

# A housing guide for refugees in Scotland



## Housing options in Glasgow

Leaflet 1 – December 2010

When you receive a positive decision on your asylum claim, you also receive the same rights and entitlements to housing services as other UK citizens, including the freedom to choose where you will live.

You might decide to settle in Glasgow. If so, this leaflet will show you how to obtain housing and what will happen when your asylum support from the Home Office (formerly NASS) stops.

### **I have leave to remain – what happens now?**

Once UK Border Agency gives you leave to remain in the UK, you are no longer an asylum seeker. This means that the Agency will not continue to provide you with financial support or accommodation.

### **What can I do?**

You can:

- make a homelessness application to Glasgow City Council;
- start applying to local housing associations for housing, including the Glasgow Housing Association (GHA);
- get advice about private renting.

If you have the resources, you can also consider buying a home. The following sections give you more details about these options.

### **I live in accommodation provided by Glasgow City Council. What happens next?**

You will get a letter from UKBA telling you that your financial support and accommodation will end in 28 days. However, if you make a homelessness application to Glasgow City Council, it will let you remain in this accommodation by signing a temporary agreement. Your project worker from Glasgow Asylum Support Services will visit you and ask you what you want to do.

### **I live in accommodation provided by Angel or YMCA. What happens next?**

You will get a letter from UKBA telling you that your financial support and accommodation will end in 28 days. You will have to leave this accommodation. Do not worry; you have the right to make a homelessness application and Glasgow City Council must help you with temporary accommodation until it can find you a permanent home.

### **What happens when I make a homelessness application?**

When you make a homelessness application to Glasgow City Council, it has a duty to accommodate you until it makes a decision about your application. Find out more about your options on the Glasgow City Council website:

<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/Residents/YourHome/HousingOptions/Homelessness/>

To make a decision about your application, the Council has to consider three things. It has to:

- confirm that you are homeless or about to be;
- decide what priority to give your application, because it has many different people looking for housing. It will consider for instance, your health and that of any family members with you, whether you have children with you, your status as a former asylum seeker;
- make sure that it wasn't your fault that you became homeless. Because you have no choice about leaving your present accommodation, it is most unlikely that the Council will consider you intentionally homeless.

### **How will I know what the Council has decided?**

You will receive a letter telling you what the Council has decided within 28 days of your application. If you think the decision is wrong, you have a right to ask the Council for a review. You should seek advice promptly before doing this: contact our refugee housing team on **0800 085 6087**, or one of the agencies listed at the end of this leaflet.

## **The Council has decided that I am homeless. What happens now?**

The Council will find you permanent accommodation. It will make offers of accommodation in writing. You do not have to accept these offers if you think they do not meet your needs. However, before refusing accommodation, you should always seek advice from our refugee housing team on **0800 085 6087**, or one of the agencies listed at the end of this leaflet.

You do not have to wait for the Council to make you an offer of accommodation. You should also:

- start applying to local housing associations for housing, including the Glasgow Housing Association (GHA);
- get advice about private renting.

Find out more about options on the Shelter Scotland website:

[http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice\\_topics/finding\\_a\\_place\\_to\\_live/asylum\\_seekers\\_and\\_refugees/asylum\\_seekers\\_with\\_leave\\_to\\_remain/former\\_asylum\\_seekers\\_and\\_homelessness#3](http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice_topics/finding_a_place_to_live/asylum_seekers_and_refugees/asylum_seekers_with_leave_to_remain/former_asylum_seekers_and_homelessness#3)

## **How do I rent from a housing association?**

If you are over 16, you can apply to any housing association.

You will be able to get an application form from each housing association you approach, along with information on how to apply and how the association allocates its houses. Most associations have quite long waiting lists, so do not use this as your only option.

Find out more about how to rent from a housing association on the Shelter Scotland website:

[http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice\\_topics/finding\\_a\\_place\\_to\\_live/housing\\_association#5](http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice_topics/finding_a_place_to_live/housing_association#5)

With the form, housing associations will give you information explaining:

- how to fill in the form;
- what documents you will need as identification;
- what happens to it once you have filled it in;
- how housing associations decide who gets a house first.

## **Homechoice in Glasgow**

Some housing associations (HAs) have a system called choice based letting. The HAs using this system are Link Housing Association, Glasgow Housing Association and Cube Housing.

Housing associations using the choice based letting system aim to give you more choice about where you would like to live and the type of house you would like to live in.

Properties are advertised every week on websites and in newspapers. In order for you to be considered for choice based letting, you must complete an application/registration form. After you submit your application/registration form, the housing association will provide you with a reference number and a priority category, based on your personal situation.

If you are interested in a property, you must express your interest by bidding online or contacting the housing authority by phone or at their office. The person with the highest priority will be offered the property first.

### **How do I rent from a private landlord?**

There are several ways to find private property for rent. You can:

- ask your family, friends or work colleagues if they know of somewhere to rent
- check advertisements in shop windows, and on notice boards in supermarkets, community centres or at colleges and universities. You can put a notice up yourself saying that you're looking for accommodation.
- check advertisements in local papers and magazines
- search online: there are many websites listing rental properties.
- ask your local council if it has information about private landlords.
- approach letting agencies – they have offices in most shopping areas

There is a lot to consider when renting privately. Have a look at Leaflet 6 in this series, 'Renting from a private landlord', which is available on Scottish Refugee Council's website. You should seek further advice from our refugee housing team on **0800 085 6087**.

Find out more about renting from a private landlord on the Shelter Scotland website:

[http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice\\_topics/finding\\_a\\_place\\_to\\_live/renting\\_privately/finding\\_private\\_rented\\_accommodation](http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice_topics/finding_a_place_to_live/renting_privately/finding_private_rented_accommodation)

## **What if I am a student?**

When a university or college offers you a place, it should also send you information about accommodation. If you don't receive anything, call the college's or university's accommodation department.

Ask your Student Accommodation Office for a list of landlords who rent to students, if you are a student.

Find out about finding student accommodation on the Shelter Scotland website:

[http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice\\_topics/finding\\_a\\_place\\_to\\_live/student\\_accommodation](http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice_topics/finding_a_place_to_live/student_accommodation)

As a student, you can also apply to housing associations or GHA for housing, or seek private accommodation.

## **How do I buy a home?**

When buying a home, it is important that you seek complete money advice from an independent financial adviser to ensure that you can afford the property, and to also ensure that you will be able to sustain ownership of your home in the future.

A legal process protects yours and the seller's interests when you buy a house. Make sure that you have good advice, preferably from a solicitor. Here are the main things you will need to do:

- make sure you can afford to buy a house – as well as the selling price; there will be other costs, such as legal and surveyor's fees.
- find a solicitor who can deal with the legal process
- find a property you want

There is a set process for buying a house, and it can take a long time and be expensive to find the right place, so make sure you have good advice.

Find out more about how to buy a home on the Shelter Scotland website:

[http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice\\_topics/finding\\_a\\_place\\_to\\_live/buying\\_a\\_home](http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice_topics/finding_a_place_to_live/buying_a_home)

## **Where can I get further information?**

### **Scottish Refugee Council's Refugee Housing Team**

Phone this number free for advice or to make an appointment with an advice worker: 0800 085 6087

### **Shelter Scotland**

Phone this number free advice: 0800 800 4444

### **Positive Action in Housing**

Phone this number for information about its services: 0141 353 2220