



Homeless or threatened with homelessness in East Renfrewshire?



Housing Services



Accessibility

We can explain this document to you in other languages and provide it to you in other formats such as Braille and large print. For more information, please contact Customer First on 0141 577 3001 or e-mail: customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk.

آپ کے لیے اس دستاویز کی دیگر زبانوں میں وضاحت کی جاسکتی ہے اور یہ دیگر مختلف صورتوں میں جیسا کہ بڑے حروف کی لکھائی اور بریل (ناپیدا افراد کے لیے اُبھرے ہوئے حروف کی لکھائی) میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔ مزید معلومات کے لیے برائے مہربانی ٹیلیفون نمبر 0141 577 3001 پر کسٹمر فرسٹ سے رابطہ کریں یا customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk کے پتہ پر ای میل بھیجیں۔

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ইমেইল : customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਬਦਲਵੇਂ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਰੇਲ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਕਸਟਮਰ ਫਸਟ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲਤਾ ਕਰੋ: 0141 577 3001 ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਪਤੇ ਤੇ ਈਮੇਲ ਕਰੋ: customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

這份文件可以使用其他的語言解釋,亦可以提供其他形色的版本,例如大字和凸字。請聯絡客

服務 (Customer First) 索取進一步的資料。

電話:0141 577 3001或電郵
customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

आप क लिए इस दस्तावेज़ का व्याख्या अन्य भाषाआ म का जा सकता ह आर बदलव रूपा जस बड़े अक्षरों और ब्रेल पर भी प्रदान की जा सकती है। कृपया अतिरिक्त जानकारी के लिए कस्टमर फस्ट वालों से इस फोन नंबर पर संपर्क करें: 0141 577 3001 व इस पते पर ईमेल करें: customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

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1. Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for anyone in East Renfrewshire who is homeless, or who may become homeless within the next 56 days. This leaflet is a guide which explains how we can help you and answers questions that are frequently asked about our services. This is part of a range of leaflets which include:

- **Housing Options in East Renfrewshire**
- **Private Renting in East Renfrewshire**
- **Applying for Social Rented Housing in East Renfrewshire**
- **Low cost Home Ownership in East Renfrewshire**

This leaflet will:

- Direct you to where you may receive advice regarding your housing options.
- Explain what to do if you are in East Renfrewshire and are homeless or threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days
- Explain our homeless procedures
- Offer advice regarding temporary and/or supported accommodation

2. Our Service Standards

These are the standards you can expect if you approach us regarding homelessness

- We will give you free advice, information and assistance to find somewhere to live
- We will arrange a translation service for you if English is not your first language
- We will arrange assistance if you have hearing, speech, sight or other communication difficulties
- We will treat you with consideration and respect the confidentiality of your situation
- We will offer an out of hours service all year round
- We will offer you an interview the same day if you contact the office within working hours if you are homeless
- We will offer a telephone interview if you cannot travel to the office the same day
- We will offer you temporary accommodation if you have nowhere to stay tonight
- We will offer you an interview within two working days if you are threatened with homelessness
- We will explain that you can be accompanied by a friend, relative or advisor to your interview
- We will offer you the choice of an interview with a person of the same sex, wherever possible

- We will hold homeless interviews in a private room
- We will aim to reach a decision on your application within 28 days of your homeless interview
- We will keep you informed of progress on your application
- We will aim to issue a decision in writing within one working day of making the decision
- We will advise you of your legal right to appeal our decision or offer of temporary or permanent accommodation
- We will offer a quick and informed response to your appeal

3. Housing Options Approach

East Renfrewshire has adopted a '**Housing Options Approach**'. Housing Options is a process which starts with housing advice when someone approaches a local authority with a housing problem. This means that our housing advisors will look at your housing options and choices in the widest sense. This approach features early intervention and explores all possible tenure options, including council housing, housing association housing and the private rented sector. We will also look at measures which may help you to continue living in your current home if this is appropriate.

The advice can also cover personal circumstances which may not necessarily be housing related, such as debt advice, mediation and health issues. As well as considering a homelessness application where appropriate, we will work together with you and other services such as employability, mental health, money advice and family mediation services, and so on to assist you in the hope of avoiding a housing crisis.

The advice and assistance we can offer (which may include a homeless application) will be determined by your individual circumstances, which we will discuss with you at your interview.

4. Your Housing Options Interview

Why is an interview necessary?

The help we can offer depends on your particular needs and we will need to find out more about your situation. Wherever possible, we will offer any assistance we can which may prevent you from becoming homeless. For example, if you are threatened with homelessness due to your financial situation, we may be able to offer advice to maximise your income, or to negotiate with your mortgage holder. If you are in privately rented accommodation and your landlord has asked you to leave, we may be able to offer advice regarding your rights, or to contact your landlord on your behalf. **The advice offered does not prevent you making a homeless application if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days.**

What you need to bring to interview

In order to ensure that we are able to deal with your application as quickly as possible, it would be of great assistance if you could bring the following items to your interview:

- Verification of your current or last secure address
- Proof of identity, such as your birth certificate, passport, driver's licence or a letter from the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) or Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC)
- Proof of your National Insurance number, such as a document containing your number or your National Insurance card

- Proof of dependent children, such as birth certificate or a document confirming names and dates of birth and custody arrangements (if applicable)
- If your current tenancy is ending then any documentation relating to the tenancy and the end of it, such as letters from your landlord, Notice to Quit, AT6 or a copy of your lease
- Proof of your household income, such as payslips, benefits award letter or a bank statement
- If you are pregnant, your maternity certificate (MATB1)
- Proof of leave to remain/access to public funds if you are not a UK citizen
- Any other documentation relating to your homelessness

5. What to do if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness

Can you help me if I am homeless or threatened with homelessness?

Yes. We are usually the first point of contact for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in East Renfrewshire. If you live in an area other than East Renfrewshire, you should apply to the local authority which covers that area.

As noted above, our approach is housing options based. We will try to give you housing options and will offer advice to help you decide which option is best for your individual circumstances. **As part of our housing options process, we will always offer you the option of making a homeless application if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days. If you do not wish to proceed with a homeless application, we will ask you to confirm this with a signature.**

We have a statutory duty to offer advice, assistance and accommodation to people in this situation. If you choose not to apply as a homeless person, we will ask you to confirm that this option has been offered to you. Our advice will take account of the Council's legal duties and the Code of Guidance on Homelessness as published by the Scottish Government.

If you are threatened with losing your accommodation, we will discuss options which might allow you to stay in your own home. But this depends on your circumstances. **Even if we are trying to help you to prevent your homelessness, you can still make a formal application for housing under the terms of the homelessness legislation if you are threatened with homelessness within 56 days.**

If you are homeless or think you may become homeless in the next 56 days you should approach the Council's housing office in either Barrhead or Eastwood. You will find addresses, phone numbers and opening times at the back of this booklet.

If you have somewhere to stay, an appointment will be made for you to discuss your situation with a Housing Advisor within two working days. If you have nowhere at all to stay, you will be offered an appointment to see a Housing Advisor on the day that you contact us. If you need or would prefer to speak to a male or female officer, please ask.

If you become homeless outside office hours, you should contact the council's out of hours service on 0800 052 0180. They will be able to offer you temporary accommodation, if it is needed. You will be contacted the next day by the housing office to arrange an interview.

When you contact us we will:

- Offer a translation service if your first language is not English
- Offer assistance with communication difficulties
- Offer you the opportunity to bring a friend, relative or advisor to your interview
- Offer you an interview in private
- Offer you an interview with an officer of the same sex
- Treat you with consideration and respect the confidentiality of your situation

The advice and assistance we can offer will be determined by your individual circumstances, and will be explored during your interview with a housing advisor.

6. Homeless or threatened with homelessness?

In order to determine whether a homeless application is appropriate for your situation, we need to answer these key questions required by legislation. These questions will determine whether you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and the assistance you are offered.

- **Are you homeless or threatened with homelessness?**
- **Are you intentionally homeless?**
- **Do you have a local connection to East Renfrewshire?**

Are you homeless or threatened with homelessness?

You can be considered as being homeless or threatened with homelessness if:

- You do not have anywhere to stay
- You have to leave your accommodation within the next 56 days
- Your house is not safe to live in
- You are fleeing domestic violence
- Your landlord has stopped you accessing your house
- Your house is overcrowded and a danger to your health
- You are at risk of abuse or threats of abuse
- You are living in a hostel or bed and breakfast
- It is not reasonable for you to continue living in the accommodation you currently occupy

Are you intentionally homeless?

We will also look at the reasons for your homelessness to decide if you are responsible for your homelessness. You may be considered as intentionally homeless, if you have deliberately done, or failed to do, something that has resulted in you becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness when it was reasonable for you to continue to occupy your accommodation.

If we decide that you have become homeless through your own actions or inactions you may be considered to be 'intentionally homeless'. In this case, the council would not accept a responsibility to provide you with permanent accommodation, although we would still provide you with temporary accommodation, and advice and assistance to find somewhere to stay.

If you have nowhere to stay, we can provide you with temporary accommodation for a period of time to allow you the opportunity to find other accommodation.

Do you have a local connection?

You have a local connection to East Renfrewshire if you:

- Have lived in the area for the past six months
- Have lived in East Renfrewshire for six months of the last twelve months or three of the last five years
- Are in employment or attend further education in the area
- Have close family living in the area
- Require specialist medical treatment in the area
- Are fleeing domestic abuse from another area

If you have applied as homeless and are requesting to live in East Renfrewshire for another reason, we will take this into account. However this does not guarantee that we will accept that you have a local connection.

If you do not have a local connection to East Renfrewshire we will refer you to a council where you have a local connection. If you have a local connection to more than one council we will discuss with you which area you want to stay and make a referral on your behalf.

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, we will ask for information about the reasons for your situation. We may ask you to provide some details to confirm your circumstances. For example, if you have been evicted due to a financial difficulty, we will look into the reasons why the financial difficulty occurred. This might involve you providing us with details of your income and expenditure, leading to the loss of your accommodation. The details you provide, together with the information you give us, and any other investigations we carry out into the reasons for your homelessness, will form the basis of your homeless application.

If you are assessed as unintentionally homeless we will also carry out a **support assessment** designed to identify if you have any support needs. This assessment will help us to establish if you may require any assistance to help you manage and sustain any tenancy you may be allocated.

7. How long does a homeless application take?

How long does a homeless application take?

This depends on how many enquiries we have to make to confirm your circumstances. We will deal with your application as quickly as possible. In most cases we will give you a decision regarding your homeless application within 28 days. If it takes longer than 28 days to deal with your application (because, for example, we need additional information), we will contact you to explain the reason for the delay. It is very important that we have an address to contact you. If you move to a different address, you must let us know in order that we can continue with your application and to ensure that we do not lose contact with you.

When we have made a final decision, we will write to you within one day to tell you our decision and the reasons for it.

8. Temporary Accommodation

Where do I stay until you have made a decision on my homeless application?

If you need a place to stay while we are looking at your application, we will arrange temporary accommodation for you and any members of your family who have been living with you. As well as family members, if you have a disability and have a carer who lives with you, we will include them as part of your household.

What about my belongings?

If you have furniture or other belongings which you want to keep safe, we can arrange for them to be stored while we are looking at your application.

If you have friends or relatives who will let you stay with them temporarily, but they have no room for your belongings, we can still arrange to store them.

Do I have to stay in temporary accommodation?

No. If you have friends or relatives who will let you stay with them temporarily, it will not affect the outcome your homeless application. We will deal with your application as quickly as possible, whether you are in temporary accommodation or not.

How will I know where to go if I need temporary accommodation?

Our Housing Advice Team can arrange for the provision of temporary accommodation for you and any members of family who live with you.

What type of temporary accommodation will you offer me?

We will try to arrange the most suitable type of accommodation for you. Exactly what we offer you will depend on your circumstances and needs. For example, if you have children, we will do our best to give you priority for one of our furnished flats, and we will, as far as possible, try to take factors such as your children's schooling into account.

It will depend on what temporary accommodation is available at the time. We may not be able to arrange the type of temporary accommodation for you that you would prefer, simply because there is nothing of that type available at that time. We will do our best to move you to something suitable for your particular needs as quickly as we can.

We have several types of temporary accommodation that we use to accommodate homeless people.

- **Furnished flats**

We have a number of fully furnished council flats in some areas of East Renfrewshire. We also have a number of fully furnished flats which are rented to us for use as temporary accommodation. In line with the Scottish Government's recommendations, we give priority to families with children for our furnished flats.

- **Supported accommodation**

We also have a supported accommodation project. This is intended to help young single people develop the skills they need to be able to manage their tenancies (for example, budgeting, housework, cooking and so on).

- **Emergency accommodation**

In an emergency situation, even if it is outwith office hours, we will try to arrange the most suitable accommodation we can for you. If there is nothing else available, however, we may have to offer bed and breakfast accommodation. We only use bed and breakfast accommodation where there is nothing else available, and we will try to move you to something more suitable as soon as we can. We prioritise households with children.

How much will it cost me to stay in the temporary accommodation?

We will charge you rent on the temporary accommodation you occupy. The actual charge that you have to pay will depend on your income, and you may be entitled to Housing Benefit. We will help you with the Housing Benefit application forms and we will tell you what charges you will have to pay.

What if I can find my own temporary accommodation?

If you have friends or relatives who will let you stay with them temporarily, it will not affect how we deal with your homeless application. We must have a contact address for you in order that we can continue with your homeless application. It is also important that you tell us if you are planning to move out of our temporary accommodation. There is likely to be another homeless person waiting for that type of accommodation.

Can you give me a furnished flat near to my family and friends?

We will take your particular circumstances into account as far as is possible. This includes factors such as family support, your children's schooling and your place of employment. As we have a limited number of flats, however, there may be nothing available in the area that you want at that particular time.

Can you give me the furnished flat permanently?

No. We use these flats to provide a safe, comfortable place for people to stay in while we are trying to find them permanent accommodation. As there are only a limited number of flats, we need to ensure that we have a flat available for the next homeless person requiring temporary accommodation. When you move out, another homeless person will move in.

What does the Supported Accommodation Officer do?

The Supported Accommodation Officer will look after all aspects of your stay in our temporary accommodation.

The Supported Accommodation Officer will:

- arrange suitable temporary accommodation for you,
- book you into a furnished flat,
- give you any relevant information about the flat or the surrounding area. This includes things like shops, G.P. surgeries, bus routes, and so on.
- work with you in identifying any support needs you may have and how these can be provided

The Supported Accommodation Officer will also talk to you about arranging removal and storage of your belongings.

If you are staying in one of our furnished flats, the Supported Accommodation Officer will call at the flat regularly. If you have any problems or any questions about your stay while in temporary accommodation, your Supported Accommodation Officer is there to help.

How long can I stay in temporary accommodation?

We will continue to provide you with temporary accommodation until we have completed your homeless application. When you accept an offer of permanent housing, we will work with you to make the arrangements to help you move into your new home.

Will you move me during my stay in temporary accommodation?

We will try to make sure that you are as settled as possible, but we need to make the best use of our accommodation. As a result, we may sometimes have to move people from one type of accommodation to another or from one place to another. We may also move you if more suitable accommodation for your needs becomes available or if your needs change.

What if I am staying in a furnished flat and I need to go away?

It would be unwise to leave a fully-furnished flat empty. If you are staying in our temporary accommodation, and you need to go away for a short while, it is **essential** that you let us know; otherwise the accommodation will be left empty and unprotected. We may also assume that you have made other arrangements so we may cancel your accommodation.

9. If you are aged between 16 & 25

We recognise that young people who become homeless are particularly vulnerable. For this reason, all young people in 16-25 age range who apply as homeless are referred for **Outreach Support to our Young Persons Support Service** based at Connor Road, Barrhead. The service helps young people with the skills necessary to succeed in a tenancy of their own by offering support on items such as:

- Managing money
- Applying for benefits
- Applying for grants to help furnish their flats
- Paying bills
- Dealing with debts
- Dealing with rent/council tax arrears

You can find further information on our services to homeless young people aged between 16 & 25 in our information leaflet:

Young Persons Housing Support Service in East Renfrewshire

You can contact the **Outreach Support Service** by telephone at:

0141 577 4069

10. Can I choose where to be permanently housed?

Can I choose where I will be housed permanently as the result of my homeless application?

We will take account of your individual circumstances as far as possible, although we cannot guarantee that any offer of housing will be in an area of your choice. It is important that you tell us about any circumstances you want us to consider. This may include:

- where your family lives, if they are offering you support
- where your children go to school, particularly if your children have special educational needs
- If you have a medical condition that will affect the type of housing you will need (for example, you require a ground-floor flat)
- any areas where you might be placed at risk of violence or harassment
- any other factors you wish us to take into account

We may ask you to give us more information about any of the points shown above.

Due to the limited availability of council or housing association housing in certain areas, while we will try to take your area preferences into account, the council will consider its duty to you discharged by making a suitable offer of housing anywhere in East Renfrewshire.

11. How many offers of housing will I receive?

How many offers of housing will I receive?

If you are found to be unintentionally homeless, we will make you **one offer** of permanent housing.

What if I refuse your offer of permanent housing?

If you are given an offer of permanent housing, which we consider to meet your needs as far as is possible, we will close your homeless application on the basis that we have discharged our obligation to you as a homeless person. You will still be able to apply for housing in the normal way. We can also give you advice and information on other housing options, including housing associations and private landlords who you may contact direct.

What if you decide that I am not homeless?

We will provide you with advice and assistance appropriate to your circumstances. If you are staying in temporary accommodation that we have provided, we will arrange a suitable leaving date with you.

12. Can I appeal against your decision or offer of temporary or permanent housing?

Can I appeal against your decision or offer of housing?

- You have the right to appeal against our decision in respect of your homeless application.
- You have the right to appeal against an offer of temporary accommodation
- You have the right to appeal against an offer of permanent accommodation

If you wish to appeal against our decision or the offer of either temporary or permanent accommodation, you have the legal right to appeal. The appeal will be considered by a senior member of staff who was not involved in the original decision. **To appeal, you must give us your reasons for appeal within 21 days of receiving your decision letter.**

Details of how to make an appeal will be contained in your decision letter or offer letter. If you wish to make an appeal, you should contact us clearly stating why you think our decision is wrong or the accommodation we offered you not suitable. If you have any additional information to support your appeal please include this. If you need assistance with this, please ask.

You should normally make your appeal in writing, but if you require any assistance with your appeal, you will find a list of useful organisations at the end of this booklet that can help.

While considering your appeal, we may ask you to come in for another interview or similarly you may want to request a meeting, please state this when you request an appeal. You can bring a friend or advisor and if you require an interpreter or assistance due to hearing, speech or sight difficulties please let us know and we will make the necessary arrangements for you.

13. Support & Resettlement Service

As well as offering you support in your temporary accommodation, we will also offer you advice and support to help you move and settle in to your new home.

The help we can offer you includes:

- helping you to identify and plan for the type of accommodation that meets your needs
- work with you to identify any support needs you may have and how these can be provided
- working with you and other service providers where appropriate as part of the support and resettlement process
- help with arranging to have gas and electricity supplies connected in your new home
- advice and practical assistance on where to go for help to furnish your home
- help with applying for Housing Benefit, and advice on how to ensure your rent continues to be paid

14. Contact addresses and phone numbers

<p>Housing Advice & Homelessness Team East Renfrewshire Council 211 Main Street Barrhead East Renfrewshire G78 1SY Phone 0141 577 3001</p>	<p>Opening Times Mon – Thursday 8.45am – 4.45pm Friday 8.45pm – 3.55pm</p>
<p>East Renfrewshire Council Eastwood Park Rouken Glen Road Giffnock East Renfrewshire G46 6UG Phone 0141 577 3000</p>	<p>Opening Times Mon – Thursday 8.45am – 4.45pm Friday 8.45pm – 3.55pm</p>
<p>Homelessness Out of Hours Service Phone: 0800 052 0180</p>	<p>Outwith office hours</p>
<p>Shelter Scotland Housing Aid Centre 274 Sauchiehall Street Glasgow G52 3EG</p>	<p>24-hour-Freephone 0808 800 4444 www.shelter.org.uk</p>
<p>East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau 216 Main Street Barrhead East Renfrewshire G78 1SN Phone 0141 881 2032 www.eastrenfrewshirecab.cas.org.uk</p>	<p>Opening Times Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 9.30 – 15.30 Wed: 9.30 – 15.30 and 15.30 – 18.00 (by appt.)</p>
<p>Money Advice & Rights Team East Renfrewshire Council 211 Main Street Barrhead East Renfrewshire G78 1SY Phone 0800 052 1023 (Freephone)</p>	<p>Opening Times Mon – Thursday 8.45am – 4.45pm Friday 8.45pm – 3.55pm</p>

<p>Health & Social Care Partnership (Social Work) East Renfrewshire Council 211 Main Street Barrhead East Renfrewshire G78 1SY Phone 0141 577 3777</p>	<p>Opening Times Mon – Thursday 8.45am – 4.45pm Friday 8.45pm – 3.55pm</p>
<p>East Renfrewshire Women’s Aid Helpline 0845 1801 323 Fax 0141 644 0976 info@erwa.org.uk</p>	<p>Helpline open 24 hours</p>
<p>Barrhead Police Station Bank Street Barrhead G78 2RA Phone 101</p>	
<p>Giffnock Police Station Braidholm Road Giffnock G46 6HA Phone 101</p>	
<p>The Samaritans Phone 08457 90 90 90 jo@samaritans.org</p>	
<p>Breathing Space Phone 0800 838587</p>	
<p>Jackson Carlaw (MSP) The Scottish Parliament Edinburgh EH99 1SP</p>	<p>Telephone: 0131 348 6800</p>
<p>Tom Arthur (MSP) The Scottish Parliament Edinburgh EH99 1SP</p>	<p>Telephone: 0131 348 5863</p>
<p>Kirsten Oswald (MP) House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA</p>	<p>Telephone: 020 7219 3000</p>

You can contact the Housing Advice Team at:

Housing Advice Team

Telephone: **0141 577 3001** (office hours)

E-mail: housingadvice@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

<http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/housing>

Homelessness Out of Hours Service

Phone: 0800 052 0180

East Renfrewshire Council

211 Main Street

Barrhead G78 1SY

Opening Times:

Mon – Thurs: 8.45am - 4.45pm

Friday: 8.45am - 3.55pm

Our **Customer First Team** are available from 8.45am until 4.45pm on 0141 577 3001

You can also obtain independent advice from:

East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau

216 Main Street

Barrhead G78 1SN

Telephone **0141 881 2032**

Opening Times

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 9.30 – 15.30

Wed: 9.30 – 15.30 and 15.30 – 18.00 (by appt.)

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