

Housing Application Guidance Notes

Should you have any questions or queries regarding the completion of your application form, our Community Housing Staff are available to help you. Please contact your local office to arrange an appointment or telephone **01620 827827**.

You may find our leaflet "How we let our Council houses" useful in explaining the allocations process in more detail. The leaflet is available online at www.eastlothian.gov.uk and from local housing offices.

You must complete this form fully and provide any evidence that is required. Please note that we will only accept original documents or certified copies as supporting evidence – local Council offices in East Lothian will copy and verify your original documents and return them to you. This will allow us to process your application quickly and make sure it is pointed accurately to reflect your housing circumstances.

If you have to leave or are at risk of losing your current accommodation please contact the Council's Homelessness unit for advice and assistance by telephoning 01620 827 536 during office hours or 0800 169 1611 (emergency).

Page 1 – Front cover

Please enter your name and contact details on the front cover of your application form. If there is someone you want to add as a joint applicant, please provide their details too.

Page 2 – Data Protection

East Lothian Council uses the personal data you provide for purposes associated with the delivery of our services. Personal data will be held in line with East Lothian Council retention policies. For more information see www.eastlothian.gov.uk/communityhousingpn

Page 2 & 3 – About you

The main applicant and any joint applicants are required to confirm their identity and residency. You must also provide your national insurance number, date of birth and whether you are care experienced.

(The term "care experienced" refers to anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked-after).

Proof of ID required for Main & Joint Applicant.

Please provide one of the following:-

- Driving Licence
- Residence Permit
- Marriage Certificate
- Medical Card
- National Insurance Card
- ELC issued bus pass
- Firearms licence
- Valid Passport/Biometric
- Birth Certificate
- Adoption Certificate
- HM Forces ID Card
- Young Scot / National Entitlement Card
- Blue Badge

Proof of Residency required for Main & Joint Applicant.

Please provide one of the following:-

Issued in the last 3 months:

- * Utility Bill
- * Lawyer/Solicitor's Letter
- * Bank/Building Society Statement
- * Child Benefit/Pension Statement
- * Mobile Phone Bill
- * Hospital Appointment Letter
- * Credit Card Statement

Issued in the last 12 months:

- ** P45/P60 Statement
- ** Council Tax Statement
- ** HMRC self-assessment letter or tax demand
- ** Medical Card
- ** Mortgage Statement

Failure to provide the information outlined above will prevent your application from being processed.

Page 3 – Local Connection

If you live outside of East Lothian you must have a local connection to have your application made active on the waiting list. Please provide the details of your local connection using the options available.

Page 4 – Reasons for applying

Please tell us why you wish to move. If you need to receive additional support please provide the contact details of the person who would provide that support. If you receive support from Social Work or another agency, please provide their contact details.

For applicants that live outside East Lothian, please tell us why you wish to move here. This helps us establish your local connection. East Lothian Council will accept applications from those who do not have a local connection, however, they will remain deferred until a local connection can be established.

Page 4 & 5 – About where you live now

Please tell us the type of the housing in which you currently live e.g. do you own it, rent etc. If you do rent your home – you must provide us with a copy of your rental agreement. Tell us about the size of the property and how long you have lived at that address.

Page 5 – Additional Property Ownership

Housing legislation has changed to allow us to take home ownership into consideration. This is because homeowners are usually considered to have lower housing needs than other applicants and more housing options available to them. If you or someone who is to be rehoused with you owns; or part owns a home; or has been a home owner in the past three years you must provide us with the property details.

In these circumstances, we may suspend your housing application until your circumstances change or we may contact you for further information. Failure to disclose this information may mean that your application cannot be processed and should an offer of housing been made, the Council will take appropriate action to recover the property.

Page 6 & 7 – Your Household

Please provide the details of all the people you currently live with and whether they are to be re-housed with you or not.

You must provide proof of ID and residency for each person that is going to be re-housed with you – please provide one of the documents from each of the previous tables **(page 2)**. Failure to provide this information may delay or prevent your application from being fully processed.

Page 8 & 9 – Housing History for Main & Joint Applicants

Please provide details of your previous addresses for the last five years, including your reasons for leaving the accommodation. We also require this information for any joint applicant named in your application.

We will use this information to take up references from previous landlords, so please include their contact details. Failure to provide this information may delay or prevent your application from being fully processed.

Page 10 – Pregnancy

If someone named in your application is pregnant and is to be re-housed with you, please provide confirmation of their pregnancy e.g. a copy of their MAT B1 form or a scan photo showing their name/date. This allows us to make sure that any offer of housing is the correct size for your household. Following the birth of your baby, you may be entitled to additional points should you become overcrowded. Please provide a certified copy of the birth certificate as supporting evidence.

Page 10 – Non Resident Children

Please tell us if you have access to children whom you wish to be re-housed with but who do not currently live with you. Proof of access arrangements will be required, for example, a written agreement from the child's main guardian or details of access via a solicitor. We will verify this information with the provider. Failure to provide this information may delay or prevent your application from being fully processed.

Page 11 – Other Housing Options

Please tell us which housing providers you would like to consider or whether you would be interested in other housing options. If you are an existing Council or housing association tenant you may wish to consider a mutual exchange. Information on mutual exchanges and properties is available on our website www.eastlothian.gov.uk or from your local housing office – telephone **01620 827827**.

Page 11 – His Majesty's Forces and Veterans

If you currently live in HM Forces accommodation, please tell us when you expect to be discharged from duty. You will also need to tell us when you originally enlisted as we will base your priority for re-housing on your length of service and, if applicable, any assessed health needs you may have. (You will need to complete our Health & Housing Assessment form available online at www.eastlothian.gov.uk). **Please provide us with a certified copy of your Certificate of Cessation.**

We have a limited number of properties specifically for Veterans of HM Forces. If you have previously served in the armed forces, please provide details of your service and a certified copy of your Certificate of Cessation or Veteran's ID card.

Page 11 – Tied Applicants

If your current home is included as part of the terms of your employment, you may be entitled to apply for priority if you are to be made redundant; of retirement age or unable to carry out your employment due to ill health and have been asked to leave your tied property as a result.

Page 12 – Bedroom Requirements

The number of bedrooms you need depends on how many people are in your household and who are to be re-housed with you. Details of our occupancy levels can be found on this page. Please tell us how many bedrooms you need. If you are an approved foster carer or "looked after" kinship carer, you can apply for an additional bedroom in order to provide care. We will confirm this with Children's Wellbeing.

Page 13 – Reasons for Leaving Your Current Accommodation

If you have to leave your current accommodation, please tell us why. If you have been served

with a Notice to Quit/Leave by your landlord, please provide a copy of this Notice for our information.

Applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness should contact East Lothian Council's Homelessness Unit for advice on 01620 827536 during office hours or 0800 169 1611 (emergency).

Domestic Abuse – East Lothian Council will use the full scope of antisocial behaviour powers in conjunction with housing legislation to take a tough stance on tenants & applicants found guilty of committing domestic abuse by offering them short term tenancies and ensuring that any property offered is at a reasonable distance from the victim.

Page 14 – Health & Wellbeing

A medical condition, however severe, is not in itself grounds for a health priority. An award can only be considered if your current property has an impact on your health condition after all possible aids and adaptations have been considered.

You will need to complete a separate Health & Housing application form. Your Community Housing Officer will discuss with you how to apply for a Health & Housing award. You may also find our leaflet **"Health & Housing Assessment"** useful. This is available on our website at **www.eastlothian.gov.uk**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence to support a Health & Housing application – this evidence can come from any health care professional currently involved in your care – **evidence should not routinely come from your doctor/GP as this information is not sufficiently detailed to allow a decision to be made.**

Page 14 & 15 – Where You'd Like to Stay

Information about our housing stock and turnover is available in our leaflet **"How we let our Council houses"** which can be found online at www.eastlothian.gov.uk or from your local housing office. Details of our lettings areas can also be found on our website.

We make two reasonable offers of housing to general needs/transfer applicants at the top of our housing list. Should these offers be made and refused, the application will be suspended for twelve months. Applicants accepted for re-housing under homeless legislation will be made one reasonable offer of housing. Refusal of an offer made under homelessness legislation will mean that homelessness priority is removed. Further information can be found in our **"Cancellations, Suspensions & Exclusions"** and **"Appeals for Community Housing Services"** leaflets which are also available on our website.

Please select the areas you would like to consider for housing. Please note that applicants can select as many or as few areas of choice as they wish. However, the more choices you select will increase your opportunity for housing. You can also discuss your areas of choice with your local Community Housing Team.

- **Homelessness priority** – If you are accepted for re-housing under homelessness legislation, you are encouraged to select as many areas as possible at the outset to maximise your chances of achieving an offer of housing. After a period of six months, if you haven't received an offer of housing and haven't maximised your choice of areas, your areas of choice will be widened to include one main town. Your house types will also be widened to include all property types in order to maximise your opportunity for housing and to allow the Council to discharge its homelessness duties. More information is available from your Housing Options Officer.
- **Health and Housing priority** – If awarded a priority medical award, you are encouraged to select as many areas as possible at the outset to maximise your chances of achieving an offer of housing. Your house type choices will be widened to include all property types in order to maximise your opportunity for housing and to allow the Council to meet your housing needs. If you are awarded a specific house type award such as wheelchair accessible or ground floor only then your house types will be widened to reflect this. After a period of six months from receiving the priority award, if you haven't received an offer of housing and haven't maximised your choice of areas, your areas of choice will be widened to include one main town.

Page 16 – Sheltered Housing

If you are aged 60 or over and wish to apply for sheltered housing, please tell us which complexes you would like to consider. The Council may also use this information when it is asked to nominate applicants to other sheltered housing providers.

Please refer to our Sheltered Housing brochure for more details. This is available online at **www.eastlothian.gov.uk**.

In East Lothian, sheltered housing is also available from other landlords, however, you will need to apply to them directly – contact details can be found in the application form on **page 16**.

Page 17 – Area Preferences

Please place the areas you have selected in your order of preference. The Council cannot guarantee that you will receive an offer of housing in your first area of choice but will use the information provided in identifying areas of housing demand.

Page 17 – Property Types

Please tell us your preferred house types – the more property types you select will increase your opportunity for housing, please state your preferences here.

Please note that all suitable ground floor property will be offered to those with assessed mobility needs in the first instance. If you are accepted for re-housing under homelessness legislation, you are encouraged to select all house types from the outset in order to maximise your chances of achieving an offer of housing. After a six month period, if you

haven't received an offer of housing, your house types will be widened to include all property types that would adequately meet your needs. Your areas of choice will also be widened to maximise your opportunity for an offer and to allow the Council to discharge its homelessness duties. More information is available from your Housing Options Officer.

Page 19 – 22 – Declaration

It is important that you complete all of the information requested in this section and then sign the declaration to confirm that you have carefully read and understood the information provided to you and that the information that you have given us is correct. If it is found that you have provided false or misleading information, the Council will take appropriate action to suspend your application.

All the information you provide is treated confidentially. However, we may need to share information relating to your circumstances with others in order to fully consider your housing application. We need your permission to do this. You do not need to give your permission but we may not be able to fully assess your application should you choose not to do so.

Both the main and joint applicant (if applicable) must sign and date the declaration on page 22 and the consent on page 27.

If this form is not fully completed and signed it will not be accepted and will be returned for your completion. If you have not provided all the required information to allow us to verify your circumstances, your application cannot be fully processed. We aim to process applications for housing within 14 days and will notify you in writing when your application has been accepted on to our housing list.

Suspensions at the point of application.

In certain circumstances, we may suspend your application for a period of time from the point we receive your housing form. We will only do this in certain circumstances and we will notify you in writing to tell you should this apply to your application. Please see our **"Cancellations, suspensions & exclusions"** leaflet for more information. This is available from our local offices or online at www.eastlothian.gov.uk.

Page 23–27 Equalities

Pages 23 to 27 include a set of questions to allow us to collect equality information to help us plan and deliver effective services and to meet our legal and regulatory obligations. Please answer as many questions as possible to help us better meet your needs.

Page 27 – Appeals and Feedback

You can appeal against a decision made by East Lothian Council's Community Housing Service. Our leaflet **"Appeals for Community Housing Services"** provides further information. This is available from our local housing offices or online at www.eastlothian.gov.uk

Get in Touch



AREA OFFICES

Tel: 01620 827 827

MUSSELBURGH AREA

The Brunton
Ladywell Way, Musselburgh EH21 6AF
housingmusselburgh@eastlothian.gov.uk

EAST AREA – DUNBAR, HADDINGTON & NORTH BERWICK

John Muir House, Brewery Park
Haddington EH41 3HA
housingdunbar@eastlothian.gov.uk
housinghaddington@eastlothian.gov.uk
housingnorthberwick@eastlothian.gov.uk

TRANENT & PRESTONPANS AREA

The George Johnstone Centre
35 Winton Place, Tranent EH33 1AE
housingtranent@eastlothian.gov.uk
housingprestonpans@eastlothian.gov.uk

HOUSING OPTIONS TEAM

The Brunton, Ladywell Way
Musselburgh EH21 6AF
homelessness@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 827 199