

Preparing For Your New Home

Paying Rent

You **must pay rent** for your property. To help with this charge you may qualify for **Housing Benefit** if you are on other benefits, work part-time or work full-time on low income.



Remember you will be expected to pay all or some of the rent in advance. If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit, come prepared with the necessary paperwork.

If you do not qualify for assistance through Housing Benefit it is important to make sure you can afford the rent, as failure to pay can lead to you losing your home.

Remember the bills

As well as the rent, you are responsible for paying utilities supplied by Broadband, Gas and Electric companies. You have to pay Council Tax (depending on your circumstances, you may qualify for assistance) which is used to pay for local services such as schools, rubbish collection, roads and street lighting.

You need to be covered by a **TV Licence** to watch or record live TV programmes on any channel, or download or watch BBC programmes on iPlayer.

Your responsibilities

When you accept a property, you will sign a legally binding document called a **Tenancy Agreement**. You are advised to read it carefully to ensure you understand your responsibilities as a tenant and what duties the council has to you.



You can lose your home if you do not follow the rules within the Tenancy Agreement.

Furnishing your home

New homes can be very expensive to furnish. Make sure you have essentials like a **bed, sofa, and white goods such as washing machine, fridge and cooker**. To help you start out you can visit one of the many charity shops throughout West Lothian for good quality furniture and other items. Keep in mind that properties may not be decorated to your taste and may need to be freshened up.



Furnishing your home (Cont'd)

A qualified tradesperson may have to connect your cooker and your washing machine, adding to the cost of setting up your home.

You may qualify for assistance through the Scottish Welfare Fund. Run by the Council, there are two types of grants: Community Payback Grant & Crisis Grant. Neither need be paid back.

To discuss eligibility, contact the Scottish Welfare Fund on 01506 773440, or see the website at

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/welfarereform/scottishwelfarefund>



Require support?

Some "first time tenants" require support to set up a new tenancy. Others require support to maintain their tenancy. Services are available that can help you with:

- Benefit claims/financial management
- Correspondence
- Advice on maintaining your home
- Keeping your home safe and secure

Housing Support Services are practical services that assist people to live independently in the community. You can access the service by contacting the Council.

Other services available that can offer advice and assistance to you are:

West Lothian Citizens Advice Bureau
Almondbank Centre, Shiel Walk, Craigshill
Livingston, EH54 5EH. Tel: 01506 432977
www.cabwestlothian.org.uk

The Advice Shop, Bathgate Partnership Centre
Lindsay House, South Bridge Street
Bathgate, EH48 1TS. Tel: 01506 283000

For any other information relating to housing or other services, please visit our website
<http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/>

Tel: 01506 280000

Email: customer.service@westlothian.gov.uk