



Newham London

Your housing options explained

Our approach to providing settled homes

The Housing Options Centre (HOC) offers advice and assistance to help prevent you from losing your home or, where this is not possible, by helping you to find other accommodation.

If you are in danger of losing your home, please visit any Local Service Centre (LSC) in Newham. They will arrange an appointment for you to have an initial interview and identify what services you maybe entitled to.

You will be interviewed by a homeless prevention officer who will assess your housing need and provide advice or assistance. Where you have been asked to leave your accommodation by friends or relatives a homeless visiting officer will carry out a visit to your home. They will be able to give advice on your housing situation and also discuss the eligibility criteria for the various schemes outlined in this leaflet.

In Newham the demand for social housing is high and our housing waiting lists are growing every day.

At present, there are thousands of households on the housing waiting list. We are working very hard to ensure there is more housing available, but at the moment there are simply not enough council and housing association properties to go around.

The following table shows on average the waiting time for council and housing association properties:

	bedsit	1 bedrooms	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms
Houses and Bungalows	none let	none let	9 years 10 months	11 years and 11 months	14 years 7 months
Ground floor flats & maisonettes	8 years 2 months	8 years 10 months	9 years	11 years 8 months	10 Years 5 months*
1st to 3rd floor flats & maisonettes	6 years 10 months	8 years 4 months	8 years	9 years 11 months	14 Years 3 months
4th and above flats & maisonettes	none let	7 years 1 month	7 years 5 months	8 years 7 months	14 Years 1 month

*There was only one 4 bedroom ground floor flat available last year and as such the average waiting time may well be misleading. There were also 5 bedroom houses available last year with an average waiting time of 13 years 8 months.

We can offer advice and assistance on a range of options available to resolve your housing problem more quickly. These are:

Housing advice

Some examples of the advice we offer to private sector tenants:

- housing benefit - how to make a claim, information on your Local Housing Allowance (LHA) so you know if you can afford the rent before you move in, problems with housing benefit shortfall or breaks in your claim
- debt advice - including rent and mortgage arrears
- welfare benefits – what you could be entitled to and how to apply
- problems with your landlord – for example, harassment or threats to evict you unlawfully. We can negotiate with your landlord to resolve your tenancy issues and help you to stay in your home
- private tenants – we can offer you advice regarding your tenancy for example, if you are experiencing problems with disrepair issues.

Sanctuary scheme

Domestic violence is a crime and we are committed to supporting people so they do not suffer in silence. If you have suffered domestic violence we can provide confidential help and advice. This may include assistance with injunctions, taking further legal action against the perpetrator or nominating you for the Sanctuary scheme.

The Sanctuary scheme can help to fit your home with additional security measures for you to remain in safety. This can include installing secure locks, grilles, new doors and alarms.

Mediation and family reconciliation

We use mediation and reconciliation to support families resolve conflicts and live amicably together. We aim to stop family members from having to leave the family home because relationships have broken down. We will visit you at home and talk to you about the issues. We may also refer you on to specialist support from trained mediators. The objective is to help family members seek joint solutions to the problems they are experiencing. This service is free to our clients who approach HOC for advice or assistance.

What if I cannot remain in my current home?

If we cannot help you to remain in your home, we will offer you a range of other options and advice. For example, if you want to rent a property in the private sector or if you are working and want to know how you could afford to buy a property. We can also tell you about ways you could move to other parts of the country, if you wish to move from Newham or London.

Private sector options

Private sector scheme

Moving into the private rental sector can be expensive but the HOC may be able to assist you through our private sector scheme using bonds instead of actual money for deposits.

The bond is a legally binding agreement that is given to the landlord in place of a deposit and is the equivalent of up to four weeks rent. We already have some properties from accredited landlords waiting to be viewed at the HOC so we maybe able to arrange viewings of private rented properties within a short period of time. Alternatively, you can find your own accommodation and we can negotiate the bond with the landlord on your behalf.

Not everyone is eligible for the Bond scheme – the HOC can advise you if you meet the criteria.

Moving out of London

HOC can offer you advice on moving out of London, where you are able to find accommodation in other parts of the country.

Schemes for people in employment

If you are working, you may think you cannot afford to get onto the property ladder. However, we may be able to help you through one of the following schemes:

Shared ownership schemes

Shared ownership can help people who cannot afford full ownership of a property to own a share of their own property. The purchaser buys a share of a property by a mortgage and pays rent on the remaining share they do not buy. The Housing Association retains ownership of the remaining part. The purchaser may continue to buy more shares leading to full ownership.

Anyone can apply for a shared ownership scheme, but priority will often be given to people registered with East London Lettings Company's waiting list.

HomeBuy scheme

HomeBuy is a scheme that aims to help council and housing association tenants in England buy a home. Tenants pay a certain percentage of the cost of the property and receive a contribution from the Housing Association for the remaining part which they keep ownership of. If the property is sold the remaining sum has to be repaid and is linked to the value of the property. So it will increase or decrease in line with changes in the value of your home.

Key workers scheme

This is a government funded scheme available to support the purchase of homes by key workers whose services are considered essential to the community they work in.

The scheme targets teachers, NHS professionals, police, probation officers, prison officers, social workers, local authority planning officers, occupational therapists, and educational psychologists.

For more information pick up our leaflet on low cost homeownership from your LSC or HOC.

NB: Not everyone will be eligible for the schemes but we will be able to advise you on what assistance we can offer you.

The benefits of our approach

We know that losing your home is an extremely stressful event. The advice and assistance we offer at the HOC could keep you in your current home, or failing that, help find you another.

If you do lose your home, the housing options we offer will put you in control of finding the property you want, in the area of your choice. If you were offered temporary accommodation by the council you would have limited choice of where you will live.

We can help you find suitable housing with landlords or agents who have properties available. We maybe able to give financial assistance to the landlord to ensure that you secure the property you want.

What do I do next?

If you are in danger of losing your home, please approach any of the LSCs in Newham and they will carry out an initial assessment to assess your housing needs. If you have a disability which affects your mobility we may be able to arrange a visit to your home to discuss the different options that may be suitable for you.

What happens if I am not eligible for any schemes?

Advice and information on finding private rented and hostel accommodation can be found at any of our LSCs or by calling [020 8430 2000](tel:02084302000).

Newham Local Service Centres

Beckton

1 Kingsford Way
Beckton E6 5JQ

Canning Town

3 Beckton Road
Canning Town E16 4DT

Docklands

4 Pier Parade
E16 2LJ

East Ham

330-354 Barking Road
East Ham E6 2RT

Forest Gate

4-20 Woodgrange Road
Forest Gate E7 0HQ

Green Street

403-405 Green Street
Upton Park E13 9AU

Manor Park

685-689 Romford Road
Manor Park E12 5AD

Stratford

112-118 The Grove
Stratford E15 1NS

Monday - Friday
9.00am - 5.00pm



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