

Homelessness **advice**



West Lothian
Council



What should I do if I become homeless or think that I am likely to be made homeless?

You should contact **01506 280000** to request a homeless appointment.

Or you can contact the local office so an appointment can be made with the Housing Options team.

What if the office is closed and I have nowhere to stay that night?

You should call the out of ours service on **01506 280000** where they will provide immediate assistance.

What will happen at my homeless appointment?

You will be asked details about your circumstances so that the officer can determine what help can be offered. You may also be asked to provide evidence to support this.

At the end of your interview you will be asked to participate in a short satisfaction survey. You can either do this in the office or take it away with you to complete and return. This information helps us improve the satisfaction levels of our service.

Can I bring a friend or my support worker?

Yes, you can also ask for a same sex interview.

What happens after my homeless appointment?

If you have completed a homeless application your case officer will carry out an investigation into your situation. You will then be advised of the council's decision within 28 days.

What if I don't agree with my homeless decision?

You can appeal your homeless decision within 28 days from the date of the letter. The details of this will be made clear in your homeless decision letter.

But what if I have a support need?

Housing support can be offered to help with:

- Benefit claims/management of finances
- Correspondence
- Moving accommodation/resettlement
- Engaging with welfare services/professionals
- Advice on maintaining the home
- Keeping a safe and secure home

If you need help with any of these needs your case officer can refer you to the Housing Support Team for extra assistance.

What if I need temporary accommodation?

If the council believes you have nowhere else to stay they will provide furnished temporary accommodation, this is based throughout all of West Lothian and is only short term.

You will have to pay rent, however if you are eligible for help with rent costs the officer can discuss this with you.

If you fail to make regular rent payments you may be asked to leave, and the council will not provide you with any other temporary accommodation for the duration of your homeless case.

What if my children go to school?

If you are placed out with your school area and have no means of transport, the council will offer assistance so the children can remain at their existing school.

What if I already have furniture?

If you have nowhere for this to go, we can uplift your furniture and place this into storage for you. You may wish to keep some items with you in your temporary accommodation. There is a charge for using furniture storage and your officer can explain what these costs are.

What if I don't want the temporary accommodation that has been offered?

You can request a review of this offer however it is not guaranteed you will be offered anything else and you may be asked to stay in that accommodation if you have nowhere else to go until the council can decide whether the offer is unreasonable.

Will the council have to find me somewhere permanently to live?

If you are considered unintentionally homeless with a local connection, yes, the council will have to find you somewhere to live and will make you one permanent offer.

You will be asked to pick up to 10 communities in West Lothian and will be considered for any type of property, on any level, unless there is a medical reason not to do so. If this applies to you, you should discuss this with your case officer.

If you have not received an offer within 9 months of your homeless application, the council will increase your areas to either the East or West of West Lothian. This is to keep the length of time you spend in temporary accommodation to a minimum.

If you are not unintentionally homeless with a local connection there are different duties the council will have. This will be discussed in detail with you by your officer.

What if I don't want the permanent offer that has been made to me?

You have the right to request a review of the offer, however, if the offer is deemed as being reasonable, you will not be offered anything else and will be asked to leave the temporary accommodation.

If this happens your officer will give you advice and assistance to explore other housing options that may be suitable to consider.

How many houses does the council have?

2016/17 figure is 13464

How many does the council have to let each year?

2016/17 figure is 891

How many people does the council need to rehouse on the homeless group?

2016/17 figure is 986

What should I do to better my chances of getting a house?

You should be as realistic as possible when choosing your areas for housing. You should also apply to as many housing associations as possible to maximise your chances of being rehoused as quickly as possible. If you want to know any more information about Housing Associations speak to your case officer.

When can I expect to hear from my officer?

Your officer will keep in touch with you every two weeks until a decision is made on your case. After which they will then keep in contact every month until your case comes to an end.

Who is my case officer?

Name

Tel no:

What if I want to make a complaint about the service I have received?

You should call **01506 280000** so you can make a direct complaint which will be dealt with by the Housing Options Manager.