



Leeds Housing Options



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Our Values



Looking After Leeds



Putting Customers First



Treating People Fairly



Valuing Colleagues



Introduction

At Leeds Housing Options our top priority is to help you make the right choice about where you want to live. We know that every situation is different so we will listen to what you tell us and make sure that we help you to find the right option for you.

We will help you to identify the full range of options that are available to you - from private tenancies to council housing, from in-house security to debt management, and give you comprehensive advice on each of the options available to you. Remember the sooner you approach us, the more options will be open to you. Act early!

We will always try to help you to stay in your home. Our Housing Options advisors can help you to resolve any

issues or problems that you are having. If this is not possible or appropriate, we will help you to move on to alternative accommodation in a planned way.

When you have an appointment with us, we will complete a Personal Housing Plan with you. This contains information about you and your situation. We use this information to create a 'plan of action' detailing what steps we can take to enable you to explore all your options. This Personal Housing Plan follows you through the entire process.

We will carry out any legal duties that arise from your Personal Housing Plan. We will make sure that you understand what this means for you.

Keep your options open - Get advice now

I am having issues in my current accommodation

We will do what we can to help you sort out issues that may prevent you from staying in your home. We will make every effort so that you can remain there safely and securely.

Harassment

Being the victim of any form of harassment can be a very frightening experience but there is help available. Leeds Housing Options can link you up with partner agencies

(e.g. our Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, Landlords and Police) to tackle the perpetrators of the harassment. We may also be able to install additional security in your property to keep you feeling safe until the issue has been resolved. It is important that you keep a detailed record of any incidents that take place.

If you are a council tenant, you can ask to speak to your local Tenancy/Estate Management Officer who will be able to talk you through the process as well as give you a 'nuisance diary' to record any incidents. You can find more information by speaking to your local housing office or one stop centre.

If you have been the victim of a crime, you may wish to contact Victim Support on 01274 530 554.

Domestic violence

If you are the victim of domestic violence we can help you with a range of options.

If you wish to stay in your current home, we can make a referral to Leeds Sanctuary Scheme. They may be able to install security measures to keep you safe.

If it is not safe for you to stay in your home, we will look at other ways of helping you, always taking into account your individual needs and circumstances.



Keep your options open

Reception

The following organisations can provide help and advice about domestic violence that you may find useful:

- HALT
0113 243 2632
- Women's Aid
0808 2000 247
- Safer Leeds
0113 395 0821
- STOP
(for perpetrators of domestic violence)
0113 244 6007
- West Yorkshire Police
0845 60 60 606

Financial difficulties

If you are unable to pay your rent, mortgage or other bills then it is essential that you get help before you become at risk of losing your home. We can give you advice about what steps you can take.

We will help you to negotiate with your Landlord or Lender to give you some time to sort out your financial situation. Our advisors can look at your current financial situation and help you to think about the options that are available; this can include ways of reducing your spending and maximising your income.

If you are having problems with debt, you should contact a registered debt advice agency, e.g.

- Consumer Credit Counselling Service
0800 138 1111
- National Debtline
0808 808 4000
- Payplan
0800 917 7823

Get advice now!



Repairs to your home

We can help if your landlord is refusing to carry out repairs to your home. We will be able to help you to write to your landlord. We will also be able to advise you of your legal rights.

We can, where necessary, make a referral to our Health and Environmental Action Service who can take enforcement action against your landlord if they continue to refuse to carry out repairs.

You can find more information on your rights around repairs on the Shelter website at: www.england.shelter.org.uk

Adaptations

If you are a disabled person there may be physical barriers that make it difficult for you to carry out ordinary day-to-day activities in your home. These could include items such as stairs or high-sided baths. At Leeds Housing Options, we will be able to advise you on the best services for your individual needs. You can find more information on adaptations by telephoning 0113 395 7146.

Overcrowding

If you are a Leeds City Council tenant, your local housing office or one stop centre will be able to assist you by carrying out an 'Additional Needs Assessment'. If you are not a council tenant, we can help by looking at alternative accommodation options that are more suited to your needs.

Keep your options open

I need to leave my current accommodation soon

Notice to Quit

If your landlord has served you with a Notice to Quit (also called a 'Notice Requiring Possession' or 'Section 8', 'Section 21' Notice) you should come and speak to us as soon as you can. The earlier you approach us the more assistance we will be able to give you. We will always check the validity of the notice and negotiate with your landlord to see if you can be given more time to move in a planned way.

Where the notice has been issued for a specific reason (e.g. rent arrears) we

will work with you and your landlord to attempt to resolve these issues. If there is a disagreement between you and your landlord, we will offer to mediate.

You can find more information about Notices to Quit on the Shelter website at: www.England.shelter.org.uk

My friends or family have asked me to leave

If you are under 25, then we have a leaflet specifically for you. Please ask us for a copy.

When family and friends ask you to leave, it is essential that you approach us as soon as possible – the sooner you come the more assistance we will be able to offer you. In all cases, we will contact your friends or family to see if the reasons that led to you being asked to leave can be resolved. Where this is not possible, we will help you to move in a planned way.

NASS Accommodation

If you have received a positive decision about your asylum application you may have to leave the accommodation provided by NASS. If this happens it is important that you get in touch with us as soon as possible so we can discuss how we may be able to help.



Get advice now!

I have nowhere to live

If you have nowhere to live at Leeds Housing Options we will carry out a Homelessness Assessment as a part of your Personal Housing Plan.

Immediate (emergency) accommodation is only available to people who meet the 'tests' of homelessness. These are set down in law by the government in the Housing Act, 1996 (as amended) Part VII; these are:

1. Eligible – a person must be eligible for assistance from public funds and habitually resident in the UK.
2. Homeless – a person must not have accommodation anywhere in the world which they have a right to occupy and which is reasonable to occupy.
3. Priority Need – a person must be more vulnerable than an average homeless person.
4. Not intentional – a person must not have made themselves homeless.
5. Local Connection - a person must have a specified connection to Leeds.

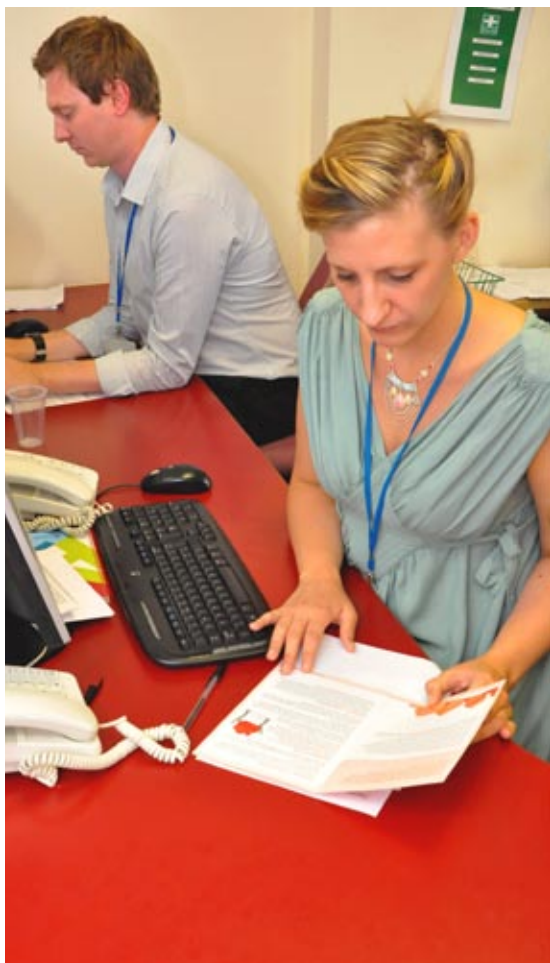
Please note – this information is for reference only and should not be used as a definitive guide to the five tests.

If we have a legal duty to you, we will explain exactly what this means

and arrange for accommodation to be made available to you. If we do not have a duty to offer immediate accommodation and you require somewhere to stay tonight, you may find the following telephone number helpful:

- St George's Crypt night-shelter:
0113 245 0054

Note: there are other self-referral hostels in Leeds. Please ask us for a complete list.



Keep your options open

Housing Options

Options for re-housing in Leeds fall into four main categories:

1 Private Rented Accommodation

This is where you rent your accommodation from a private landlord, usually as an Assured Short-hold Tenancy for a minimum period of 6 months. There is a wide ranging supply of private rented accommodation in Leeds. Private rented accommodation can often be a quick and simple way to find a new home.



If you are currently not working or on a low income, you may be entitled to Local Housing Allowance that can help you to pay your rent. For more information telephone 0113 222 4410.

At Leeds Housing Options we have a Private Sector Solutions Scheme. We work with landlords across the city who can offer quality, affordable housing to people in housing need. If you would like more information on this scheme, please ask any member of staff or telephone 0113 222 4412.

2 Social Housing

Social housing consists of Council Housing and Housing Association housing (also known as Registered Social Landlord housing).

While social housing provides the most secure type of tenancy, there can often be a very long wait. There are currently over 27,000 people on the Leeds City Council waiting list waiting to be re-housed.

If you would like more information visit: www.leedshomes.org.uk or telephone 0113 222 4413.

You can also find a list of housing associations on this site in their 'Useful Contacts' section.

Get advice now!



3 Supported Housing

This type of housing is suitable for people with support needs.

There are a wide range of supported accommodation projects in Leeds. As a part of your Personal Housing Plan, we will identify if any of these would be suitable for you and make referrals on your behalf. You can find a list of supported housing providers in Leeds on our website at www.leeds.gov.uk/LHO

4 Home Ownership

If you are on a low income, you may be able to get help to buy your own home. Affordable housing is aimed at people who are:

- First time buyers
- Unable to afford to buy a home on the open market

If you want to find out more about any of these options please ask us for further details.

Keep your options open

Our Customer Service Standards

- We will be courteous and helpful. We will listen to you and deal with your enquiry efficiently, quickly and fairly.
- We will communicate with you using language that is clear and easy to understand.
- If you need to discuss a sensitive or confidential issue, we will arrange for you to be seen in private.
- Council leaflets and information can be made available in other languages, large print, audio tape, or Braille, as appropriate.
- We will arrange an interpreter for you, by appointment, if English is not your first language, or if you use British Sign Language.
- We will answer your telephone calls promptly and professionally.
- We welcome and encourage your feedback and will try to resolve any complaints on the spot. Where this is not possible, we will acknowledge your complaints within three working days and provide a full response within 15 working days.
- We will acknowledge emails to publicly advertised email addresses within one working day and provide a fuller response as early as possible, but certainly within 10 working days.
- We will respond to your written correspondence within 10 working days.
- We will wear name badges, wherever possible, so you know who we are. If we have to pass your enquiry to a colleague, we will give you their name

Get advice now!

Contact Details

If you would like to contact us, you can do so by:

Writing to us at:

Leeds Housing Options
1st Floor, 2 Great George Street
Leeds
LS2 8BA

Opening Hours:

Monday - Thursday: 08:30 – 16:00

Friday: 09:30 – 16:00

E-mail us at:

housing.options@leeds.gov.uk

Telephone us on:

0113 222 4412

Minicom:

0113 247 6078

We also run outreach services at the following One Stop Centres:

- Armley
- Dewsbury Road
- Harehills
- Seacroft South

www.leeds.gov.uk/LHO

