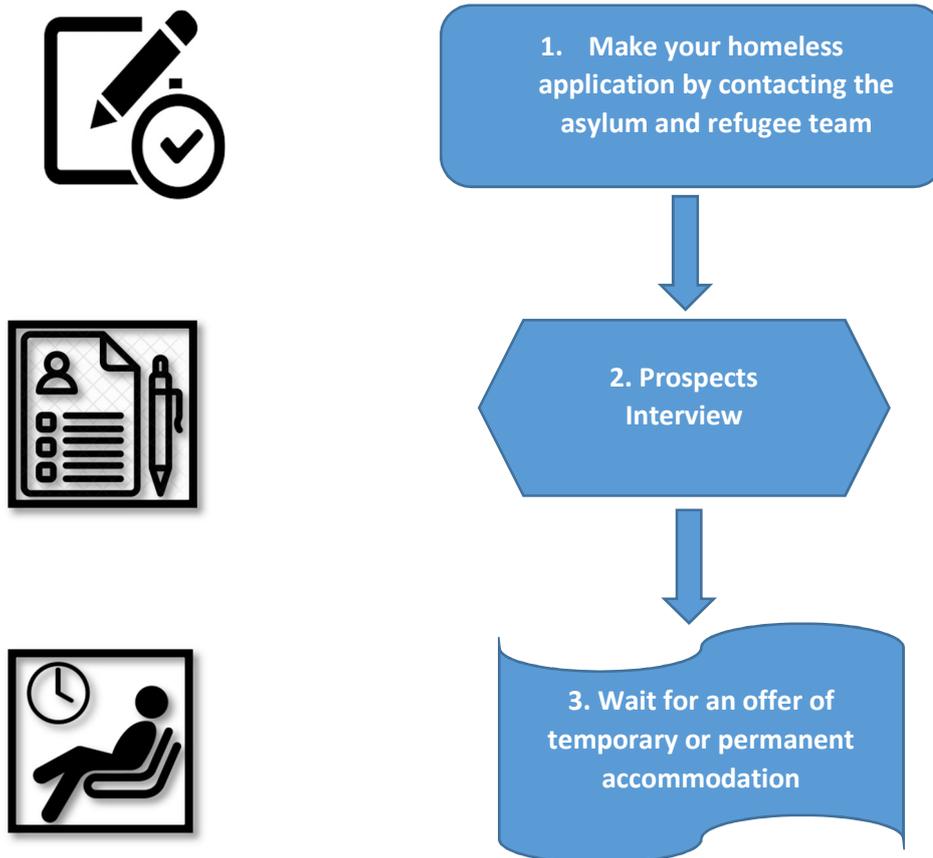


## Factsheet - The Homelessness process in Scotland during COVID-19



This fact sheet is for people who have received a positive decision on their asylum claim and have decided to stay in Glasgow.

This factsheet explains:

- What you need to do before you leave your Home Office accommodation and the process and the organisations you will engage with.
- Your housing rights and your housing options.

## What are my homeless right as a newly granted refugee?

When the Home Office writes to you to tell you that you have been granted status, they will also tell you when you will need to leave your accommodation. You are then at risk of homelessness. It gives you rights to get help with housing from the local Council, for example, Glasgow City Council.

### Key changes due to COVID-19:

- As a response to COVID-19, the Home Office decided that even if you receive a decision on your asylum claim, you will not have to leave your Home Office accommodation until Glasgow City offers you temporary or permanent accommodation.
- You still need to make a homeless application as soon as possible and we advise you to do so now. This will mean the council can start looking for a new home for you for as soon as possible.
- If you need temporary accommodation, the council will provide this for you. When it is ready for you, Glasgow City Council will tell you and Home Office housing provider (MEARS) when you can move. You will be given transport to your temporary accommodation.
- If you receive a permanent offer and you then accept the offer after viewing the property. The Council will tell MEARS. You will be allowed to continue to stay in your Home Office accommodation until you are ready to move into your own new permanent accommodation. There will be no need for you to move to temporary accommodation.

### Right to an interpreter:

If you feel that you need an interpreter, you have a right to request one for every interaction you have with Glasgow City Council. This includes when you make a homeless application, have your prospect interview or have any other conversation with your homeless caseworker. You need to inform which language is best for you.

## 1. Homeless application

### What is the homeless application?

If you are already homeless, or you are about to become homeless in the next two months, you can apply for help to get somewhere to live from your local council. This is called making a homeless application. The council will look into your situation to decide what help they will give you.

### How can I make a homeless application?

Normally you can make a homeless application by going to your local council, COVID-19 means the safest way to make the application is over the phone.

- To make your homeless application in Glasgow, you can simply phone the Asylum and Refugee Team on 0141 222 7300.

### When can I make a homeless application?

As soon as you are granted status and have some proof of this (your biometric residence card or your asylum determination letter). You can start the process by phoning this number 0141 222 7300.

- If English is not your first language or you have difficulty communicating in English, you have the right to ask and be provided with an interpreter.
- You might be asked to email a copy (photo) of your documents, to the asylum and refugee team.

## 2. The prospects interview

After you phoned the council and made your homeless application, the council will arrange an interview for you with a homeless caseworker. This is called the **Prospect Interview**.

The aims of the Prospect Interview are:

- For you to understand the help you will receive from the Council
- For you to explain your housing needs and where you would like to live long term.

During the interview you will need:

- some documents such as your Biometric Residence Permit and documents confirming the identity of family members and their relation to you;
- to select up to **three areas** of Glasgow where you would like to live;
- to take a note of the name of your Homeless Caseworker

To prepare for this interview, think about how you will explain:

- Any health problems or disabilities you or anyone in your family has. This might affect the type of property you need to live in. If your GP/health specialist is not able to give you a letter explaining your health conditions, it is still important to talk about your health at this interview.
- Future changes in your family size because of family reunion/ pregnancy. This is important for the size of property you may need.
- Problems you had with domestic abuse or other forms of harassment. This will help to avoid areas where you cannot live.

### 3. Moving on from asylum accommodation– what next?

When the Home Office writes to you to give you a fixed date to leave your Home Office accommodation, you should phone your Homelessness Caseworker and let them know.

#### What about my permanent/ settled accommodation and how/ when can I get that?

Once you have had a prospects interview, the council will make referrals to housing associations that work in the areas you have chosen. You won't be able to choose the housing association you get an offer from, as some housing associations do not have properties in some areas. However, the council will do their best to match your needs with the offer you get. Once the council have identified a property that is suitable for you, they will contact you and let you know. They will ask you to go through a process, in which you view the property and sign the tenancy. This will be your offer of permanent accommodation.

#### Is the online bidding system working at the moment?

The **My Housing system** (GHA online bidding system) has been suspended. If you are homeless and have picked an area which is covered by Glasgow Housing Association, they will match you with available properties in that area.

## Further help

**If you have any question about your housing situation and about what the Glasgow City Council tells you, please phone Scottish Refugee Council's helpline on**

**0808 196 7274**

*This fact sheet is created on 1/4/2021 and is accurate on this date. Information can change frequently. Please check for up to date information at the time of making an application.*

#### **Disclaimer:**

This factsheet should not be used as legal advice and is intended for information and guidance only. Legal advice on any individual cases and assistance should be sought from a qualified adviser.