

A housing guide for refugees in Scotland

Housing options: moving away from Glasgow

scottish
refugee
council

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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.

However, if you want to move to England or Wales, this may be difficult so please see the section about moving outside Scotland in this leaflet, and/or seek advice from our Housing Team.

You might decide to move away from Glasgow. If so, this leaflet explains how you can obtain housing and what will happen when your asylum support from the Home Office (formerly NASS) stops. You should make sure you get good advice before making a decision to leave Glasgow. You can contact our refugee housing team on **0800 085 6087**.

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.

I have leave to remain and I want to move to another area in Scotland. What do I do?

If you have already arranged your own accommodation in the area you want, you can simply give notice to your present accommodation provider and move to your new home. You will be responsible for arranging your own transport and moving your belongings.

If you have not already arranged your own accommodation, then you may need to make a homelessness application. How you do this depends on where you live just now:

- If you live in accommodation provided by Glasgow City Council, then you should tell the Council that you wish to leave. The Council will issue you with a notice to leave your accommodation provided by the Home Office (formerly NASS). With this notice, you can present as homeless in the area in which you wish to live.
- If you are in accommodation provided by Angel or YMCA, you will already have notice to leave. With this notice, you can present as homeless in the area in which you wish to live.

How do I make a homelessness application?

Many councils have a homelessness team that processes all homeless applications, or the local housing offices may accept them. You can find out where to make your homeless application by phoning the Council for the area you wish to live in.

Find contact information for local councils in Scotland on the Directgov website:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DI1/Directories/DevolvedAdministrations/DG_4003604

You can also find contact details for each council in Shelter Scotland's Advice Services Directory:

http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice_services_directory

You will be responsible for arranging your own transport and moving your belongings.

What happens when I make a homelessness application?

Because you have no choice about leaving your accommodation, you can make a homelessness application to the Council in the area in which you wish to live. It has a duty to accommodate you until it makes a decision about your application.

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 homeless within the next two months;
- decide what priority to give your application, because it has many different people looking for housing. It will consider, for instance, your health and the health of any family members with you, whether you have children with you, your status as a former asylum seeker; and
- 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**.

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

The Council will find you permanent accommodation. Each Council may have a different policy on the amount of offers they will make to you for permanent accommodation. Each offer should be made in writing. You do not have to accept an offer if you think it does not meet your needs and is unreasonable. However, before refusing accommodation, you should always seek advice from our refugee housing team on **0800 085 6087**.

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;
- consider private renting.

Find out more information 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

I do not wish to make a homelessness application. What are my housing options in Scotland?

There are several different ways of finding a new home in Scotland:

- you can rent from the local council or a housing association
- you can rent from a private landlord or letting agent
- if you are studying at college or university, you may be able to rent accommodation from them
- you can buy a home

How do I rent from a local council?

Most councils in Scotland have housing available for rent. If you are over 16 and have leave to remain, you can apply for council housing.

To apply for council housing, you need to fill in an application form, which you can get from the Council's housing department. You can write, phone or ask for a form in person at the Council's office. With the form, the Council will give you a leaflet 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 the Council decides who gets a house first.

The Council is likely to have a waiting list; it will assess how much you need a home according to a set of rules – its allocation policy. For instance, it will give priority to homeless people.

How do I rent from a 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 finding a place to live on the Shelter Scotland website:

http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice_topics/finding_a_place_to_live/housing_association
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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 a place to live on the Shelter Scotland website:

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. Find out more about finding a place to live on the Shelter Scotland website:

http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice_topics/finding_a_place_to_live/student_accommodation

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

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

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 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 buying a home on the Shelter Scotland website:

http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice_topics/finding_a_place_to_live/buying_a_home

I have leave to remain and I want to move to England or Wales. What do I do?

If you have not already arranged your own accommodation, think very carefully about making such a move and seek advice. You may find it difficult to present as homeless in these areas, because England and Wales have different housing laws to Scotland. Local authorities in these areas may return you to Scotland if you cannot prove a local connection.

What is a 'local connection'?

Unless you are fleeing domestic or other violence, you will need to prove that you have a local connection with the area to which you wish to move – this could be:

- family connections – but not cousins
- health needs – if you cannot access the treatment you need in the area you live in at present
- work – this has to be a confirmed job.

You cannot claim an education or training place as a local connection. You will be responsible for arranging your own transport and moving your belongings.

If you have already arranged your own accommodation in the area you want, you can simply give notice to your present accommodation provider and move to your new home. You will be responsible for arranging your own transport and moving your belongings.

Where can I find out more?

This leaflet provides general advice. You should think very carefully before making the decision to move out of Glasgow. If you would like to discuss your options, you should contact our refugee housing team on **0800 085 6087**