

## Factsheet for homeseekers

This factsheet is for you if you are currently seeking a home. Whether you are a first time renter or buyer, or planning for your retirement, this factsheet lists various options for you to explore. Separate leaflets and factsheets are available giving more detail on some of these options, so please ask for any that may be of interest to you.

The options available to you will partly depend upon the reason why you are seeking a new home. For example

- You may be lodging with friends or family and need to move because of arguments or overcrowding
- You may be in temporary accommodation such as a hostel or refuge and feel it is time to move on
- You may be homeless, sleeping rough or “sofa-surfing”
- You may be leaving care, prison, the Armed Forces or tied accommodation, and not have anywhere to go

The other factors that will influence which option you choose are

- Where you want to live and the type of accommodation you need
- The length of time you may have to wait for council housing (depending how much priority you will have on the waiting list)
- Whether there is other housing available that might be more suitable for you
- Your financial and personal circumstances, now and in the future
- Whether there is any way we can help you to stay in your present home

For specialist advice on any of the options listed, please use the contact numbers given overleaf. For general information please contact 0300 555 2345.

**If you are already homeless or due to lose your home within the next 28 days, you should visit or telephone Dudley Council Plus in Castle Street, and ask to be referred to the Homelessness Prevention and Response Team.**

### Useful contact numbers

Housing options advice	0300 555 2345
Housing benefit enquiries	0300 555 8100
CAB general advice	01384 816222

## **Housing options for home seekers include:**

### **Staying Put/Home Security Initiative**

If you have suffered domestic abuse or hate crime you may be able to get assistance to improve security in your home. This can range from extra locks on doors and windows to creating a safe room within the property, and the service always includes support from a specialist worker. If your home has been burgled then you may benefit from home security improvements, crime prevention advice and the help of the victim support service. **Contact number: 0300 555 2345.**

### **Mediation**

If you are having problems with your family or anyone else you live with, then independent mediation can often help in reaching an agreement acceptable to all parties. **Contact number: 01384 812245.** Serious disputes may call for intervention by a solicitor or the police or the Council's Anti Social Behaviour Team.

### **Home ownership**

If you are able to save for a deposit you may be able to apply for a mortgage and buy a home on the open market. There are also government funded special schemes to help first time buyers, and you can find out about these on [www.helptobuymidlands.co.uk](http://www.helptobuymidlands.co.uk) or contacting the local Help to Buy agent on 0345 850 2050. Whichever home ownership option you choose, you will need to be able to obtain a mortgage and think carefully about whether you can afford the repayments, both now and in the future if your circumstances change. **Contact number: 0300 555 2345.**

### **Renting a property**

You may wish to apply to the council and/or a housing association. Your application will be assessed, and your options will depend on how much priority you have and how many homes are available. If you are ready to move on from a hostel or supported housing scheme, you will usually have high priority. Most available homes are advertised each week on [www.dudleyathome.org.uk](http://www.dudleyathome.org.uk) and our website also has information on low cost home ownership. Alternatively you may wish to consider renting privately. This may be a quicker option than waiting for a council property and you will be able to choose from many high quality properties and may also qualify for Local Housing Allowance to help you with housing costs. **Contact number: 0300 555 2345.**

### **Adaptations to your home**

If you need to adapt your home to help you live with a disability, you are likely to need an occupational therapy assessment. Minor adaptations can be completed quite quickly. Major adaptations such as lifts and ramps may be able to be fitted to your home subject to an assessment. If for any reason your property cannot be adapted, then we would advise you on other housing options. There are also other support and advice services available for people with disabilities. **Contact number: 0300 555 2345.**

### **Sheltered and supported housing**

If you cannot live alone, you may wish to consider the option of sheltered or supported housing. There are a number of sheltered housing schemes for older people, where you would live in your own flat but be able to meet other older people and have support at hand when you need it. Supported housing is also available for people with specific support needs, especially for young people who cannot live at home, and for people with (for example) mental health needs or learning disabilities. Supported housing also includes refuges for single people and families following domestic abuse. **Contact number: 0300 555 2345.**

### **Flat share/lodging**

If you are just about to move out of your family home for the first time then flat sharing or renting a room is an option for you. It is more affordable as all costs are split and is a great steppingstone towards independent living. There are factors to consider such as how the costs are split fairly and you should think carefully about who you will be living with. You may be able to claim Local Housing Allowance.

**If you want more information on any of these options please contact us on 0300 555 2345**

**If you currently have nowhere to live then please contact the Homeless Prevention and Response Team at Dudley Council Plus.**