

My Leaving Home Plan

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1. Browse the the general pages of the project first step site for general information. You can save as many pages/articles as you like to be included as reference to your own leaving home plan. To save any page click on the 'add to my list' button on the top of every section.
2. As you browse the site you can also add your own tasks by clicking on the 'my tasks' button
3. Next you will need to complete the [Planning Your Move Plan](#) which gives you an easy to use check list and plan on all the key thing you need to consider when moving home.
4. Moving home involves careful budgetting, we have prepared the following ready reckoners which will help you buget for your move
 1. [Overall budget calculator](#)
 2. [Decorating and furniture budget](#)
 3. [Moving home budget](#)
5. In the few months leading up to your move you will find the [moving home checklist](#) useful to help you plan all the things you need to do and when.
6. Finally having a good network of family friends and people you can turn to when moving is really helpful the [My Support Network Section](#) will allow you to list all your contacts and other notes.

Once you have completed your plan you can print or download it.

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This is a very big step and that is why 'Project First Step' has been set up. Here you will find help and advice which is produced specifically for your needs and you can also download or print information tailored to suit you.

When you are planning to leave home there is plenty you will need to think about first:

- Do you have enough money to pay the monthly rent?
- How do you apply for a property?
- Do you need to pay a deposit?
- What about insurance?
- Will the property come with furniture?
- What about extra costs such as going out, or even food?

There is a lot of support out there, both from the council and other organisations set up to deal with such enquiries. Once you have your home you will be responsible to retain its tenancy (the agreement between you and the owner of the property), if you do not they are able to end it - leaving you homeless again.

We want to provide you with sufficient information to help stop this from happening:

What help can I get?

- Help for first time or vulnerable tenants
- Family and friends

Housing options

- I am not getting on with my family and want to move out.
- Is it the right time for me to be moving?
- What are my housing options?
- What is private renting?
- Can I apply for a Dudley Council home?
- How do I apply for a council or housing association home

Financial considerations

- Can I afford to move home and get my own place?
- How do I apply for benefits?
- Changes to housing benefit from 2013?

Other considerations

- I have a disability or a long term illness and want somewhere to live
- I'm from an ethnic minority
- I'm lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered
- I'm leaving care

- [I'm a young parent](#)

For more information go to the ['Got my own place but need some help'](#) section

You might be planning to leave home several years from now, in a few months, or even in an emergency. But it pays to have the right information, who to ask for help, where to go, what to expect. On this site you can make your [own leaving home plan](#).

If you apply for housing some landlords will ask to see your plan so that they know that you are ready to cope with having your own home.

There are a number of reasons why people are made homeless, the following links will provide you with essential information on what to do if you are facing homelessness:

- [What to do in an emergency, I have been made homeless](#)
- [I'm being evicted](#)
- [Is this the right time for me to move home?](#)
- [I'm not getting on with my family and I need to move out](#)
- [I can't cope I'm giving up my tenancy!](#)

Other useful information:

[Can I apply for a Dudley Council home?](#)

[What are my housing options?](#)

[I have a disability or a long term illness and want somewhere to live](#)

[I'm from an ethnic minority](#)

[I'm lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered](#)

[I'm leaving care](#)

[I'm a young parent](#)

In this section you will find help and advice about what to do if you don't feel safe at home. Everyone should feel safe in their own home and if you don't, or think you are being abused this section is here to help you.

Being abused means you are being deliberately hurt by someone. Abuse can take many forms, it might be physical, emotional, financial or sexual. The person abusing you may hit you, but hitting is not the only way to abuse someone. They may make you feel bad by the way they talk to you, calling you names, taking money off you or forcing you to do things you are not comfortable doing.

It is not your fault and there is no way this should be happening to you.

Yes, telling someone about what is happening to you will not be easy, but once you do it things will change. Even if you don't think anyone will believe you, or the person abusing you has told you no-one will believe you, you must tell someone. Even if the first person you tell does not believe you, keep on trying until you find someone who will help you. Things may not change straight away, but they will get better and as soon as you have told someone you will feel different.

You need to be sure that the person you talk to can be trusted, you may be able to talk to someone you know such as a teacher, relative, friend, youth worker or social worker. But if you don't want to talk to someone you know, and don't know who to turn to, or just need some help and advice, below are some numbers of people who can help.

NSPCC
0800 800 5000

ChildLine
0800 1111

Emergency Duty Team
0300 555 8574

National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808
2000 247

Police Domestic Abuse Unit (Halesowen) 0121 626 8078 (in an emergency
always dial 999)

Victim Care Unit (Victim Support) 0300
303 1977.

Abuse is not normal and never ok. If you are in a relationship with someone, you should feel loved, safe, respected and free to be yourself. There are different forms of abuse which may include sexual pressure, calling you names or using violence. Your partner may also try to "control" you by checking your phone or getting angry when you want to see your friends instead of them. If your relationship leaves you feeling scared, intimidated or controlled, it's possible you're in an abusive relationship. As with any form of abuse tell someone that you trust such as a teacher, relative, friend, youth worker or social worker who can support you and help you make the right decisions to move forward. You can also find out more dating abuse [here](#).

This will depend on your circumstances, what you have said and the amount of danger you may be in. But it will also depend on your age. If you are under 16 and what has been happening has put you in danger it may mean that Social Services help you.

If you are over 16 you can leave home without your parent's permission. You can present yourself as homeless to Dudley Council Plus and explain that you are not safe at home and have nowhere else to go. If you do this try and take someone with you to support you. The person you see will keep what you tell them confidential but some of the information may need to be shared with other agencies who can help.

Remember, if you no longer want contact with your family or people you don't trust be careful you give your new address to.

Each situation is different and the most important thing is that you tell someone exactly what has happened to you. If you don't think anyone will believe you or the person abusing you has told you no-one will believe you, keep trying until you find someone who will help you.

Things may not change straight away sometimes they may even seem to get worse for a short while. But things can get better and as soon as you have told someone you will feel different.

You might be planning to leave home several years from now, in a few months, or even in an emergency. But it pays to have the right information, who to ask for help, where to go, what to expect. If you register an account then you can add anything that you think will be useful to your personal leaving home plan.

When you add an article to your personal plan a summary of the most important information will appear in your plan. It will contain all the telephone numbers and sometimes attachments like application forms as well.

We have also have a series of useful tools that can help you with your move such as

- [Planning Your Move Plan](#) which gives you an easy to use check list and plan on all the key things you need to consider when moving home.
- [Overall budget calculator](#)
- [Decorating and furniture budget](#)
- [Moving home budget](#)
- [moving home checklist](#)
- [My Support Network Section](#)

There will also be reminders of things to do and free text space for you to make your own notes.

Nobody else will be able to see your information and you can up date it whenever you log on.

You can download or print your plan so that you have the information where you need it.

If you apply for housing some landlords will ask to see your plan so that they know that you are ready to cope with having your own home.

Step 1. In order to make a leaving home plan you will need to register onto the site see link above

Step 2. Once registered you can begin to make your leaving home plan [here](#)

Receiving the keys to your new home is a very exciting time and there may be many things once you are in your new home that you may need support with. This may at first seem daunting and quite scary but equally there are many ways to find that support. The important thing is to not forget or ignore things you need help with in the hope that they will go away.

If it is appropriate your family and friends may be a good place to start to find any support that you need. Relations and friends are very often able to provide moral as well as physical support and of course in a much more informal basis.

Please refer to the section on Family and friends.

Is this your first place, do you consider yourself to be vulnerable?

If this is your first tenancy or you are vulnerable there are many organisations within Dudley that may be able to offer you support depending on your circumstances.

These support schemes maybe be known as Tenancy Sustainment teams or Floating Support Schemes and are generally run by Housing Associations, Charities or the local authority.

For more information please refer to the section on tenancy support.

When you find somewhere to rent, you will be asked to sign a Tenancy Agreement – it is a legally binding contract, so you need to understand what you are agreeing to. As with any other legal document, you really need to read the small print and make sure that you can keep to the conditions (rules) of the tenancy.

Do not leave it until the day that you get your keys to start collecting your furniture. It will cost much more than you thought and suddenly all those people who were going to help you may have other things to do.

When you move into a new place there are lots of things to do, forms to fill in, things to buy like food and cleaning materials, changing your benefits, changing the details with your bank, cleaning, getting the electricity turned on. If you haven't got any furniture the whole thing can turn into a nightmare.

You probably do not want to move in with no furniture and you could end up in rent arrears because Housing Benefit will not pay until you are moved in and they do check.

[:: more on free and cheap furniture](#)

It is best not to put off decorating your property, the longer you leave it the more of a chore it will become. It is important to do things in the right order. If you don't have much money and you can only do a bit at a time then you may be tempted to start with the walls but this will be a big mistake.

Not every landlord will allow you to have pets but if you do have a pet you need to make sure that it does not damage your home or become a nuisance to other people. You also need to look after it properly or someone will probably report you to the Police, the RSPCA or your landlord.

[::more on keeping pets in your home](#)

When you move into your new property you will need to start thinking about how you spend your money. Money can disappear through your hands like water if you are not careful.

[More on: Making my money go further](#)

[More on: applying for benefits](#)

[More on: Changes to housing benefit from 2013](#)

This information may affect you if you are renting a home in Dudley and you are

- Of working age ie not old enough to draw your state pension, and
- Claiming housing benefit, or thinking that you may need to claim housing benefit in the future

Housing Benefit will be restricted for some people who are living in a property that is larger than their household size. This will apply to working-age customers renting from a social landlord such as the council as well as those who rent privately. It will not apply to tenants who are pensioners. The calculation is that a separate bedroom can be available for

- each couple or single adult over 16,
- any two children of the same or opposite sexes up to age 9
- any two children/young people of the same sex up to age 15

If you have more than the number of bedrooms allowed for your family size, your housing benefit will be reduced from April 2013. The Housing Benefit entitlement will be reduced by 14% if there is one spare bedroom and 25% if there are two.

- Example 1 – a couple in a 3 bed house with 1 child (or two children under 10 of opposite sexes, or two children up to 15 of the same sex) will be under-occupying by 1 room and therefore will not receive full Housing Benefit - this could be as much as £13 per week if you rent from Dudley MBC and more if you have a property with a higher rent, for example from a private landlord.
- Example 2 - a single person of working age in a two bed flat will also be under-occupying by 1 room and will only receive Housing Benefit for up to 86% of the rent

If you think this will affect you, please see below for some options that may help

- Book a housing options interview 0300 555 2345
- Housing benefit enquiries 0300 555 8100
- CAB general advice 01384 816222

At the moment, the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) is expecting to make the housing benefit changes in April 2013. From that date, your housing benefit will be reduced and if it previously covered all of your rent you will find that in future you will need to find extra money each week towards it. For Council Tenants that amount could be up to £25 and for those on higher rents the amount could be considerably more. By planning for this now, you can avoid the risk of falling into rent arrears and losing your home. The actions you could take will depend on your individual circumstances, and will include one or more of the following:

Choosing a home that matches your needs

Flat sharing

If you need an extra room because you have a disability and need a carer to stay overnight, or because you are a foster carer or have other exceptional needs you may be able to claim a Discretionary Housing Payment. Contact number: 0300 555 8100

In the coming months Dudley Council will make up to date information and advice available on their website. Staff will be trained to assist with your queries, and can be contacted on the telephone numbers on this page.

If you would like more information on any of these options or would like a housing options interview please call 0300 555 2345

If it is appropriate your family and friends may be a good place to start to find any support that you need. Relations and friends are very often able to provide moral as well as physical support and of course in a much more informal basis.

It is also worth noting that support does not have to be financial. It may be that you have friends and family that maybe renewing the furniture and therefore it might be possible that they could give you their older stuff or even just some older kitchen utensils it all comes in handy and saves you paying out. Recommendations are always valuable and if your family member cannot help you they may know someone that can, a good recommendation is always worth remembering.

Sometimes all that you need is someone to show you do it properly – cooking, hanging wallpaper, cleaning, shopping, budgeting.

This page tells you:

How to apply

Why you might not be allowed to register

How to choose a property once you have registered

If you are successful in registering you will be given a banding. Broadly speaking the higher the band the more chance you have of being housed quickly. But it also depends on what you want and where you want to live – so listen carefully to the advice that the Housing Options Advisor will give to you when you go to register.

There are five steps to registering on the waiting list

1. Read this guide [Applying for a council property – is this service right for me](#)
2. Fill in an application form [Application Form](#). Print this form or pick up a copy from your area Housing Office or Dudley Council Plus (Castle Street, Dudley), you will be able to do this online in the near future.
3. Book an application interview by calling into your local Housing Office or Dudley Council Plus, or call 0300 555 2345 to book an appointment.
4. Attend the interview and make sure that you bring any information that you have been asked to provide. It will delay and may even harm your application if you do not attend at the booked time or do not provide the information.
5. If your application is accepted your registration will be completed during the interview and you will be able to start looking at available properties straight away. The advisor will explain how you express an interest in a property and what chance you have of being successful.

Why you might not be allowed to register (Less preference and exclusions)

If you have a history of anti-social behaviour, rent arrears, damaging your accommodation, or criminal behaviour then you may be given a lower banding or completely excluded from Council Housing.

If you can show that your bad behaviour was in the past then the Council will consider giving you better preference or lifting the exclusion. Dudley Council does not exclude people permanently.

Although you may not be able to get a property straight away the Council may help you find other kinds of accommodation to meet your needs and support you to get back on track.

Dudley Council has special arrangements with some services such as supported accommodation, hostels, Youth Offending Service, Probation, drug support services.

You may be able to have Council Housing or other accommodation as long as you are working with one of these service providers and really engaging with the help they give to you.

If you have someone who gives you support with your anti-social behaviour, offending, drug use or a specialist support provider then speak to them first.

If nobody gives you support then apply in the normal way. You may be disappointed if you are not allowed to register or put in a lower band. However, it is important to listen to the advice about other housing options and how to qualify for a better band or have the exclusion removed.

Choice Based Lettings

DMBC allocates properties using a choice based lettings system. This means that once you are accepted onto the waiting list it is your responsibility to place bids on properties that you are interested in. It does not cost anything to place a bid.

In order to place bids you will need to visit [Dudley at Home](#) between Wednesday at midnight and a Monday at midnight and log on using the registration number you are issued with at your interview.

You can place up to 3 bids on a weekly basis on properties you are interested in.

You won't lose out to people who bid earlier than you. All the bids are considered after bidding closes. Only bid on properties that you would be happy to live in.

Read the advert carefully, it will tell you a lot about the property and usually includes a picture.

It's okay not to bid if there is nothing you want that week.

If you don't bid for a long time you may be asked if you still want to be registered.

It is vital that you work out how much money you need to live on BEFORE you move out and sign any tenancy agreements for a new property.

The cost of survival

Potential monthly costs when taking on a new property:

Rent (bedsit)	£250
Council Tax	£70.70
Electricity	£60
Gas	£40
Water	£20
Phone/mobile	£30
Travel	£40
TV Licence	£12
Food	£180
Clothes and shoes	£40
Toiletries	£20
Cleaning products	£10
Total	£772.70 per Month

(£178.32 per week)

You may want to play around with the figures given above, either increasing or decreasing the amount for each category according to how you feel your current expenditure is, or is likely to be when you take on your property.

Please note that if you are moving into a privately rented property you will almost certainly have to pay a deposit when you move in, which is generally equivalent to a month and a half rent. You may also have to pay a reference fee between £65 to £200.

The cost of having a life

The above figures cover the basic essentials but most people will want to have money for other things such as:

- Take-aways
- Holidays
- DVDs/CDs
- Nights out at pub/cinema etc
- Presents
- TV rental
- Satellite TV/Cable subscription
- Monthly internet fees
- Cigarettes/tobacco
- Alcohol
- Emergencies

How much do you spend on these items now? Be honest with yourself and add in any other regular expenditure you know that you have.

When you have come up with a figure that you believe is realistic, just add it on to the monthly essentials figure (£772.70 per month in the example above) to give you a realistic idea of the income you will require in order to have your own place.

For more help with budgeting and looking after use the budget calculator on this site:

Budgeting

Where does your income come from & how do you increase it?

For most people, their income comes from working or from claiming welfare benefits. Students' income will come from other sources such as maintenance grants, student loans, and possibly student bursaries.

If you cannot find work and you are over 18 you will need to claim Jobseekers Allowance. In order to get this benefit you need to be available for and actively seeking work. Some people, such as lone parents, may be able to get Income Support.

Preparing for a big change

The 16+ Team are there to help plan your move from care and provide support until you are 21 (or 24 if you are still in full-time education)

Make sure it's the right time for you; don't feel that you should be moving into independent living as soon as you reach 16

Before you reach 16, your Adviser should be talking to you about what support you will need to live independently. You should be planning when is the right time to leave care, what sort of place you want to live in, how you will manage your money and how you will cope with living alone

If you have a disability, your Adviser should be talking to you about any extra support you may need to live independently

Living alone

Coping with loneliness can be a big issue. It's worth thinking about how you will cope with suddenly being alone in your own place. If you are feeling alone or struggling to cope, contact your Adviser. You are not alone – don't forget the 16+ Team are there to support you

Be careful about inviting visitors to your new place - a lot of young people lose their tenancies because of visitors' behaviour. You will sign a Tenancy agreement taking responsibility for all your visitors. If you lose your property due to visitor's behaviour, it will make it difficult for you to get re-housed

Money

Young people leaving care under the age of 18 are normally financed through the 16+ Team. They will normally pay your rent and give you a weekly living allowance unless you start working. They will also help with the cost of setting up your home with a Leaving Care Grant. You won't normally get the whole grant for your first move in case you need to move again or you have any unexpected bills.

When you reach 18, you will need to claim benefits if you are not working. Your 16+ Adviser will help you put a claim in for Housing Benefit to make sure your rent is paid. If you don't put a claim in on time, you will get into rent arrears and Housing Benefit will not be backdated unless you have a very good reason

What sort of place can I live in?

If you leave care before you are 18, you will need to consider living in supported housing which will help you make the move from care into independent living

This will normally be a Foyer or supported housing project where you will be expected to do training, education or work whilst living there

What if I become homeless?

If you become homeless, make sure you tell the Housing Adviser you speak to that you are a care leaver because this will affect the advice you receive

Most young people who have been in care are entitled to extra help if they become homeless. This will depend on your age and personal circumstances

If you are under 18, the 16+ Team are still responsible for finding you a place to live. If you go to Dudley Housing for help, they will probably ask the 16+ Team to help you

Personal safety is something that is important to everybody whether they are at home, out and about or at work or college.

Personal security

Out and about

- If you're out and going to be late, think about how you're going to get home. For example, pre-book a taxi or arrange a lift with a friend or family member. Let someone know about your plans - and if they change.
- Take sensible precautions if walking alone in the dark. For example, try to stick to well-lit busy streets and be alert.
- Avoid walking alone in out-of-the-way areas after dark.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Remember things like MP3 players can be distracting.
- Be discreet when using your mobile phone and put it away from view after use. Keep it on vibrate so it doesn't attract attention.
- Try to not have any valuables on display.
- When going to your car or home, have your keys ready.
- Carry your bag close to your body and try not to overload yourself with items - only take what you need. Spread your valuables and don't keep them all in one place, for example a handbag.
- Don't leave your bag unattended on the back of shopping trolleys or on top of pushchairs and try not to place it on the floor.
- If someone tries to snatch your bag don't challenge the thief. Your safety is more valuable than the bag or its contents. Try to remember a good description of the person and call the Police straight away.
- Think about carrying a personal attack alarm with you. These do cost money but can sometimes be given out free by local councils, colleges etc.
- Be aware of your personal space and be on your guard if someone gets too close.

At the cashpoint

- Never give out your personal identification number (PIN) to anyone.
- Be quick and don't hang around the cashpoint when you've finished.
- Try not to use a cashpoint late at night or in a deserted street.
- Never count your money on the street, put it away as soon as possible.
- Don't write your pin number down even if it is disguised.

Using Public Transport

- Know where you're going and which stop you need.
- Check departure times, especially last buses and trains.
- Have your ticket or change handy. This ensures your wallet or purse stays out of sight.
- Try to stay away from out-of-the-way bus stops, especially after dark.
- On an empty or late night bus, sit near the driver.
- On a train, sit in a compartment where there are several people.
- If you feel uneasy, move to another seat or carriage or sit near to the emergency alarm.
- Don't be afraid to use an emergency alarm if you feel threatened - check where it is when boarding.
- Make use of CCTV. Many bus and train stations have CCTV so check where the cameras are and sit near to them when you're alone.

On a Night Out

- Plan your night out and let someone know where you'll be and when you'll be home.
- Keep an eye on your drink at all times. If you accidentally leave your drink lying unattended never assume it has not been tampered with.
- Take your drink straight from the bar staff or from trusted friends.
- Never accept a drink from someone you've just met or don't totally trust.
- Remember, binge drinking makes you vulnerable to attack.
- Before the start of your night out plan how you'll get home. Arrange for a taxi or have a chosen driver within your group.

There are a lot of people applying for Council Housing in the Dudley Borough compared to the number of flats and houses available so it can take a while before you get a property, it really depends on what you need. If you have a disability or long term illness the Housing Occupational Health Team will do an individual assessment of your need.

Remember:

Houses are more popular than flats and maisonettes so you will usually wait longer for a house.

Some areas are more popular to live in so you will wait longer if you want that area.

Some properties are for people of particular ages so you can't have them if you don't fall into that age group.

Some properties are for people with particular needs.

Large properties only come up occasionally and are only for people with large families.

It is worth thinking about what is most important to you. If you really want to live in particular area then it might be worth considering a flat or maisonette to give yourself a chance of getting something sooner. Or if you really want a house because you have small children perhaps you could consider a less popular area.

But think long and hard before you take any property.

If you refuse an offer and you have made your application from an address in the Dudley Borough

If you are applying as homeless or have other special circumstances then your Case Manager in the Homeless Team or Property Team can tell you more about what it means for you if you refuse an offer.

For everyone else you will only be offered something you have bid for so the Council expects that you will only bid for things that you are likely to take if you are offered.

It is definitely a good idea to look at the property from the outside and look at the neighbourhood and ask questions before you make a bid.

You will usually be made up to 3 offers that the Council thinks are reasonable that you have bid for or that you have asked your Case Manager to bid for. If you refuse three offers your application will be suspended for six months and you cannot bid during that time.

If you refuse an offer and you have made your application from an address outside the Dudley Borough

Dudley Council has a duty first of all to provide for people who live in the area. Their policy is that anyone from outside the borough who refuses an offer will have their application cancelled.

If you are applying from outside Dudley Borough find out every thing you can about the neighbourhood and the properties in that street or block before you bid. The best idea is to talk to people who already live there, in the shops, in the pub, at church or in online forums – whatever suits you best.

More information about Council Housing in Dudley

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/applying-for-a-council-home/>

<http://www.dudleyathome.org.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/30.aspx>

Please find below some useful links:

[I have a disability or a long term illness and want somewhere to live](#)

[I'm from an ethnic minority](#)

[I'm lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered](#)

[I'm leaving care](#)

[I'm a young parent](#)

[How do I apply for benefits?](#)

[I think I've got a problem with alcohol](#)

[Why do I feel so down?](#)

[I've had enough I'm leaving my new home!](#)

[How can I keep safe?](#)

[I'm being evicted](#)

Can't find what you're looking for or if you've got any comments about how we could improve this site please email: Shelley.brooks@dudley.gov.uk

Sometimes people need to leave - but do you?

If you are unsure about whether to leave in a hurry or to stay and try to work things out then there are people you can speak to who will help you to make an informed choice.

- You can book an appointment with a Housing Advice Case Manager by calling 01384 815035
- (If you have a Social Worker or other support you can ask them to go with you to speak to a Housing Advice Case Manager)
- If you have a Youth Offending Worker you can ask to speak to the YOT Accommodation Officer 01384 813060

Surviving at home

Here are some things that you can do to survive the aggro while you make some realistic plans to leave home:

- Get out more with friends or at work or doing sport or study to keep away from the arguments.
- Spend time doing something that will help you later like earning money, volunteering or study.
- Talk to a trusted friend, relative or teacher, counsellor or doctor.
- If you are under 18 you can call Childline on 0800 1111
- Call Samaritans on 08457 909090

Follow these links

[Samaritans](#)

[Childline](#)

[Dudley Colleges](#)

[Connexions](#)

[Volunteering opportunities](#)

Getting on better at home

Dudley have a free service called Dudley Mediation Services (DMS).

DMS has expert mediators who can help you talk to the people you live with about things that are distressing you. They won't speak to your family without your permission but they can help to repair relationships when things have gone wrong.

You can call them on [01384 812422](tel:01384812422).

Whatever you do don't suffer in silence - contact one of these services and see if you can't change your life for the better.

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We may change this policy from time to time by updating this page. You should check this page from time to time to ensure that you are happy with any changes. This policy is effective from 18 April 2013.

What we collect

We may collect the following information:

- name
- contact information including email address
- demographic information such as postcode, preferences and interests
- other information relevant to services you may use this site for.

What we do with the information we gather

We require this information to understand your needs and provide you with a better service, and in particular for the following reasons:

- Internal record keeping.
- We may use the information to improve our products and services.
- From time to time, we may also use your information to contact you for market research purposes. We may contact you by email, phone or mail. We may use the information to customise the website according to your interests.

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I'm from an ethnic minority

Deciding to leave home

It can be really hard to leave home and if your friends or family don't agree with what you are doing then that can make it even harder. All young people can feel pressure from family and the community, about where they live, what job they do, who they marry. But the people around you can offer valuable support as well. Only you can decide the right balance between different aspects of your culture.

Try talking to your family – they may be more supportive than you expect – start with someone in the family who you trust and who has given you good advice before.

Time 2 Talk is a free mediation service for young people who are thinking of leaving home. They can help you talk to family members. Call them on 01384 812422.

If you really want to leave then try and make as much preparation as you can before you move out. Making a leaving home plan with the help of this guide is a good place to start

If you need to leave home urgently here is our advice [LINK](#)

If someone is trying to force you to get married this is illegal and you can get help

<http://www.forcedmarriage.net/ineedhelp.html> You can call the forced marriage unit on 020 7008 0151 during normal office hours or call the police at any time on 999 if you are in danger right now or 101 if there is no immediate danger

Harassment

If you are suffering racial harassment this is not something you or your family should have to put up with.

You can report racial harassment to us at any time of the day any day of the year. It doesn't have to be in writing. You can tell us in person or someone else can tell us on your behalf.

- In an emergency call the police on 999
- If there is no immediate danger call the police on 101 (15p per call) or 0345 113 5000
- If you are a DMBC tenant speak to your Housing Manager at the local Housing Office

Anyone can call 0300 555 2345 and an advisor will respond. Out of hours this will divert to another call centre but stay on the line and someone will answer.

Talk to any member of Dudley Council staff.

Useful Contacts

- **Victim Support**
01384 241511
- **Centre for equality & diversity**
01384 456166
- **Stop Hate UK – 24 hour helpline**
0800 138 1625

To report hate crime to Dudley's Community Safety Team to a specialist officer on 01384 812537 or e-mail community.safety@dudley.gov.uk

When you move into your new place you should take the time to find out where all of the following things are and how they work. Ideally your landlord should tell you about these things as you move in but if they don't, make sure you ask them.

Electric trip switches, Water mains valve, Gas valve

Also make sure you have the following items:

Smoke alarm, Fire blanket, Fire Extinguisher

Making your money go further

£105

£22/mth

£15/mth

If you are skint, ask yourself the following questions: Do I need it? Can I afford it? Have I checked if it's cheaper anywhere else?

If you're not skint, ask yourself these questions: Will I use it? Is it worth it? Have I checked if it's cheaper anywhere else?

If the answer to any of these questions is NO, then DON'T BUY IT!!!

For further money saving tips and ideas go to www.moneysavingexpert.com

Budgeting and debt

Thinking about how to deal with your household expenditure might seem pretty dull but if you don't pay your rent regularly and on time you could be evicted, if you don't pay your council tax you could end up in prison and if you don't pay your regular bills you could have your gas or electricity supply cut off or have your phone disconnected.

As we said in the "Can I afford to have my own place section?" it is important to work out how much income you need every month to keep your household running. When you get your income or benefits you need to know how much you need to put aside to pay for the household bills.

If you find yourself getting into debt or are worried that you are going to struggle to pay your household bills, you should seek some advice as soon as possible. For further help with these matters you could look at the following websites or ring the numbers that go with them:

www.creditaction.org.uk – 0800 138 1111

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk – 0808 808 4000

www.adviceguide.org.uk or visit your local CAB or ring them on 01384 816 222

Project First Step is a partnership initiative set up to tackle homelessness in young people aged between 16 and 25.

Dudley Council

CHADD, Churches Housing Association of Dudley

Dudley Citizens Advice Bureau

Heantun Group (Housing Association)

Black Country Housing Association

In the Dudley borough there is an increasing number of young people who perceive themselves to be homeless.

There are a number of services that are available to these people, and the success rate in terms of preventing homelessness is very good.

In 2008/2009, there were 928 homeless enquiries, which in this day and age is a very large number. The systems that are in place prevented 64 from being homeless, 100 were statutory homeless, and the other 761 were not homeless but clearly thought of themselves as homeless.

In addition people who are aged under 25 who take a first tenancy with Dudley Council without any support have a prevalence to fail with their tenancies within the first 18 months. The main reason for these failed tenancies is "moved to lodgings", the second is arrears or anti-social behaviour eviction.

Moved to lodgings means moving to situations of precarious tenure including "sofa surfing". The most important reason is financial. Young people may be on low income and benefits that is likely to be barely enough to live. Young people in this situation often fall back on candles for light and warmth; rather than turn the heating on to incur more costs. Other reasons may include:

- Friends taking advantage of the home owner
- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Isolation
- Inappropriate ways of coping with conflict, which conform to gender stereotypes.

With all this in mind, the council and its partners has developed this site to create a tool that can be used by all young people, with or without support, to assess their readiness for independent living and create a personal plan. This tool shows the working practices of the council and other services that provide and support young people seeking housing.

- Reasons for eviction
- How can you prevent the eviction?
- Helpful Contacts
- Things to take to meetings
- Harassment by your Landlord
- What to do in an emergency

If you receive any letters that mention EVICTION do not ignore them. (Sometimes this may say that it's a NOTICE OF SEEKING POSSESSION or NOTICE TO QUIT. There may be words like POSSESSION PROCEEDINGS/ORDER and action in the COUNTY COURT). If in doubt do not delay, get free advice from CAB or SHELTER, by calling 0808 800 4444

Alternatively you can speak to your LANDLORD directly or through their AGENT. If you have a tenancy with Dudley MBC or a Housing Association then you need to talk to your INCOME MANAGER (Dudley MBC tenants) 0300 555 2345
The main thing is not to ignore it!

The main reasons for eviction are:

- You don't pay your rent or mortgage.
- You are involved in anti-social behaviour, like being noisy and getting into arguments.
- Your Assured Shorthold Tenancy has ended.

In most cases the eviction can be prevented so follow the advice below so that you don't end up homeless.

Rent Arrears

You can pay off your arrears slowly which stops you being classed as a non-paying tenant.

Speak to your landlord, he or she may not be happy about the arrears but they will appreciate that you are trying to do something about it. Let them know that you are getting advice.

Continue paying whatever you can afford regularly whenever you get your wages or benefits or other income.

Then without delay do one of the following:

Contact

- your local CAB

Or

- Debtline on 0808 808 4000

CAB and Debtline will make sure that you are getting any benefits that you are entitled to, even if you are working. There are more links at the foot of the page that may help.

Anti-Social Behaviour

If you are behaving in an anti-social way but really don't want to lose your place you need to tackle the problem by talking to a support worker or a housing officer. If you feel it's beyond your control then try and speak to someone in the Housing Department about what support they can offer.

- If you are in a private tenancy call Private Sector Housing on 01384 815118
- Call 0300 555 2345 and ask for an appointment with a Case Manager from the Homeless Team.
- If you are a Council Tenant call 0300 555 2345 and ask for an appointment with your Housing Manager
- If you are a Council tenant or you have a disagreement with a neighbour who is a Council Tenant then you could try the free mediation service Time2Talk. Call them on 01384 812444
- Talk to anyone who is supporting you such as a Social Worker, Tenancy Support, Probation, YOS, Health Visitor or follow the link at the foot of the page 'Who will support me in my new home?'
- Talk to the Police Community Support Officer
- Talk to your friends and family
- If you are having problems with drugs or alcohol then get some professional help.

If it is your friends or visitors who are causing problems then you need to be clear with them that you are not willing to lose your home because of their behaviour.

If you are threatened with eviction contact:

- Shelter's free housing advice helpline 0808 800 4444 (they can put you in touch with your nearest Housing Aid Centre)
- CAB
- Private Sector Housing 01384 815118
- Income Managers (Dudley MBC tenants) 0300 555 2345

Things to take to meetings

- Your tenancy agreement (if you have one)
- Any letters that say how much you owe or that your landlord has a problem with you. If you have rent arrears try to work out how many weeks you are behind so that you can tell the worker how big the problem is.
- Any letters you have had from your landlord about eviction. The date of these letters could be important.
- Personal ID
- The names ages and income of people who usually live with you, their ID as well if possible

Harassment by your landlord

If your landlord is trying to evict you they may try to make you leave by harassing you. This is illegal. The only way you can be evicted is if your landlord has got a court order against you. . If a landlord changes your locks without any warning this is illegal. (See what to do in an emergency)

Harassment means that you are not being allowed peaceful enjoyment of your home and can include your landlord:

Coming round without warning.

Refusing to do repairs.

Threatening you in any way, including verbal threats, texts and e-mails.

If a landlord has made you leave your place without a court order, they have committed a criminal offence and you can try to sue.

If you think you may be being harassed then you need to contact

Private Sector Housing at Dudley MBC on 01384 815118

Finding somewhere to live

With all rental properties you will need to take into account the changes happening to benefits in April 2013. The changes mean that there are strict rules about how much help you can get toward the rent and households that may have previously received enough benefit to pay the whole rent may no longer do so. There is a page on the First Steps website about Housing Benefit Changes 2013 which you should read.

Private rented property is advertised in many ways, including in the press, shop windows, estate agents and on internet sites.

[The Association of residential letting agents](#) can also help provide details of local letting agents.

Private Tenants Handbook

Dudley MBC Private Sector Housing Team have produced a handbook, packed full of handy tips and hints, which covers everything tenants need to know about renting privately.

The handbook will help with choosing a rental property, managing a tenancy and avoiding any potential problems. It will also help you to decide what to do if things go wrong. A useful directory of local services is included, as well as a valuable checklist to help in assessing a rental property.

[You can go to the interactive handbook from the First Steps website](#)

Choosing a rental property

Before you agree to rent or sign any paperwork, remember to take a really good look at the property that you're considering, ensuring it is safe and secure to live in and that all outstanding repairs are carried out before you move in. Visit the property both in daylight and in the evening to check that the area is safe and always ensure you take someone with you. Please see related documents below to view a document which explains what you need to know about renting in the private sector.

Dudley is also a member of Homestamp, a partner consortium with an interest in private sector housing comprising of local authorities, the Private Rented Sector and West Midlands Police and Fire Service whose aim is to: encourage the supply of good quality private rented homes, to provide and facilitate information and training for landlords, to consider and respond to regional and national issues affecting the private rented sector and to encourage joint working between all interested parties. The Homestamp Consortium produced a publication on renting in the private sector called, Read This First, which incorporates a checklist of things to consider before renting in the private sector - see related documents below.

Landlord problems

If you are living in privately rented accommodation the law protects you against harassment and illegal eviction by your landlord. Both of these acts are criminal offences and victims are able to claim damages, through the civil court.

There are links on the First Step website to more information about this.

Getting repairs done

If you need a repair to your rental property, write or call your landlord. If the landlord refuses to do the work, then contact Dudley MBC Private Sector Team on 01384 815118. The council has a number of powers that it can use to ensure that works are carried out to the minimum statutory housing standard.

Make sure that, when you sign your tenancy agreement that you find out which repairs your landlord is responsible for, which you are responsible for and the procedure for reporting a repair.

Tenancies granted for less than 7 years on or after 24 October 1961, the landlord is by law normally responsible for the repair of the structure and exterior of the home and for keeping in repair and proper working order any basins, sinks, baths and other sanitary installations and any installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity, for heating water and for space heating. For more detailed information, please read the booklet: Repairs A guide for landlords and tenants under related documents below.

Problems with rent

If you're struggling to pay your rent, you may be able to claim benefits in order to help you manage. The local housing allowance was introduced from 7 April 2008 – it is a new way of working out housing benefit for tenants of private landlords. You can get further advice from our team or the Benefits Shop located at Priory Street, Dudley, call 01384 812639 or visit the following webpages.

[There are links on the first step website that take you to more information about Benefits](#)

Tenancy deposit protection

After 6 April 2007 landlords requesting rent deposits must protect them using one of the government schemes available. Within 14 days of taking your deposit your landlord should have advised you of the authorised scheme it is registered with and how to apply for the release of the deposit. All schemes have a dispute resolution service. They will decide whether and how much of the deposit should be returned to you.

[:: Further information on Tenancy Deposit Protection](#)

Anti-social behaviour

We all have the right to live in peace free from the nuisance of problem neighbours, threatening behaviour or harassment. If you have a problem with antisocial behaviour please contact our Community Safety Team on 0300 555 2345

Dudley home improvement service

Our home improvement service offers a range of products and services to Dudley Borough homeowners and private rental tenants - who are responsible for their rental home's maintenance. We provide a complete home repairs, improvements and adaptations service and are part of a national network of over 300 home improvement agencies.

We can help you to improve your rental home, adapt it to better suit your needs if you have a disabled family member or to access funds to help you to repair your rental property. Our services include:

- Arranging property repairs, home improvements or adaptations on your behalf
- Providing help and professional advice on finding suitable finance for these works
- Providing general advice, assistance and ongoing support throughout the process

Disabled facilities grants

These grants may be available to private tenants, to enable them to adapt their rental property in order to make their life more comfortable. If you or a member of your household has a disability or mobility problem, then call us on 01384 813090.

It's probably a good idea to talk through your leaving home plan with someone who knows you and your disability or health needs. This will help you choose accommodation that suits your needs and think about any support you may require when you are living on your own. There are a wide range of services to assist you through Dudley's Adult Social Care Team, depending on your needs and circumstances.

A lot of things in this guide such as saving for your first home, budgeting, getting furniture, friends, how to cope with bad days, will be useful to you and it's worth creating a leaving home plan. But you may have extra needs and you may be entitled to extra help so if you don't already have a support worker you can turn to then it may be worth contacting one of the organisations below.

[Adult Social Services](#)

[Dudley Advocacy](#)

[web site](#)

Advocacy Service

The [DART project](#) for people in Dudley Borough age 16 and over who have autistic spectrum disorders

If you have a [physical disability](#)

[Kooth](#) - Online counselling and advice with real advisors for young people age 11 to 25

What about applying finding somewhere to live?

You can start by applying to the Council in the usual way [What will Housing offer me LINK](#)

If your long term health or disability needs are affected by your current housing circumstances then discuss this with your advisor at your [Housing Options Interview](#).

If you think you may need to move to a property with adaptations such as a level access shower, an assessment can be arranged through Dudley's Housing Occupational Therapy Team. Your advisor will let you know if you need to make an application and provide any support you need with this.
Tel: 0300 555 2345

It is a good idea to take someone you know and trust and who understands how your disability affects you when you go to your interview.

The [Housing Options Advisor](#) may talk to you about other kinds of housing as well as Council Housing so it's a good idea to think about what you want before you go.

[Supported Housing](#) this can mean someone visiting you in your own home or living in accommodation with staff on site. As a minimum you can expect to have your own room and often your own flat. Some supported accommodation is accessed through Social Services, some through Housing.

[Buying your home](#) if you are very specific about where you want and can afford it this can be a good long term option. There are special schemes that can help you get a mortgage if you need to rely on disability benefits. Although they may not be able to help you at the moment because of the problems in the financial market it is worth having a [look](#).

If you have some money for a deposit it is worth talking to a high street lender such as a bank or building society.

Council Housing you know about this one.

Adapting part or all of your family home to give you more independence.

Council Tenants

Owner occupiers

Moving your whole family to something more suitable, particularly if you are Council or Housing Association tenants.

Private renting this could be tricky if you have very specific needs but it can be more flexible too.

You may be absolutely desperate to get some freedom but it is worth taking your time to get it right. If you move somewhere that you don't like it might take a long time to move again.

Here are some quotes from real young people with disabilities who moved to independent living in the last few years...

- How can I keep safe
- How do I find a place?
- Moving in with someone

How do I apply for benefits?

Golden rules when applying for benefits

Apply immediately – as soon as you think you are entitled or have a very low income apply for the relevant benefits by filling in the appropriate claim form. Do not assume you can apply some time later and get your benefit back-dated – you can only do this if you have a very good reason as to why you did not claim earlier

Take a friend or relative with you when you attend any appointments to claim benefits – ideally this person will have some experience of claiming benefits themselves

Try to keep a copy of all the forms you fill in – this is generally easier if you are applying online. Keep copies of any letters you write to the benefit authorities and of any documents you send to them. Keep a note of the date you send things in and keep the copies and dates together in a file or folder. Keep all of the letters that the Jobcentre Plus and/or Council send to you

ALWAYS get a receipt when you hand in a form and/or other documents to the Council, the Jobcentre Plus or the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP). This is your proof that you handed in the relevant forms/documents if the benefit authorities lose them

If your circumstances change keep the benefit authorities informed. They will need to know things like moving house, your income changing, somebody moving into or out of your property, starting at college. If in doubt as to what counts as a change of circumstances seek some advice.

Get advice immediately if your benefit stops or you do not think you are getting enough money, or indeed you are getting too much. Go to the Citizens Advice Bureau with any relevant paperwork relating to your benefit claims. Remember if you are not happy about a decision on your benefit claim you generally have only one month to appeal against the decision

Helpful contacts

Dudley Council's Benefit Services if you have a query about Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit - go to <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/advice-benefits/>

The Department of Work & Pensions – www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

Jobcentre Plus - www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job

Disability Benefits Enquiry Line - 0800 88 22 00

Dudley District Citizens Advice Bureau – advice line 01384 816 222

www.adviceguide.org.uk

If you are really depressed or anxious then you may just want to walk away from your home. Don't do anything that you can't undo without talking to someone first.

If you are thinking about suicide or self harm:

Make an appointment with your doctor or practice nurse

Tell your support providers, CPN or a relative

Call the Samaritans on 08457 909090

Call Childline on 0800 1111

If you are worried or anxious about anti-social behaviour near to where you live

If something is happening right now call the police on 999

If you are a DMBC tenant call your Housing Manager on 0300 555 2345

If you are a Housing Association Tenant call your landlord.

If you are a private tenant or you own your home then call 0300 555 2345 and Private Sector will support and advise you.

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice/anti-social-behaviour/dealing-with-anti-social-behaviour/?locale=en>

If you intend to leave right now.

If you feel very mentally unwell see your GP or go to the emergency department at your nearest hospital

Tell your landlord what you are doing and why. Do not end your tenancy until you have taken advice.

Arrange for somewhere to stay with someone you can trust if possible. If you have nowhere to go contact the Homeless Service right away.

Once you have had some help and taken advice you will be in a better position to decide what to do next.

When you find somewhere to rent, you will be asked to sign a Tenancy Agreement – it is a legally binding contract, so you need to understand what you are agreeing to. As with any other legal document, you really need to read the small print and make sure that you can keep to the conditions (rules) of the tenancy.

If you are offered something by the council or a housing association, you can be sure that they are a good landlord and the Tenancy Agreement will be fair, for example, it will include things like

- You must live in the flat as your main home
- You must pay the rent on time
- You must keep the flat decorated and in good order
- You must not cause any nuisance to neighbours
- You must give a certain amount of notice in writing before you leave

In return, they will agree

- To carry out any repairs in reasonable time
- To let you know in advance if they need to visit you
- To give you notice of any rent increase (usually a month)
- To help you if any neighbours cause a nuisance to you
- To let you stay in the flat for as long as has been agreed

Even so, you should still check any special conditions that may be important to you, such as

- Can I keep a pet?
- Is there any car parking and what are the rules about using it?
- Is there a garden and do I have to look after it?
- Can I have a visitor or lodger?

One of the most important things to check is how much is the rent, how and when will it have to be paid, and are there any other charges – certain service charges may not be covered by housing benefit. If you are renting from the council or a housing association they will be happy to answer your questions and provide advice.

Council tenancies are “Introductory Tenancies” for the first year, which means that if you mess up you can be made to leave. If this happens, it usually means you will find it harder to get another tenancy later. This may not seem very important now, but it is worth thinking about, because in a few years time you may have a family of your own and need a house!

On the other hand, if you keep to the Tenancy Agreement, then after a year you will be a secure tenant and have extra rights to stay longer and make the place your own. Most housing associations also have similar trial tenancies for the first year, until you have proved you are a good tenant.

Most of these are “Assured Shorthold Tenancies”, for six months or twelve months – one thing you will want to know is whether the landlord will be willing to carry on with the tenancy at the end of that time, and if so whether they will charge you a fee for extending the tenancy.

- Lots of private landlords are very good. They will make sure that you have time to read and understand the Tenancy Agreement, and its conditions may be very similar to the council's.
- Some private landlords work in partnership with the council and have been checked out and accredited – for further information see [\[link\]](#)
- A few are not so good. They may let you move in before signing any agreement, might not give you a rent book, and might start asking you for extra money over what you first agreed. You can avoid all of this hassle by doing things properly in the first place – do not even think about moving in somewhere till you have a proper Tenancy Agreement you are happy with. Read all the small print and make sure you can keep to the Conditions of Tenancy. If the flat is furnished, the agreement should include an inventory or list of everything in the flat – you need to check this because you will be charged if anything is broken or missing when you move out.

When you decide you are serious about moving out there are various options available to you which are listed below. Remember, however, to think carefully about where you want to live and any specific requirements you may need to take into consideration when you move.

Students

Student

Finance

You can rent from a private landlord- this can either be through a lettings agency or directly from the landlord of the property. Renting in the private sector can be expensive- in order to secure a property you will need to save money for a deposit which is often the equivalent of 2 months rent. Depending on the landlord and the property type, this amount can be upwards of 1000.

Can I get any help with my deposit?

How do I pay my rent?

Local Housing Allowance/Shared Room Rate in a private rented place

If you are going to rent from a private landlord and have a low income and/or you are claiming benefits you may be able to claim Local Housing Allowance which is a form of Housing Benefit specifically for the tenants of private landlords. Before you sign up to a tenancy agreement you should be sure what amount of Local Housing Allowance you will get in case it is not as much as you are expecting or assuming. You could get such a calculation done by visiting Dudley District Citizens Advice Bureaux or Dudley Councils Benefit Services. Such a calculation will help you to decide what you can really afford when you are looking for a place.

If you are single and under 35 the amount of Local Housing Allowance that you can get will be limited to the Shared Room Rate which is basically the amount you would get for a room in a shared house. You can find out what this rate is by contacting Benefit Services or visiting the [Housing Benefit](#) page on Dudley Council website.

How secure is a private rented tenancy?

In the private sector tenancies tend to run for a period of 6 or 12 months.

At the end of the tenancy your landlord has the right to review whether he wants to renew your tenancy for another period.

When renewing your tenancy landlords will take into consideration whether the rent was paid on time and whether there were any problems with you as a tenant. The more reliable a tenant you are, the more likely it is that your tenancy will be renewed.

However if your tenancy is not renewed your landlord still has to give you a notice before he or she can evict you. .

In addition The Private Sector Team provides a whole range of services includes our home improvement service offering assistance with home repairs, improvements and adaptations, traveller site management, dealing with the nuisance of empty properties, management of the councils property accreditation scheme, the promotion of energy efficiency advice and taking direct action where the health and safety of your living environment is threatened.

The team is based at:

Harbour Buildings, Waterfront West
Brierley Hill
DY5 1LN
Tel: 01384 815118

Office opening hours: Monday to Friday - 9am - 5pm

This type of accommodation can be found through private landlords (please note that sometimes the landlord may live in the property with you) or through flat sharing websites e.g. www.spareroom.co.uk.

Flat sharing may seem like a cheaper/easier option it is important to work out the type of person who you want to live with before signing up to a tenancy agreement.

Sharing with others may not be so enjoyable if you do not get on or have very little in common.

You can find out more about Private Renting by following the link at the bottom of this page
[Council Rented](#)

Generally, once you reach 18 you can apply to go on your local councils waiting list. Councils let housing at affordable rents based on the needs of applicants on their waiting list. Properties in Dudley are let through a process called bidding. You can find out more by following the links below.

Unlike in the private sector, councils also tend to offer secure tenancies. This means that as long as you rent is paid on time and there are no incidences of anti social behaviour you can carry on living in your home without renewing the tenancy. Council rents are usually lower and you do not need to put large sums of money aside for a deposit.

But the time in which you wait to be offered a council property is likely to be significantly longer. There are currently approximately 7000 people waiting for housing through Dudley Council.

Registered Social Landlords (incl. Housing Associations)

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are government funded, not-for-profit organisations that provide affordable housing and include housing associations, trusts and co-operatives. RSLs work in conjunction with local authorities to provide homes for people meeting the affordable homes criteria. RSLs also develop land, build homes and act as landlords by maintaining properties and collecting rent.

Housing Associations

Housing Associations often work particularly closely with local authorities and it is common practice for housing associations to advertise their properties through their local councils website. Housing Associations now tend not operate their own waiting lists but ask you to apply for their properties through the council. Information regarding housing associations is available at your application interview with Dudley Council. Similarly to council rented accommodation, housing associations offer secure tenancies that do not need to be renewed every 6 or 12 months.

You will be monitored on the way you conduct your tenancy, however, and action will be taken if your tenancy is not conducted satisfactorily.

Tips for when you Apply

Remember that the council operates a waiting list- it may therefore be some time before you are offered a property. Have an idea of the area you want to live in but try not to be too specific when placing bids. You are likely to wait longer if you hold out for a specific street or individual property.

If you like the look of a property on the website but aren't familiar with the area, go and do your research! Try and go and look at the property from the outside before you place a bid. This way you will be able to get a feel of the area and property type and means you will avoid disappointment at a later date.

Once you have joined the waiting list, don't forget about the other housing options available to you. These can be discussed at the application interview when you initially apply or with a housing options adviser at a later date if you feel you need more information. Remember to keep the Council up to date with any changes in circumstances you may experience whilst waiting for a property e.g. change of address. If your details are incorrect at the point of any offer it may result in the offer being withdrawn.

Tell us at the earliest possible opportunity if you need extra support- we will be able to advise on more specialised housing options that are available to you.

Don't let a disability stop you from applying- our housing occupational therapy department will assess your individual needs when allocating properties.

Housing you could be Offered

Young Single Person (YSP)

Dudley Council classifies YSPs as single applicants as those aged under 29 years and 4 months. As a YSP you are eligible for 2 types of accommodation- duplex flats and 1/2 bedroom high rise flats.

Young Couples

As a couple making a home for the first time you are eligible for more property types than those classed as YSP

Young Parents

As a young parent we understand that you are going to need more space and need to provide a family home in which your children can grow up- as such we offer family flats, maisonettes and houses to those with children. The number of bedrooms you are eligible for depends on the size of your family.

Refusing an Offer

In Borough Applicants

As a landlord we understand that a property you have bid on may not be what you expected when you look around it. As such, in borough applicants are made 3 reasonable offers of accommodation before their application is deferred for a period of 6 months.

In order to minimise the risk of a property not being what you expected when you view, we do ask that wherever possible you go and look at the property from the outside before you place a bid. By doing this you can make an informed decision about whether or not you would be happy living in that property.

Out of Borough Applicants

Usually, if you have somewhere to live then it is advisable to stay where you are until you can plan your move more confidently.

However, if you are in danger or if you might be harmed where you usually live, or you have nowhere to stay, then you need to try some of the following:

- If you are in immediate danger and at risk you can call the Police on 999
- Ask a friend or family member that you can trust. They may be able to help you for a few nights, giving you time to get things sorted.
- Call Dudley MBC on 0300 555 2345 (24 hours service), depending on what happened they should be able to direct you to the right service, this may be the Homelessness Team, Social Services or the Private Sector Team, who may be able to get you back into your home, if it's safe and legal for you to return.
- Call Shelter for advice, it's free on 0808 800 4444 or go to their [website](#). They should be able to give you advice and tell you of locally available places to stay. The Police may also be able to give you this information.
- Call National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247 if you are suffering domestic violence (remember men can be victims as easily as women) or look at this [web page Womens Aid](#)
- If you are under 16 or if you have been in care you can contact the Children's Services Team at Dudley MBC via 0300 555 2345 or outside of working hours the [Emergency Duty Team](#) on 0300 555 8574
- If you are 16 or 17 then you will need to contact either Children's Services on the numbers immediately above or the Homelessness Team on 01384 815035 or if out of hours on 0300 555 2345. The two services will work together to try to help you.
- You may also want to call the [Runaways Helpline](#) Call 0808 800 7070, Text 80234, Email runaway@missingpeople.org.uk

I'm LGBT and homeless, what do I do?

But I'd like my own place

I'm facing homophobia or transphobia

Will I get fairly treated by Dudley Council?

Helpful contacts

- Stonewall Housing - lesbian and gay housing advice and advocacy: 08000 502020
- Albert Kennedy Trust - supports young LGBT 16-25 year olds who are made homeless or living in a hostile environment: 0207 831 6562 or 0161 228 3308 or 0191 281 7799
- Galop - challenging homophobic and transgender-phobic hate crime: 0207 704 2040
- Broken Rainbow - LGBT Domestic Violence Service helpline: 0300 999 5428
- Summit House- support for men who are gay, bisexual, transgender or MSM (men who sleep with men) in the Dudley area: 01384 243220,
- The Lesbian and Gay Foundation advice support and information for lesbian, gay and bisexual people: 0845 3 30 30 30
- LGBT Centre Birmingham Specialist counselling and medical services

If this is your first tenancy or you are vulnerable there are many organisations within Dudley that may be able to offer you support depending on your circumstances.

These support schemes maybe be known as tenancy sustainment teams or floating support schemes and are generally run by housing associations, charities or the local authority.

In Dudley you can access these via many routes, if you have a social worker, community psychiatric nurse (CPN), health visitor or other support they will be able to make a referral to the Supporting People Gateway for you.

If you do not have any support already, thats not a problem you can go to Dudley Council Plus, part of Dudley Council (see below) and they will be able to advise you.

Dudley Council Plus (DCP) can be found at the following address:
259 Castle St
DY1 1LQ

Tel: 0300 5552345

Or email: Supportingpeople.dachs@dudley.gov.uk to ask for an assessment.

You can aslo get help from CHADD outreach: 01384 864 232

They provide support with

- Feelings of isolation
- Housing Benefit Claims
- Tackling debt
- Registering with a GP
- Finding work
- Tenancy related problems
- Helping you find other service

CHADD outreach staff will meet with you one to one see what help you need.

Dudley Council also provide a specialist housing support service for people coping with drug issues for further information on this please contact:

Housing Support (DIP) on 01384-812504

If you are applying for a council tenancy you may be asked to provide details of someone who is going to support you whether they are a family member or a professional so its a good idea to ask them and keep their details in your plan.

If you know of an organisation that you specifically want support from you may still be able to contact them directly.

Money In

Money out

What am I left with?

Benefit 1		Rent		Money In Total	7,269
Benefit 2		Council Tax		Money out Total	1,285
Child support		Electricity	56	Balance	5,984
Wages 1		Gas			
Wages 2		Water			
Other 1		Mobile Phone			
Other 2		Travel			
Total	7,269	TV Licence			
		Food			
		Clothes and shoe			
		Toiletries			
		Cleaning products			
		Child care			
		Take aways	3		
		Holidays	200		
		Music			
		Going out	10		
		TV package	160		
		Internet			
		Fags	1		
		Booze			
		Emergencies	10		
		Other	50		
		Total	1,285		

	Cost if applicable	Notes	Date Complete
Research rents of suitable properties	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Save deposit and first month rent	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Make list of everything I will need in my new home. (see Moving Home and Furniture and Decorating Budget)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Speak to friends and relatives about items they can give to me.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Complete Moving Home Budget	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Save money to meet Moving Home Budget	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Complete Weekly budget to see if I can afford to move out.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Look for a property using internet, estate agents, newspapers.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Complete Support Plan	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Visit properties with a trusted older person.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Work out if I can afford the rent.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Check if I will get any help from benefits with rent or Council Tax	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Agree a moving in date with landlord	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Meet the Landlord with a trusted older person and ask for any repairs to be done before I sign the tenancy.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sign tenancy	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Move in!	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

	Notes	Date Complete
Research rents of suitable properties	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Apply to Council or Housing Association	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Make list of everything I will need in my new home. (see Moving Home and Furniture and Decorating Budget)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Speak to friends and relatives about items they can give to me.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Complete Moving Home Budget	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Save money to meet Moving Home Budget	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Complete Weekly budget to see if I can afford to move out.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bid for properties on DudleyatHome	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Complete Support Plan	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Visit properties with a trusted older person.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Work out if I can afford the rent.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Check if I will get any help from benefits with rent or Council Tax	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Accept the offer in principle	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Meet the Landlord with a trusted older person and ask for any repairs to be done before I sign the tenancy.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Meet the Housing Manager with your Moving Home Plan and someone who is going to support me in my new home	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sign the tenancy	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Move in!	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

	Cost if applicable	Notes	Date Complete
Research price of suitable properties	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Meet with bank to find out what deposit I will need and your repayment options for the mortgage you will need.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Save deposit and first month repayment and solicitors costs (solicitors cost £500 or more)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Make list of everything I will need in my new home. (see Moving Home and Furniture and Decorating Budget)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Speak to friends and relatives about items they can give to me.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Complete Moving Home Budget	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Save money to meet Moving Home Budget	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Complete Weekly budget to see if I can afford to move out.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Look for a property using internet, estate agents, newspapers.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Complete Support Plan	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Visit properties with a trusted older person.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Work out roughly if I can afford the mortgage	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Approach several banks to see who will accept me and who will offer the best deal	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Agree a date to exchange contracts	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Look around the property and note measurements and any immediate repairs that I will need to pay for when you move in.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sign contracts	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Move in!	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Cost	Price New	Actual Cost of items	Where am I getting this item?	Phone Number and delivery details	Other information
Fridge	£150.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
A basic cooker and someone to connect it.	£250.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bed and mattress	£80.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Pillows, sheets, duvet and cover, pillow cases	£23.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Personal clothing and washing products	£200.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
General Surface Cleaner, washing up liquid, toilet cleaner, toilet paper	£5.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
A large towel and a small towel	£10.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
A chair or sofa	£150.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Wardrobe or clothes rail	£50.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Washing up bowl and brush	£3.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Two tea towels	£2.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Mop and bucket	£4.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Broom	£3.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Dust pan and brush	£2.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Knives and forks, spoons, plate, bowl, mug	£10.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Saucepans and basic kitchen spoon, sharp knife, tin opener set	£20.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Light bulbs and basic shades	£30.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Total	£992.00	<input type="text"/>			

Item	cost	Actual Cost of items	Where am I getting this item?	Phone Number and delivery details	Other information
Television and licence for one year	£250.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Basic Washing Machine	£190.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Microwave	£35.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Broadband connection for one year	£168.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Curtains	£200.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Cushions	£20.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Coffee table	£20.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Carpets	£300.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
MP3 and speakers	£100.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Computer (laptop)	£400.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Pictures or posters	£40.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Toaster	£5.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Kettle	£5.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Hair straighteners	£25.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Hair dryer	£10.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Games Console and games	£250.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sky TV for one year	£600.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Total	£2,618.00	<input type="text"/>			

The quantities of paint here are a rough guide only. Most decorating suppliers will exchange or refund unopened paint or wallpaper but there may be a time limit. Ask when you buy. How many coats of paint you need will depend on the condition of the walls but most walls and ceilings will require at least two coats.

Estimated Cost per room	Number of rooms	Total Estimate	Actual	Notes
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White Emulsion for ceilings, 5L per room	£10.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Magnolia for walls 5L per room	£10.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Turpentine substitute 1 per room	£2.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Brushes set	£10.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Large paint tray and roller	£2.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Small paint tray and roller	£2.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Paint tray and roller for gloss	£2.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sandpaper 1 Pack per room	£1.25	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Filler 1 box for 2 rooms	£3.20	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extension pole	£5.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Masking tape 2 rolls per room	£5.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Washing up liquid	£1.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Cloths	£1.50	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Dust sheets 4 per room	£4.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Wallpaper (3 drops per roll)	£50.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Wall paper paste	£3.75	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Paste Brush	£4.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Paste bucket	£2.50	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sponge	£1.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Paste Table	£10.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Total	£130.20	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Money for moving home from two weeks before move to four weeks after.

Savings	
Income each week (benefit or wages) x6	
Gifts from family	
Loan or grant from benefits	
Other income	
Social Services (care leavers only)	
Other income	
Total	

Moving home costs two weeks before move

Order/organise bed and mattress	
Curtains (bedroom and lounge minimum)	
broom	
mop and bucket	
cloths	
multi purpose cleaner	
crockery	
cutlery	
bedding	
chair or sofa	
TV and/or computer	
Pots and pans	
kettle	
cooker or microwave or hot plate	
Total	

Moving costs on the day

Transport of belongings	
Take away or convenience food	
Pre-payment gas/electric	
Taxi or bus fares or petrol	
Phone credit	
First grocery shop	
Total	

Moving costs first four weeks of tenancy

Decorating (see decorating budget)	
Electrician or gas fitter to fit cooker	
First bills (see weekly/monthly budget)	
TV licence	
Regular weekly costs (see weekly budget)	
Total	
Grand total in	
Grand total out	
Balance	

Four weeks before Notes Done?

Give notice to current landlord

During two weeks before moving Notes Notes

Order bed and mattress

Get a cooker, microwave or hob

Cutlery and Crockery

Cleaning materials

Bedding

Chair or sofa

Organise moving stuff

Appointment to sign tenancy

Find people to help on the day

Make sure have enough cash flow for moving day

Get bus pass/order taxi/fill up car

Buy and pack basic groceries,

Buy cleaning products and equipment

Light bulbs

Arrange child/pet care if needed

Talk to parent/guardian or current landlord about moving day

Pack all belongings

Clean current room or flat

Moving day Notes Notes

Kids/pets to carer

Pay first week/month rent

Collect keys

One set of keys to person moving stuff

People at home loading stuff

People at new property unloading

Spotter on pavement to stop stuff being nicked from van

Final look round /sweep of empty room/flat

Put out rubbish/lock up

Return keys to old flat or house if rented and get receipt

Put in lightbulbs

Get gas and/or electric credit

Quick lunch and drink

Clean and unpack kitchen

Put out rubbish

Make up bed(s)

Collect kids/pets

Take away

Bed

During four weeks after moving in Notes Notes

Clean flat starting with bathroom and kitchen

Unpack

Buy carpets, curtains, furniture as per budget

Decorate as per decorating plan

Fit carpets and curtains

Pay rent when due

Set up payment for regular bills as below

water

Gas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electric	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV, phone, internet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV licence	<input type="checkbox"/>
rent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change address for the following (failing to do this will prevent you getting credit or services).	<input type="checkbox"/>
College	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bank	<input type="checkbox"/>
Passport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electoral register	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit and store cards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anyone to whom you regularly pay money	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driving licence	<input type="checkbox"/>

Here you can keep the details of people who are going to support you in your new home. This might be a large number of people or just a few. By keeping the details here you can have their numbers handy when you need them. You should also talk to them before you move home about what of help you hope that they can give to you. If you move into a Dudley MBC property they will look at this page to make sure that you have the kind of support you need to live independently. If you need some more support this will not stop you from having a Council House provided you are willing to be referred for extra help.

Every day advice and help	Name	What is this person really good at?	What have I said to them about helping me in my new home?
Professional Support (eg support worker, connexions, social worker, CPN)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Good with practical things like decorating and cleaning	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Help with forms, money, bills	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Good support for when I am upset	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Would drop everything to help me	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Doctor	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Next of kin	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other important people	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>