

Finding Somewhere to Live

Information for single people
and couples with a positive
decision on their asylum claim



Finding Somewhere to Live

It is important that you read this information carefully

Do not rely on information you may have heard from other people's past experiences. There is currently a national housing crisis which means that there is a shortage of accommodation.

Most single people and couples who get a positive decision on their asylum claim may need to stay with friends whilst they work towards getting a property in a shared house with a private landlord.

The Refugee Integration Service (RIS) is available for advice and support and can be contacted;

- by email at refugeesupport@hullcc.gov.uk
- by phone 01482 614265 or
- Or you can speak with one of the team at the weekly drop-in session held every Thursday at Open Door Project, Methodist Church, 91 Princes Avenue, Hull, HU5 3QP from 10.00am to 12:30pm (subject to staff availability)

1. Staying with friends or family.

You will only have 28 days to find accommodation and that will be very difficult.

If you know someone or have family or friends who can let you stay with them (subject to the landlord's approval if they rent their home) until you are able to find and pay for your own place to live that would be your best option.

More information about moving in with friends or family can be found at

<https://hull.adviceaid.uk/advice/preventing-homelessness-by-moving-in-with-friends-or-family>

2. Private Renting

Renting from a private landlord can be the fastest way to get a new home. If you are a single person, the most affordable option is in shared accommodation where you would have your own room but the kitchen and bathroom are shared with other tenants. This is a normal and usual property type in the UK.

Most private rented homes are already decorated and have carpets and many are furnished.

How to find a private rented home:

Landlords and letting agents advertise homes online on many websites. Here are some popular ones. Some of them have homes for sale and rent, so make sure you click on 'rent' or 'for rent' when searching:

- www.onthemarket.com
- www.rightmove.co.uk



- www.zoopla.co.uk
- www.findaflat.com
- www.spareroom.co.uk
- www.primelocation.com/to-rent/

Other ways to find a private rented home:

- Estate Agents often advertise rooms/properties in the windows of their shops
- Some landlords and people looking for people to share accommodation with advertise in places like shops, Community Centres, libraries and newsagents.
- Local newspapers/magazines often have sections with adverts for rental homes and shared flats
- Personal contacts - friends/family/work colleagues may know of any homes available for rent.
- Community Groups/faith groups may have information about local housing options and landlords.

The RIS may be able to help you offer guidance on how to search for properties.

Hints and tips

- Keep trying - Finding somewhere to rent takes a lot of time. There are lots of people looking for places to live.
- Check websites every day - Homes are added to websites regularly, so it is a good idea to check the above websites every day to make sure you do not miss any
- Viewing a property:
 - Don't agree to rent a property until you've seen it and have worked out that you can afford it.
 - Take someone with you a second opinion if you can.
 - Arrive to the viewing early.
 - Be polite, ask questions about any issues instead of making demands. Show that you're interested.
- Landlords and letting agents will want to see:
 - Photo ID like a passport or driving license.
 - Proof you have the right to rent.
 - Proof of any benefits you receive
 - Recent bank statements and/or pay slips or your accounts if you are self-employed.

Rent Guarantor

You might need a guarantor if you have not rented before. A guarantor is someone who agrees to pay the rent if you do not and they will be responsible to pay all the rent if you can't or don't pay it.

If you do not have someone that can act as a guarantor, please ask the RIS team if they can help you to negotiate with the landlord but be aware that the Hull City Council cannot act as guarantor.



References

You will need to provide references to show you can afford the rent and be a good tenant. Usually, you will need a reference from:

- Your current and previous landlords.
- Your employer to show you have a job and that it will continue.

If you do not have a job, then you may be able to get a reference of good character from someone who knows you well, like a support worker you know. Your RIS caseworker may be able to provide further advice about this but will not be able to provide you with a reference.

Affordability

You need to be sure that you have enough money to pay your rent, bills and other living expenses.

Landlords will want proof that you can afford the rent and may ask to see:

- Proof of any benefits you receive. You can ask the Job Centre/DWP for this proof, or
- Your employment contract, recent pay slips, or bank statements

As well as the rent you will have bills and other living expenses to pay. Even if some bills are included in your rent, any housing benefit you are entitled to will not cover gas, electricity and water and you will need to pay these yourself.

You also need to think about how much money you need for Council tax, food, travel, clothing, mobile phone, TV licence, and anything else you might need to pay for.

How much Housing Benefit may you be entitled to:

If you are claiming Universal Credit you can claim a housing element which will cover some but maybe not all of the rent. How much housing related benefit you get depends on the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and your personal income.

The LHA is the maximum amount of benefit you can get towards the rent. If the rent is higher than the LHA rate for the property you want this means you have to pay the shortfall yourself every month. The LHA rates are set each April and the current rates for single people are;

- shared accommodation rate - £335.83 monthly
- 1 bedroom accommodation rate - £380 monthly if you are aged 35 or £335.83 if you are under 35 years old.

More information about the LHA can be found at <https://www.hull.gov.uk/housing-benefit/local-housing-allowance>



Deposit

A bond or deposit is money the landlord asks for before you move in. This is usually returned to you at the end of your tenancy if you have looked after the property well and paid all your rent.

Can I get help with a deposit?

If you are at risk of homelessness and need help with a deposit you must have an assessment with the Homelessness Prevention & Options Team so they can understand your needs and help you to find a home that is suitable and affordable. Your RIS caseworker can make a referral to that team for you. Each bond request is reviewed individually, as each person's situation is different. The council cannot help if you have already moved into the property so talk to RIS as early as possible.

Tenancy Agreement

You will need to sign a Tenancy Agreement. This is provided by your new landlord and explains the rights and responsibilities of both you and your landlord. You must follow the conditions of your tenancy agreement so that you do not put your tenancy at risk (i.e. risk the landlord evicting you) and also to ensure you get your deposit back at the end of your tenancy.

More information about Private rented Accommodation can be found at <https://hull.adviceaid.uk/advice/preventing-homelessness-by-moving-to-private-rented-accommod>

Social Housing

Social housing is housing owned and managed the council or a registered social landlord. These properties are scarce - there are not enough properties for everyone who wants one.

Even if you have a high priority on the Council's housing list, it could take several years before you are offered a property, and many applicants will never be offered a property. A property in the private rented sector is a more realistic option for most people.

More information about Social Housing can be found at <https://hull.adviceaid.uk/advice/preventing-homelessness-by-moving-to-social-housing>



