



Finding the right home for you

Housing options
information guide



HILLINGDON
LONDON

www.hillingdon.gov.uk/housing



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We can support you to maintain or find housing

We can assist you if you are experiencing homelessness, or are at risk of becoming homeless. We will work in partnership with you and any other relevant support workers to find a housing solution.

What you can expect from us

Our number one priority is to help you remain in your home and prevent you from becoming homeless.

If this is not possible, we will support you to find housing through a number of options which are explained in this document.

You can expect a professional, expert service which is delivered in a supportive way.

What we expect from you

Finding a housing option which works for you will require effort from both us and yourself.

While we will support you in every way we can, we also expect you to undertake certain tasks and engage with the process. We will work as a team.

This guide is a good place to begin finding out about the process and what you can do independently.

Who we work with

We work with lots of local organisations and services who can also support you through this journey. They include:

- charities that provide a range of housing and homelessness support, such as Trinity, Thames Reach and P3
- council services, such as social services, mental health teams and probation services.

We can refer you to partner organisations and services if you need their support.



The process we will work through together

- 1 Make a homelessness application on Jigsaw 
- 2 Speak with your housing officer 
- 3 Discuss your housing needs and affordability 
- 4 Develop your Personal Housing Plan (PHP) 
- 5 Explore suitable housing options 
- 6 Find and agree housing option 
- 7 Move in 

Preventing you from becoming homeless

When you let us know that you are at risk of becoming homeless, our first priority is to prevent this from happening.

There are lots of things both you and the housing service can do to try and prevent homelessness. Your housing officer will help you to understand these options, and you will agree a plan (PHP).

To help prevent homelessness, your housing officer will:

- give support and advice about all aspects of housing
- help you to negotiate with your landlord, friends and family to help you to stay in your home
- assist you to negotiate rent costs to make them affordable
- help you to get financial support such as benefits, allowances, deposit and rent in advance
- help you to find an alternative place to live.

As a person at risk of becoming homeless, I can try and prevent this by:

- getting advice as soon as possible
- finding out what my rights are to stay in my home and the exact date which I expect to become homeless
- applying for any housing benefits and Universal Credit that I am eligible for
- getting help to improve the condition of my home
- contacting my landlord, friends and family to negotiate remaining in my home.



Organisations which can give advice to help to prevent you becoming homeless:

- Shelter is a charity that can help you with many aspects of housing, including private renting, eviction, benefits and repairs.
- Citizens Advice can give you a range of advice about housing and homelessness, including making a homelessness assistance application with the council.

Turn to page 16 for contact details.

Are you already homeless?

If you have nowhere for yourself and your family to sleep tonight, or you are in danger, please turn to page 14 for advice.

Housing options: Finding the right solution for you

There are lots of housing options which you can consider:

Private rented sector

Most people successfully rent in the private rented sector. You can search online for the exact area you want and arrange viewings directly with letting agents.

Shared living

Shared living allows single people to live with others in managed houses across the borough. We have options available through Trinity and the YMCA.

Building towards home ownership

There are several ways you can work towards buying your own home, including Rent to Buy and Shared Ownership.

Social housing via Locata

Social housing in London is very limited and it is likely to go to those households with the highest needs. If you are eligible for social housing you can apply online. Once you are on the housing register, you may face a considerable wait for a property.

Affordable private rented accommodation is your most likely route to housing. It has many advantages, including:

- a wide choice of properties
- financial support to help you
- negotiable tenancy lengths, giving flexibility

How do I find private rented housing?

You should proactively search for your own properties:

- online, via websites such as Rightmove, Zoopla and SpareRoom.com
- via estate agents and landlords – your housing officer can advise which ones often work with people experiencing homelessness.



When speaking to estate agents and landlords, you may need to make sure that they accept tenants who are in receipt of benefits.

Shelter has lots of useful information about finding a house in the private rented sector, including help with finding landlords, upfront costs of renting, getting help with paying rent and your responsibilities as a tenant.

What support is available for private rented housing?

We offer advice on all aspects of renting, including helping you to find and speak to landlords and assisting with negotiations.

If you find your own privately rented property, we may be able to assist in funding a deposit, rent in advance and presenting incentives to the landlord to offer the tenancy.

You should also research what housing benefit you are entitled to by:

- searching for your Local Housing Allowance rates
- checking if you are eligible and applying for Discretionary Housing Payment.

For more information visit  www.hillingdon.gov.uk/find-your-own-home or speak to your housing officer.

Your housing officer will talk you through these options and offer advice on which is best for you. This will be documented in your PHP.

Your Personal Housing Plan (PHP)

You and your housing officer will develop a PHP once you have made a homeless application via Jigsaw. They will contact you and find a time to do this. This is personal to you and focuses on helping you to find and stay in suitable, safe, affordable housing.

Your PHP will contain information about:

- your housing officer and how to contact them
- the outcome of the homelessness assessment
- the things you need to do to help you to stay in your home or find somewhere else to live
- the things your housing officer will do to support you
- places to go to get extra advice and support.

You can access your PHP via the Jigsaw portal  live.housingjigsaw.co.uk.





Using your PHP

Your PHP is your personal plan to help you to find and stay in a home for at least the next six months. It describes the steps you and your housing officer need to take to achieve this.

You should use your PHP to guide you through finding and remaining in a home. You should refer to it when speaking with friends, family, landlords and your support network.

You should keep your PHP updated with any changes to your circumstances or progress towards finding accommodation.

It is really important that you keep to the planned actions and let your housing officer know if you are struggling to do this so they can help. Failure to do this could result in support being ended if it is felt you are unreasonably refusing to comply.

Moving into your new home

We recognise that moving into a new home is a busy and sometimes stressful time. The key tasks checklist can help you to navigate this and make it a smooth transition.

Key things to remember when moving home

- Ensure you and your current landlord both know your moving date and, if appropriate, that you have given your notice.
- Ensure all paperwork for your new home is completed, and your new landlord is aware of your move in date.
- Contact your utility suppliers to inform them that you're moving. You may be able to move them with you to your new home.
- Provide an updated address to key people and organisations, including:
 - Friends and family
 - Your work
 - Your bank, insurance, pension and credit cards
 - The council
 - TV Licensing
 - Doctor and dentist
 - DVLA
 - National Insurance/DSS office
- Make a plan for moving day, including how you will move large items of furniture if necessary.
- Take a final electricity and/or gas meter reading before you leave.



More hints and tips for moving

- There are certain legal requirements your landlord needs to meet, such as gas safety and licensing. Speak to your housing officer to help you understand whether these requirements have been met in your home.
- If you need affordable furniture or items for your home, try local charity shops such as Oxfam, Cancer Research and Trinity Furniture Store.
- Find out about the support and services available in your area, such as GPs, health visitors or food banks.
- Check and update your benefits and allowances to make sure you're getting the right amount. Speak to your housing officer if you need help to update your details.
- If you need something repaired in your home, contact your landlord. If repairs are not done by your landlord, visit  www.hillingdon.gov.uk/landlord-repairs to find who to contact to get help.
- Get quotes from removal companies to find the most affordable option. The housing service may also be able to offer you support.
- If you have any concerns about moving, ask your housing officer who can offer help and advice.

Homelessness emergency and domestic abuse

Have you become homeless today?

We understand that circumstances can change quickly and you can find yourself in an emergency situation where you have nowhere for yourself and your family to sleep tonight, or you are in danger.

If you become homeless unexpectedly or faster than anticipated:

- complete the housing advice self assessment
 www.hillingdon.gov.uk/homeless to see if you are eligible for homelessness assistance. If you are eligible, you should complete a homelessness application on Jigsaw. If you have no internet access, call us on  01895 556666.
- in an emergency you can contact the council by either:
 - coming into the Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW
or
 - calling us on  01895 250111 (outside of office hours).

You can do this without an appointment or filling in any forms if you need to.

If you are not eligible for homelessness assistance, the council is likely to only be able to give you advice.

Domestic abuse

Domestic violence or abuse can happen to anyone. It includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse in couple relationships or between family members.

You do not have to wait for an emergency situation to find help. If domestic abuse is happening to you, it's important to tell someone and remember you're not alone. You can call:

-  999 if it is an emergency
-  101 if it is not an emergency



- Refuge - the Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline, on  0808 2000 247 (available 24/7)
- your housing officer
- your GP
- your landlord, if you are a social tenant

You can also find advice and support on our website, the NHS website and charities such as Women's Aid, Respect, Galop and Hestia. See page 16 for details.

Useful websites

Housing Jigsaw

 live.housingjigsaw.co.uk

Hillingdon Council

Housing service

 www.hillingdon.gov.uk/housing

Housing benefits

 www.hillingdon.gov.uk/housing-benefits

Advice to find your own home in the private rented sector

 www.hillingdon.gov.uk/find-your-own-home

Supported living

 www.hillingdon.gov.uk/supportedliving

Home ownership

 www.hillingdon.gov.uk/cash-incentive-scheme

Apply for social housing

 www.hillingdon.gov.uk/social-housing

Social housing via Locata

 www.hillingdon.gov.uk/social-housing

Housing advice

 www.hillingdon.gov.uk/housing-advice

Organisations offering housing and homelessness advice

Citizens Advice

 www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/homelessness

Entitled to

 www.entitledto.co.uk

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Calculator

 lha-direct.voa.gov.uk

P3

 www.p3charity.org/

Shelter

 england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness

Trinity

 www.wearetrinity.org.uk

Thames Reach

 thamesreach.org.uk/

Domestic abuse advice

Galop

 galop.org.uk/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse

Hestia

 www.hestia.org

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

 www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
 0808 2000 247 (Freephone)

NHS Domestic Violence Help

 www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-help-for-domestic-violence

Respect

 mensadvice.org.uk

Women's Aid

 www.womensaid.org.uk