take-aways are more expensive than cooking for yourself. Don't buy all your food from late night corner shops - they tend to be dearer than supermarkets.
- Travel** - Buy a season ticket which will save money in the long term. Remember you will have to keep in touch with a range of agencies – as well as your friends.
- Phone** - Pay-as-you-go mobiles are easier to budget as you control your level of spending.

Your main responsibilities

To pay your rent on time
To keep the noise down
To report damage

Landlord's responsibilities

To keep your house weatherproof
To carry out necessary repairs
To arrange a letting agreement

Harassment

Don't give your neighbours or others reason to harass you, and don't act antisocially. However, if you are being threatened and can't cope then contact:

**Your Landlord or
The Police**

Eviction

If you are threatened with eviction from any type of property seek advice immediately, for example from Shelter East Lothian Project (see page 20).

Moving On

If you decide to move out, speak to your landlord, settle all bills –and remember to hand back the keys!

As long as you keep within the agreed contract with your landlord you have the right to privacy and to be safe in your home.

Ten easy tips to save money, energy and the environment!

1. Switch off lights in empty rooms
2. Close curtains when it gets dark
3. Set thermostats correctly
 - hot water 60 - 65°C
 - room thermostats between 18 - 21°C (23°C if the young or elderly are in the home)
4. Turn off electrical appliances rather than leave them on standby
5. Fill and boil the kettle with **only** as much water as you need
6. Cook with lids on pans and match ring size to saucepan size
7. Avoid placing furniture in front of radiators
8. Wait until you have a full load before using the washing machine and use a lower temperature (between 30 - 40°C)
9. Use the shower instead of the bath where possible
10. Tumble-dryers cost a lot to run – dry clothes outside or on a clothes horse

For free, expert energy saving advice, contact
Changeworks 0131 555 4010

It's important to look after yourself as there will be no-one to do it for you.

You may become worried or depressed, but there are people to speak to - it could be your doctor or a close friend.

Whether or not you are involved in a relationship your sexual health is important. Get good advice from your Doctor, Family Planning Clinic or Healthy Respect.

Regular exercise helps you build and maintain that 'feel good' factor.

C Cards

This is a card that allows you access to free condoms. See Useful Numbers at the back for C-Card outlets.

Doctor

You may have to register with a new Doctor if you have left home. Do this quickly - don't wait until you're ill. This way you will get medical attention or advice when you need it. Don't worry if you can't find your **MEDICAL CARD** you can still register.

Do I Have to Pay?

Eye tests and prescriptions are free at any age. However, dental treatment usually carries a charge, which is lower if you are an NHS patient.

REMEMBER

You do not need to tell your old GP if you have registered with someone else.

No doctor has the right to talk about your treatment with another member of the public. He/she is allowed to discuss it with another doctor if it will help you. You will always be asked first.

If you need to get anything sorted out here are some further contact numbers.

Phone numbers starting with 0800 or 0500 are FREE and do not show up on itemised bills.

BREATHING SPACE CONFIDENTIAL	0800 83 85 87
<i>(Phone-line for people experiencing low mood or depression - 6pm - 2am)</i>	
BRIDGES PROJECT	0131 665 1621
<i>(help with managing your tenancy, support with independent living and preparing for further education, training or employment)</i>	
CALEDONIA YOUTH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCOTLAND (CAREERS)	0131 229 1042
CHANGES <i>(health and well being help)</i>	0800 917 8000
CHILDLINE	0131 653 3977
CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU (CAB)	0800 1111
Haddington	01620 824 471
Musselburgh	0131 653 2748
HEALTHY RESPECT <i>(pregnancy advice)</i>	0131 536 1520
JOBCENTRE PLUS - Benefit claims	0800 055 6688
Job seeking	0345 604 3719
Get your N.I. number	0845 915 7006
LGBT SCOTLAND	0131 555 3940
<i>(lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered young people)</i>	

MESSAGE HOME	116 000
MELD	0131 660 3566
<i>(support and advice to drug users, their friends and families)</i>	
MY WORLD OF WORK	0800 917 8000
RECYCLING FIRST PROJECT	01875 615 797
<i>(furniture for people setting up home after being made homeless)</i>	
ROOTS & FRUITS <i>(healthy eating)</i>	01875 811 003
SAMARITANS	116 123
PROJECT SHELTERLINE	0808 800 4444
WELFARE RIGHTS	0131 653 5230
TEAM YOUNG SCOT	0808 801 0338
<i>(the national youth information and citizenship agency (12-26) which provides young people with a card providing a wide range of discounts on products and services)</i>	

C CARD PICK-UP POINTS

CALEDONIA YOUTH	0131 229 1402
DUNBAR MEDICAL CENTRE	01368 861 435
BRIDGE CENTRE - Haddington	01620 823 137
NORTH BERWICK HEALTH CENTRE	01620 892 169
BLEACHINGFIELD CENTRE - Dunbar	01620 827 827
CONNECT HEALTH DROP-IN - Musselburgh	0131 665 1103
THE PENNYPIT - Prestonpans	01875 619 921
RECHARGE - Tranent	01875 615 415

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION NUMBER	01620 827536
HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY NUMBER	0800 169 1611

HOUSING OFFICES

HADDINGTON - John Muir House	01620 827 827
MUSSELBURGH - Brunton Hall	01620 827 827
PRESTONPANS - Aldhammer House	01620 827 827
TRANENT - George Johnston Centre	01620 827 827
DUNBAR - Bleachingfield Centre	01620 827 827
NORTH BERWICK - Public Library	01620 827 827

INTERNET ADDRESSES AND EMAIL CONTACTS

Bridges Project:	mail@bridgesproject.org.uk
Caledonia Youth:	www.caledoniayouth.org
C Card:	www.ccard.org.uk
Childline:	www.childline.org
Citizens Advice Musselburgh:	info@musselburghcab.casonline.org.uk
Citizens Advice Haddington:	cab@haddingtoncab.casonline.org.uk
East Lothian Council, Benefits section:	benefits@eastlothian.gov.uk
Flatmate Rooms:	www.flatmaterooms.co.uk
Healthy Respect:	www.healthyrespect.co.uk
LGBT youth:	www.lgbtyouth.org.uk
Meld drugs project:	office@melddrugs.org.uk
Samaritans:	jo@samaritans.org
Youngscot:	infoline@youngscot.org

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Haddington CAB



**ROSS
HIGH SCHOOL**
Traquair, East Lothian



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