

Moving in

**Your new
council
tenancy**



Moving in

A guide for people who have been offered and accepted a council tenancy.

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Being offered a council property

After receiving an offer, you have 3 working days to make contact with the Community Housing Officer to confirm receipt of the offer and arrange a viewing. If no contact is made within 3 working days the offer will be treated as a refusal. Please refer to your offer letter for details.

Viewing Properties

- Once you receive an offer of housing it is then your responsibility to make contact with the Housing Officer making the offer to arrange to view the property
- Once a viewing date has been arranged you will meet the Housing Officer at the property where they will show you around and answer any questions you may have
- After viewing the property you will have 2 working days to accept or refuse the offer
- If no contact is made within the 2 working days the offer will be treated as a refusal
- After accepting an offer of housing you must pay 2 weeks rent in advance before receiving your keys, this is detailed in the offer letter. This can be discussed with your Community Housing Officer.

Our Lettings Commitment

Before you move in, we will ensure that:

- The house is structurally stable, wind and watertight and free from dampness
- All electrical circuits, sockets and fittings are safe
- The gas supply is safe and that all gas fittings have been checked for safety
- Your kitchen & bathroom are clean and fully operational
- All rooms are cleaned to a set standard
- All floor coverings will be removed, and floor surfaces are clean and safe
- All walls, ceilings and skirtings are sound and free from major holes
- The heating system is in working order, and you are given instructions of use
- All windows will be fully operational and clean inside and out
- New locks are fitted to external doors, and you are given two sets of keys
- All graffiti is removed.

Some things may not be done until after you move in, such as:

- All other repairs not covered above, for which we are responsible
- A one-off tidy of your garden
- Plaster repairs, where you will be removing wallpaper.

You will be responsible for:

- The internal decoration of the house, including the removal of wallpaper.

Signing your Tenancy Agreement

Once the property is ready to let, your Community Housing Officer will contact you to arrange a *sign-up* meeting.

At the sign-up meeting your rights and responsibilities as a tenant will be explained to you and you will be given the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to your tenancy. We will ask you to sign your Tenancy Agreement and you will be given the keys to the property at this meeting.

The Community Housing Officer will check that you have paid two weeks rent in advance prior to giving you the keys. The Tenancy will normally start the following day after receiving your keys. You will be provided with up-to-date meter readings and details of the energy supplier for the property.

Applicants moving from temporary accomodation

If you are currently living in temporary accomodation and accept an offer of housing, please contact your Homeless Officer to discuss the process of moving out of it. You will also be given a copy of our *Moving Out* leaflet detailing your responsibilities when leaving a temporary tenancy.

Decoration Pack

A Decoration Pack will be provided if your property has been assessed as eligible for this. Your Community Housing Officer will discuss this with you at sign-up. The Decoration Pack will consist of paint and decorating supplies. There will be the option to choose colours from a dedicated range. The paint included in the pack will be offered in relation to the size of the property you are being offered.

Repairs which need completed after you move in

You will be issued with an information sheet called *Your New Home - what to do next*, at the sign-up meeting. The sheet will detail any repairs which need to be done after you move in. It is your responsibility to telephone the council's Contact Centre on **01875 824 311** to arrange these repairs.

Tenancy Support

Tenancy Support is a free and confidential service to give new and existing tenants support to maintain their tenancy. Our Tenancy Support Officers can support you with claiming benefits and grants, accessing other council and support services and helping you with any tenancy issues. If you feel that you need this type of support, you can discuss this with your Housing Officer at the sign up or contact your local housing office.

Paying rent

East Lothian Council's preferred payment method for rent is Direct Debit, which you can arrange at your sign up meeting. For more information about paying rent contact the Rent Income Team on **01620 827528** or go to **www.eastlothian.gov.uk/paytostay**

Universal Credit

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit you must update your journal with your new address, tenancy start date and rent costs on the same day your tenancy starts. If you require assistance with this, advice can be accessed via: www.gov.uk/universal-credit/changes-of-circumstances. To start a new claim for Universal Credit from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) go to **www.gov.uk/universal-credit**

Housing Benefit

In most circumstances if you are of working age and need help with your housing costs, you must claim this through Universal Credit. If you have reached State Pension Credit age, you can complete an application form for Housing Benefit. To get more information about Housing Benefit speak to our Benefits team on 01620 827730 or go to **www.eastlothian.gov.uk/benefits**

Council Tax

You will be responsible for paying Council Tax from the day your tenancy starts. The *Council Tax Reduction Scheme* is available if you are out of work or on a low income and can help reduce your Council Tax charge.

You can claim Council Tax Reduction whether you're working, unemployed, disabled, single, married or in a civil partnership.

To qualify for Council Tax Reduction, you must:

- be on a low income
- be the person responsible for paying Council Tax

You may be eligible for other Council Tax discounts or exemptions, for example you could be living alone, a student, a care leaver or caring for a family member. You can find out more information and access our online forms at www.eastlothian.gov.uk/counciltax

Help to furnish your property

Scottish Welfare Fund – Community Care Grant

Applications can be made for essential items such as furniture, household equipment, and removal expenses.

You can apply if you are over the age of 16, normally have a low income and be entitled to one of the following:

- **Income Support**
- **Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance**
- **Income-related Employment and Support Allowance**
- **Universal Credit**
- **Savings Pension Credit**
- **Guaranteed Pension Credit**
- **Payment on account of one of the above or have no means of support.**

You can apply online at: www.eastlothian.gov.uk/swf or call **01620 828 790**
Alternatively you can contact your Area Housing Office.

Recycling First

Recycle first offer starter packs for people moving into their first home who lack essential household items such as cutlery, crockery and bed linen, these packs are FREE to eligible people.

They support referred families & individuals living in East Lothian with basic, pre-used furniture and electrical items to turn their house into a home. They work on a referral basis in order to assist local residents and charge a small delivery fee for this service.

Speak to your Housing Officer at sign-up to request a referral to Recycling First.

Waste & recycling

Find your bin and box collection dates at:
www.collectiondates.eastlothian.gov.uk

If you need to order a new bin, recycling boxes or food waste caddy contact Waste Services on **01875 824 305** or visit:
www.eastlothian.gov.uk/recycling

Mail redirection

To make sure you continue to receive mail from your previous address you can redirect your mail. You can do this at your local post office or online at:
www.royalmail.com/redirection

Get in touch

Call 01620 827 827, email us or visit your area office to speak to your Community Housing Officer.

Dunbar

Bleachingfield Centre, Countess Crescent, Dunbar
housingdunbar@eastlothian.gov.uk

Musselburgh

The Brunton, Ladywell Way, Musselburgh
musselburgharea@eastlothian.gov.uk

Haddington

John Muir House, Brewery Park, Haddington
haddeast@eastlothian.gov.uk

Prestonpans

Aldhammer House, High Street, Prestonpans
prestonpansarea@eastlothian.gov.uk

North Berwick

Library & Customer Services, School Road, North Berwick
housingnorthberwick@eastlothian.gov.uk

Tranent

George Johnston Centre, Tranent
tranentarea@eastlothian.gov.uk



Versions of this leaflet can be supplied in Braille, large print, audiotape or in your own language. Please phone Customer Services if you require assistance on 01620 827199