



Housing Options in East Renfrewshire



Housing Services



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1. Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is part of a series designed to offer information and advice regarding housing options in East Renfrewshire. Other leaflets include:

- 'Private Renting in East Renfrewshire'
- 'Applying for Social Rented Housing in East Renfrewshire'
- 'Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness in East Renfrewshire'
- 'Low cost Home Ownership in East Renfrewshire'

While this leaflet offers advice and information on a range of housing options, the individual leaflets in this range provide more detail on the particular subject matter.

This leaflet is for anyone who is looking for a home – you may be having problems in your current property, you may have been asked to leave, or you may be looking for your first home.

The leaflet will:

- tell you what options are available to you in East Renfrewshire
- help you choose an option that is right for you

This leaflet lists the options available to you – some may suit you more than others. If you require further information, or if you want to discuss anything regarding your housing options, we can help.

2. Finding a home in East Renfrewshire

East Renfrewshire is a popular place to live. Many people are competing for a limited number of homes, especially in the Eastwood part of the authority which includes Giffnock, Thornliebank, Newton Mearns, Busby/Netherlee and Eaglesham.

High demand has an impact on the costs of both renting and buying. Private rents are at a level that many people find difficult to afford and private landlords can be particular about who they rent to, often asking for a deposit, rent in advance and references.

Both the council and housing associations are facing increasing demands for help and as demand rises, waiting lists get longer. As a result, it could be a long time before you are offered a tenancy. The council works with housing associations to provide as many new homes as possible, but this is unlikely to meet the growing demand.

3. Housing Options Approach

East Renfrewshire Council has adopted a **Housing Options Approach**. This starts with offering **effective, relevant housing advice** when someone approaches us with a housing problem. This means us looking in detail at your housing options and choices. Our aim is to offer advice and assistance **at an early stage** and to explore **all possible tenure options** with you, including council housing, housing association housing and the private rented sector.

This booklet lists the current options available to you and, where appropriate, gives you contacts for people or agencies that may be able to help you.

You may be able to decide which option is best for you, or you may wish to get advice from someone else. You may already know someone you could talk to, or you may want to discuss your situation in detail with a professional advisor.

The advice we offer can also cover personal circumstances which may not necessarily be housing related, such as **debt advice, mediation and money advice**. We aim to work together with other services such as employability, health, money advice and family mediation services from an early stage to assist you with issues which might result in a housing crisis.

The Council will give you any help it can to sort out your housing needs. If you contact our **Housing Advice Team** on **0141 577 3001**, we will do all we can to help you find the housing option that is right for you.

4. Is moving going to help?

Before you think about moving, you should consider if a move will actually benefit your circumstances. If your reason for wanting to move is related to a problem in or around your current home, it may be an issue that could be resolved with some advice or help. In some cases it is not possible to stay in your current home. For example, you should seek urgent advice if you feel unsafe in your current home.

Whatever the problem, it is important to get good advice early before the problem has got so difficult that there is little that can be done.

Difficulty paying your rent or mortgage

What we can do will depend on the reasons for your financial difficulty. You may have lost your job, or suffered another loss of income. You may be having problems with your benefits. We will discuss this with you, offer advice, and where appropriate refer you to specialist debt advisors. The aim is to maximise your income and address your debts to reduce the prospects of you losing your home.

We have our own **Money Advice & Rights Team** which can offer assistance: When you make contact, we will discuss your needs and arrange to meet you within 20 working days. We will discuss your debts and work out your income and expenditure commitments. All information provided is confidential and will not be passed to a third party unless you give us permission to do so. We will provide you with various options to tackle your debts including repayment plans, bankruptcy, trust deeds and income maximisation. Once you decide on which option, we will contact all your creditors on your behalf. This means that creditors should now

contact the money advice staff regarding your debts and you should receive fewer reminders.

You can contact the council's **Money Advice & Rights Team (MART)** in the following ways:

You can use the **Freephone** telephone number **0800 052 1023**

Or you can **Freetext 'money'** followed by your name to **80800**,
or email

mart@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

In addition to the council's **Money Advice & Rights Team**, there are also independent sources of advice and information available

East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau, 216 Main Street, Barrhead G78 1SN (0141 881 2032) or the Money Advice Service (0800 138 7777) both offer free, independent, specialist debt advice whether or not you are on benefits.

Find out from the Council if you qualify for Housing Benefit.

Housing Benefit helps you pay your rent if you are on a low income. You may qualify even if you are working and reasonably well paid. The amount of housing benefit due to you is worked out by looking at:

- How much money you have coming in.
- Your personal circumstances and the amount of rent you have to pay.
- The amount of savings you have (more than £16,000 will normally disqualify you).

You can find out more about your benefit entitlement including a free online benefit calculator at:

<http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/benefitsadvice>

- If your landlord wants you to leave because you're late paying the rent or you're having difficulty with Housing Benefit, contact the **Housing Advice Team** and we might be able to help sort out your Housing Benefit and talk to your landlord on your behalf.
- If you are receiving Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance you can claim help with your mortgage payments from the Benefits Agency
- Paying your mortgage – there may be some things you can do to reduce payments or increase your income
- Think of taking in a lodger to earn some extra income or even give you company. There are generous tax allowances if you do.

5. Difficulty coping in your home

If you have difficulty managing around the home, or sorting out your benefits and bills etc. there may be support available that could help you. Please check with the **Housing Advice Team** on **0141 577 3001** for more information on what support might be available.

- If you are physically disabled and are experiencing difficulty managing everyday activities within your home, you can contact the **Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) (0141 577 3777)** to be referred to an Occupational Therapist. The CHCP can also carry out a free assessment of your needs if you believe you need help and personal care.
- Our **Private Sector Housing Team** works with the council's Occupational Therapy Service to determine if elderly or disabled clients are eligible for Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) for major adaptations. Where alterations or adaptations to your home have been recommended by an Occupational Therapist, contact the

Private Sector Housing Team on **0141 577 3573** for information on grants and other assistance available. Where applicable, common examples of grant eligible works include: Level Access Showers, Wet Floor Shower Areas, Ramps and Closomats.

Our Private Sector Housing Team also provides a range of information and advice **targeted specifically at disabled and older persons**. The range of advice and information available includes:

Housing Options Advice

- We can provide information about the range of options available to assist with moving house, including house purchase, private renting, council/housing association renting, shared ownership/equity schemes.

Funding Information

- Although we are unable to provide financial assessments or financial advice, we can assist with referrals to private sector housing grant assistance, income maximisation or money advice services.

Practical Assistance

- We can provide tailor-made assistance in finding alternative housing; including property searches, assistance with completing housing application forms, and discussions with housing developers.

Referral Service

We can make referrals to other services such as Care and Repair Renfrewshire for technical advice/assistance relating to an adaptation, or assess feasibility in accessing their small repairs/handyman services.

Private Sector Housing Team
0141 577 3589
privatesectorhousing@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

If you are having difficulty affording repairs or are thinking of doing home improvements, get advice from the **Citizens Advice Bureau (0141 881 2032)**, the **Money Advice Service (0800 138 7777)**, or our own **Money Advice & Rights Team (0800 052 1023)** before taking out another loan which you may not be able to afford.

You may also be able to access help from **Care and Repair Renfrewshire** who offer small repairs and handyman services to assist older and disabled people with minor repairs and other jobs around the home. They can be contacted on **0141 812 4111**. Our Private Sector Housing Team can also contact Care and Repair Renfrewshire on your behalf. You can contact the Private Sector Housing Team on 0141 577 3589.

If you feel unsafe in your home, contact your local Police Station and ask for a visit from the **Crime Prevention Officer** for advice about home security. You can contact your local Police office by dialling **101**.

If you feel you are at risk of falling in your home, or you need reassurance that you will be able to contact someone if you are in need of assistance, the Council operates an alarm system called **Telecare**. The Telecare system is a service to enable you to live safely and independently in your own home. It provides a link from your home to the Council's 24 hour response centre called **Safety Net**. The alarm enables you to summon help in any emergency at the touch of a button.

If you would like to apply for Telecare you can ask your social worker or district nurse to refer you. They will assess your needs and make a referral to the Telecare Service. You can also apply direct by contacting the Council's Health & Social Care Partnership on 0141 577 3777

6. Neighbour problems or Anti-social Behaviour

If you are a council tenant and you are having problems with your neighbour or require advice in relation to your tenancy please do not hesitate to contact your **Housing Officer** for advice. **(0141 577 3001)**

To report noisy neighbours; loud music and neighbourhood disputes contact the **Ring and Report** Anti-Social Behaviour Hotline **(0800 013 0076)**

If you are a housing association tenant and you are having problems with your neighbour or require advice in relation to your tenancy please contact your landlord for advice.

Tenancy Enforcement Officers

East Renfrewshire Council have two **Tenancy Enforcement Officers** based within Housing Services at the council offices in Barrhead. These officers work with council tenants, liaise with owners and **actively promote positive tenancy behaviour**.

The Tenancy Enforcement Officers support the council's community regeneration initiatives within housing estates by ensuring tenants comply with the terms of their tenancy agreements. The Tenancy Enforcement Officers are able to **resolve many situations**, but where a resolution proves to be impossible, the Tenancy Enforcement Officers will gather the evidence required by the council to **take anti-social tenants to court**. This may potentially result in the tenancies of anti-social tenants being brought to an end.

7. Renting privately

Renting privately can be expensive and landlords and lettings agents can decide who they wish to rent to. Properties are often available quickly, however, and are often located in areas of higher demand. If you are unsure about the process of renting privately, our **Housing Advisors** can help.

- If you are having difficulty raising a deposit, and you have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, we may be able to refer you to the **East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**, which operates the **Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme** in this area.

When looking for privately rented accommodation, a useful starting point is to check with local letting or estate agents. Some of the main letting agents offering properties in East Renfrewshire include:

Barrhead Property Centre	0141 880 7770
Brunswick Residential Letting Limited	0141 632 4229
Chattelle Estates Ltd	0141 638 5807
Clyde Property Ltd	0141 212 7033
Countrywide Residential Lettings	0141 432 1208
DJ Alexander Letting Ltd	0141 333 1345
Fineholm Letting Services Ltd	0141 221 7993
Infiniti Properties Management Ltd	0141 553 2677
Northwood Residential Lettings	0141 423 4433
Pennylane Homes	0141 887 6109
The Property Bureau	0141 943 1110
Your Move	0141 620 0000

There are also many websites which advertise properties to rent in East Renfrewshire. These include:

citylets.co.uk	lettingweb.com
nestoria.co.uk	your-move.co.uk
newsnow.co.uk	openrent.co.uk
primelocation.com	rightmove.co.uk
s1rental.com	zoopla.co.uk

Landlords sometimes contact us to ask if we know of anyone wanting to rent their property. It's always worth asking the **Housing Advice Team (0141 577 3001)** if they know of anything available.

East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) also operates a housing advice service, and has good links with the private landlords in the local area. Contact them at: East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau, 216 Main Street, Barrhead, G78 1SN or by telephone at **0141 881 2032**.

It is important to note that East Renfrewshire Council does not recommend any particular landlord or letting agency. This information represents a selection of registered private landlords or letting agencies with properties in East Renfrewshire.

No guarantees or recommendations are given by the Council regarding the landlords, letting agencies, or any properties offered thereby and the option of renting privately is undertaken entirely at your own risk.

Things to remember when renting privately

Prospective tenants should **always** look for the **Landlord's registration number** and **detail of Energy Performance Certificates** in any written adverts, as private landlords have a duty to provide this information. Always make sure you check this information.

Tenant Information Pack for the Private Rented Sector

The **Tenant Information Pack** provides important information to tenants who rent their homes privately. Since 1 May 2013, landlords have a legal duty to provide new tenants with this pack.

- The pack gives information to tenants in privately rented housing. It talks about your home, tenancy and landlord, and the responsibilities of you and your landlord.
- The pack is not part of your tenancy agreement but sets out important information that is relevant to you and your landlord. The pack contains a summary of legislation relevant to private tenants. Should you want more detailed legal information, or opinion, you should seek specialist advice.

You can view or download the Tenant Information Pack online at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/02/7185>

Cost of privately rented accommodation

- You may be entitled to claim Housing Benefit from the Council to help you with your rent even if you are working and on a reasonable wage – contact the council's **Housing Benefits Team (0141 577 3002)** for more information.
- In addition to a deposit, landlords may also ask for up to two months rent in advance

- We may also be able to help you with a deposit or the first month's rent in advance, or both – contact the **Council's Housing Advice Team (0141 577 3001)**.
- It may also be worth thinking about a house share with some friends. Not all landlords are keen on this but it's worth asking if they're willing to consider it. They may be happier if one of you takes full responsibility for collecting the rent.

Before you commit yourself to a private let, make sure you can afford the rent, or have confirmed what benefit you will receive. You will be committing yourself to renting from a private landlord for a specified period, usually between 6 and 12 months. Even if you change your mind, you will still be liable for the rent.

The **Private Sector Housing Team** (contact details on page 10) offers advice and assistance on a wide range of matters relating to private sector tenancies. This includes advice and information regarding private tenants' rights and private landlords' responsibilities if you live in privately rented accommodation.

If your landlord is failing to carry out necessary repairs to your private tenancy, the Private Sector Housing Team can advise you on the '**Repairing Standard**', which sets out the standards your tenancy must meet

The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) was formed to deal with determinations of rent or repair issues in private sector housing as well as assistance in exercising a landlord's right of entry. The Housing and Property Chamber also provides relatively informal and flexible proceedings to help resolve issues that arise between homeowners and property factors. The Housing and Property Chamber replaced The Private Rented Housing Panel (PRHP) and Homeowner

Housing Panel (HOHP), and it now incorporates the functions of these former Tribunals. **You can contact the First-tier Tribunal on 0141 302 5900**

8. Tied Accommodation

Employment that comes with its own Accommodation (tied accommodation)

Some jobs provide accommodation as part of the job. This is called **tied accommodation**. If you decide to get a job with tied accommodation, remember that if you lose your job you may also have to leave your home.

9. Low Cost Home Ownership schemes

While rising house prices can put buying a home out of reach for many people, there are sometimes schemes available that help some first-time buyers onto the housing ladder.

Low-cost home ownership schemes are usually based on purchase on a shared ownership basis (part rent, part buy) or a shared equity basis where equity finance helps to cover the total cost of the home in addition to a mortgage.

Existing social tenants and first time buyers are usually given priority on low-cost home ownership schemes. The Scottish Government has a Low-cost Initiative for First Time Buyers (LIFT) which brings together several ways to help households access home ownership. These include:

- the **New Supply Shared Equity scheme** to allow first time buyers to buy a new build property from a housing association
- the **Open Market Shared Equity scheme** to allow first time buyers to buy a second-hand property on a shared equity basis

You can find out more about the different options available through the Scottish Government's LIFT (Low-cost Initiative for First-time Buyers)

scheme at <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/homeowners/low-cost-initiative-for-first-time-buyers/>

The Scottish Government also operates the

Help to Buy (Scotland) scheme. If you want to buy a new build home but can't afford the total cost, you might be able to get help through the Help to Buy (Scotland) Affordable New Build scheme. The scheme is open to first time buyers and existing homeowners, and could help you with up to 15% of the purchase price of a new build home.

- Further details can be found in the Scottish Government's at <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/help-to-buy-information-for-buyers-leaflet/>

To enquire about new low cost home ownership developments in East Renfrewshire contact the **Housing Strategy Team on 0141 577 8404** or by e-mail at: strategy.housing@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk.

We also keep a **Register of Interest for Low Cost Home Ownership** so that we can keep people who are interested in this housing option, up to date with properties which are becoming available. If you are interested in this option, please ask the Housing Strategy Team about being added to the Register.

Some house builders also offer their own shared equity schemes in new housing developments - this will depend on the development, so you should contact house builders directly where you see a property you are interested in.

10. Applying for Council or Housing Association properties in East Renfrewshire

As mentioned previously, due to increasing demand, waiting lists for both Council and Housing Association properties are getting longer. As a result, it could be a long time before you are offered a tenancy.

Three social housing providers in East Renfrewshire form the East Renfrewshire Housing Register (ERHR): East Renfrewshire Council, Arklet Housing Association and Barrhead Housing Association. The three providers work together so that you only need to complete one application form, will be considered for housing by all three and can obtain housing options advice from any of them. **Each housing provider uses their own allocation policies to assess an applicant's circumstances and decide on priority for rehousing.**

Each of the partners provides a mix of sizes and types of homes in locations across East Renfrewshire. Most of these homes are to meet general housing needs but there are also homes suitable for older, disabled or other people with particular needs, for example sheltered, amenity and wheelchair accessible properties within the stock. You can download or request an application pack for housing from any of the 3 ERHR partners using the **contact details below:**



East Renfrewshire Council, 211 Main Street,
Barrhead. G78 1SY

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/housing>

Tel: 0141 577 3001

Email: customerfirst@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk



Barrhead Housing Association, 60-70 Main
Street, Barrhead G78 1SB.

<http://www.barrheadha.org.uk>

Tel: 0141 881 0638

Email: Enquiries@barrheadha.org



Arklet Housing Association Ltd, Barrland
Court, Barrland Drive, Giffnock, G46 7QD

<http://www.arklet.org.uk>

Tel: 0141 620 1890 Email: arklet@arklet.org.uk

This table shows the number of properties each of the ERHR landlords has in East Renfrewshire, broken down into general needs, properties for older people and amenity and wheelchair accessible properties

Registered Social Landlords (ERHR)	General needs	Sheltered	Amenity or wheelchair accessible* properties
Arklet Housing Association	79	54	60
Barrhead Housing Association	755	28	75 (19*)
East Renfrewshire Council	3004	246	0
Total	3838	328	154

Other Housing Associations

There are also a number of other housing associations who have homes for social rent in East Renfrewshire. These landlords have a range of sizes and types of properties, some catering for the elderly and those with disabilities.

To find out more about the homes they have in the local area, and to be considered for these you can use the contact details below.



Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association

Web: www.hsha.org.uk (Tel: 0141 553 6300)



Link Housing Association Ltd

Web: www.linkhousing.org.uk (Tel: 03451 400 100)



Horizon Housing Association

Web: www.horizonhousing.org (Tel: 0330 303 0089)



Trust Housing Association

Web: www.trustha.org.uk (Tel: 0131 444 1200)



Cube Housing Association (part of the Wheatley Group)

Web: www.cubehousing.co.uk/home

Tel: 0800 479 7979



Abbeyfield Scotland Ltd

Web: www.abbeyfield-scotland.com

(Tel: 01727 857536)

The table below shows the number of properties each housing association has in East Renfrewshire, broken down into general needs, sheltered/very sheltered and amenity & wheelchair accessible* properties

Registered Social Landlord (other RSL'S)	General needs	Sheltered	Amenity or wheelchair accessible*
Hanover Housing Association	1	71	0
Link Housing Association	66	0	4 (2*)
Horizon Housing Association	13	0	(4*)
Trust Housing Association	2	95	0
Cube Housing Association	14	25	0
Abbeyfield Scotland Ltd	8	8	0
Total	104	199	10

11. Moving home if you're already a Council or Housing Association tenant in East Renfrewshire

Apply for a transfer inside East Renfrewshire

- If you are already a council or a housing association tenant in East Renfrewshire you may apply for a transfer to another home in the area with the same or a different landlord.
- You will need to complete and submit a housing application form. Further details can be obtained from your landlord.
- **East Renfrewshire Council Allocations Team (0141 577 3001)**
- **Arklet Housing Association (0141 620 1890)**
- **Barrhead Housing Association (0141 881 0638)**

Contact details for other housing associations are as listed on page 21

Apply for a Mutual Exchange

- If you want to swap homes with another council or housing association tenant in East Renfrewshire, or anywhere in the country, you should contact your landlord to discuss this. Both tenants must have permission from their landlord before actually swapping homes. You may also wish to consider the **Homeswapper** scheme (details on page 24).

East Renfrewshire Council has also established a **Mutual Exchange Register**. If you are interested in a mutual exchange, please contact our Allocations staff on 0141 577 3001 and request a **mutual exchange report**. The report will identify any other housing applicants who have requested a mutual exchange and who are a potential match for you in terms of house size, property type and area. You may then contact the applicant(s) to

discuss a potential mutual exchange. **If you both agree and wish to proceed, both of you must then complete a mutual exchange application form.** Please note that if you proceed with any mutual exchange that you accept the property in its present condition and the Council will only carry out safe, wind and watertight repairs for the first year of your tenancy.

12. Moving to a smaller (easier to manage) home

- If you own your home, you may be able to sell and buy a smaller one that is easier to manage, or a cheaper one that you can more easily afford. You may find that house prices are lower in some parts of the district or in other parts of the country.
- Council and housing association tenants who no longer need such a big home can apply to transfer to a smaller property which may be easier to afford and manage. Priority for a transfer is given to tenants who want to move to smaller homes as this frees up homes for new families, and other incentives may be available. **To be eligible for a transfer you must complete an application for housing with your landlord.**

13. Applying for sheltered housing if you are over 60

If you are aged 60 or over, you may wish to consider applying for **sheltered housing**. Sheltered housing is a group of homes, specifically designed and built for older people who are able to live an independent life, but who would benefit from additional security and support. An advantage of living in a sheltered housing scheme is that your neighbours will be people of a similar age.

East Renfrewshire Council owns and operates 8 sheltered complexes within the area, details of each are as follows:-

- **Bellfield Court** Sheltered Complex, Barrhead G78 1RX
- **Fordyce Court** Sheltered Complex, Newton Mearns G77 6TW
- **Graham Street** Sheltered Complex, Barrhead G78 1EU
- **Hawthorn Court** Sheltered Complex, Hawthorn Road Busby G76 8EL
- **Kirk Glebe** Sheltered Complex, Neilston G78 3SA
- **Linn Park Court** Sheltered Complex, Netherlee G44 3PL
- **Montgomerie Court** Sheltered Complex, Eaglesham G76 0AY
- **Waterford Road** Sheltered Complex, Giffnock G46 7PJ

Each property within our sheltered complexes is fitted with an alarm system that enables residents to contact help in an emergency 24 hours a day. To ensure the safety and well-being of our residents, the warden will also make daily contact with residents (when the warden is on duty).

If you are interested in council owned sheltered housing in East Renfrewshire, we can arrange a visit for you to have a look at what it's like. Contact our Housing Management Officer on 0141 577 3001 to arrange a visit.

There is also a wide variety of sheltered housing owned by housing associations across the District. Details of sheltered housing owned by Arklet Housing Association and Barrhead Housing Association are shown below.

Arklet Housing Association has 24 sheltered properties at Walton Court, Giffnock G46 7NE and 28 very sheltered properties at Barrland Court, Giffnock G46 7QD. Details of the properties are given below, while contact details for Arklet Housing Association are given on page 19 of this booklet.

Barrhead Housing Association has a complex of 28 sheltered properties at Main Street, Barrhead.

Details of sheltered properties owned by other housing associations can be obtained directly from the housing associations listed previously.

If you are aged 60 or over and you wish to be considered for sheltered housing you must complete a housing application form. You can download an application form from each of the ERHR partners, or request a form using the contact details shown on pages 20 and 21.

14. Moving to another part of the country

- If you are flexible about where you live, you will find housing demand, prices and rents are lower in many other parts the country. If you choose a low demand area you may be offered a tenancy more quickly and the rent may be cheaper than in East Renfrewshire.
- Some councils and housing associations have homes available now to anyone who contacts them. You need to contact the relevant council or housing association to find out what is available – they often advertise properties on their website. To proceed, you will need to complete a waiting list application for the council or housing association which covers the area where you would like to move.
- Private rents and house prices can also be cheaper in other areas. In parts of neighbouring areas such as Glasgow and Paisley, you can buy a substantial house for the price of a one-bedroom flat in parts of East Renfrewshire.



Homeswapper

The **Homeswapper** scheme is for tenants of socially rented accommodation who want a house swap, flat swap or to exchange their council house. This is also called mutual exchange. In order to be considered for a swap, you must live in a council house or housing association property. Homeswapper is a privately owned company which works with many local authorities and housing associations.

What do I need to get an exchange through Homeswapper?

In order to apply for an exchange through Homeswapper, you need to make sure that you and the person who you wish to swap with rent your home from the council or from a housing association and have a Scottish secure tenancy. You both need permission from your landlord, and you must both live in permanent, self-contained accommodation such as a flat or a house.

Before doing anything, you should contact your landlord and make sure you will be given permission to swap your home. If you do not, you may be liable to be evicted if you try to swap homes without permission.

- To pursue a move through Homeswapper, you will need to register online. You will need to pay a small fee to register with Homeswapper.
- When you have registered, you can put details of your home on the website, including photographs, and look at details of other homes.

You can find out more at: www.homeswapper.co.uk



15. Homelessness

We understand that there are many reasons why you may find yourself homeless or threatened with homelessness, and that this is often difficult and sometimes traumatic. Our staff will go through your situation with you in detail, and will offer you sympathetic and effective advice and assistance tailored to your own circumstances. Our aim is to prevent homelessness wherever possible, as well as to meet our duties towards homeless people.

We will:

- Provide you with advice on a range of housing options
- Provide you with information and advice on all aspects of homelessness
- Where possible, try to prevent your homelessness
- Offer advice regarding benefits to maximise your income
- Where appropriate, arrange referrals to support agencies and other housing providers
- Provide you with temporary accommodation if you have nowhere to stay
- Offer you support, both in temporary accommodation and for a period after you are permanently housed

Our **Housing Advice & Homelessness Service** is based in the council's offices at 211 Main Street, Barrhead. We offer a one-stop shop for information, advice and accommodation. **We will interview you within three working days, or if you have nowhere at all to stay, we will interview you that day.**

If you become homeless outwith office hours, our emergency service can arrange temporary accommodation for you. We will try to arrange

accommodation suitable to your specific circumstances, although outwith office hours, our options may be limited. If we provide you with bed and breakfast accommodation, we try to move you to something more suitable as soon as possible. **We prioritise families with children.**

Are you Homeless or threatened with homelessness?

If you are homeless or you believe that you may become homeless in the next 2 months, you should approach the council's housing office in either Barrhead or Eastwood or phone the housing advice service direct, during office hours, on the number given below.

It is very important that you **contact us straight away** as we may be able to:

- prevent you from losing your home;
- help you find other accommodation;
- contact other services whom may be able to help you;
- offer you somewhere to stay.

If you need emergency accommodation when our offices are open, contact the Housing Advice Team on 0141 577 3001 (during office hours)

What to do if you need emergency accommodation

If you require emergency accommodation when our offices are closed, you can contact our

**Out of Hours service
on 0800 052 0180**

16. Young Persons Housing Support Service

In order to address the problems that young people often face in setting up and sustaining a tenancy, East Renfrewshire Council has a designated **Young Persons Housing Support Service**. The Connor Road Housing Support Service offers help and support to all young people aged 16-25 within East Renfrewshire.

There are two types of Young Persons Housing Support Service available, both aimed at the 16-25 age group. They are:

- **Connor Road - Supported Accommodation**
- **Outreach Service**

Referrals to the supported accommodation project are usually made by our Housing Advisors following a Housing Options/Homelessness interview. Referrals can also come from other workers from agencies such as other parts of Housing Services, Careers Advisors, Community Health Care Partnership (CHCP) - Health Visitors or Social Workers.

Referrals to the Outreach Service can be made by: Individuals, friends, family members, or other workers who may be working with the client.

To discuss a possible referral to either part of the Young Persons Housing Support Service, staff at Connor Road can be contacted at any time by telephone on **0141 577 4069**.

Connor Road Project - Supported Accommodation

The Connor Road Project provides safe and secure supported accommodation for vulnerable young people aged 16-25 years in East Renfrewshire. The accommodation consists of 9 one bedroom flats and 2 two bedroom flats, all of which are self-contained. The project is staffed on a 24 hour basis with support staff on a daily rota and a concierge on nightshift.

A significant aim of the project is to help young adults learn how to manage and effectively sustain a tenancy when they are ready to move on from Connor Road into a tenancy of their own.

Young people are supported in any area where they require help, however, the main areas of support provided include:

- Housing
- Benefits
- Managing a home
- Fitting into a community
- Family/relationships
- Health
- Education, training and employment
- Legal issues

In addition to addressing a young person's housing needs, some young people receiving support may have experienced previous difficulties such as substance misuse, health problems or legal issues. Where appropriate, project staff will link closely with appropriate statutory agencies for referral and assessment.

The service has been designed with the intentions of providing an individualised package of support based on the young person's needs. Support Packages and Risk Assessments are reviewed regularly together with the young person and any other agency involved in their support package.

Support continues to be offered on an outreach basis when the young person moves on to their own tenancy in the community.

Young Persons Outreach Support service

The Outreach Support Service provides housing information, support and advice to young adults aged between 16 and 25 years within East Renfrewshire who are:

- Staying In their own homes (rented or bought)
- Staying In temporary accommodation
- Currently homeless
- Threatened with homelessness
- Wanting to apply for their own tenancy

The Service also helps young adults to:

- Apply for a council home
- Explore other housing options available
- Secure privately rented accommodation
- Manage money
- Apply for benefits
- Apply for grants to help furnish their flats
- Pay bills
- Deal with debts
- Deal with rent/council tax arrears
- Support to avoid eviction
- Sign post to other services i.e. counselling services

School visits

Members of staff at the Connor Road Project regularly visit schools within East Renfrewshire to speak to 4th year pupils. The aim of these school visits is speak to every young person in order to give them information about housing and homelessness. These discussions include items such as homeless prevention, awareness of the support service and realistic facts about managing a home and the associated challenges for a young person.

You can contact our Housing Advice Team at:

Telephone: **0141 577 3001** (office hours)

E-mail: housingoptions@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

You can contact the Housing Allocations Team at:

Telephone: **0141 577 3001** (office hours)

E-mail: customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

You can contact the Private Sector Housing Team at:

Telephone: **0141 577 3589** (office hours)

E-mail: privatesectorhousing@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Our **Customer First Team** is also available at any time during opening hours.

Mon – Thurs: 8.45am - 4.45pm

Friday: 8.45am - 3.55pm

Or by phone on 0141 577 3001

You can write to us at:

East Renfrewshire Council

211 Main Street

Barrhead G78 1SY

If you require emergency accommodation when our offices are closed, you can contact our

Out of Hours Homelessness Service on 0800 052 0180

You can also obtain independent advice from:

East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau

216 Main Street,

Barrhead G78 1SN

Telephone 0141 881 2032

Mon-Fri 9.30-15.30 (+ Wed 15.30-18.00 (by appt.))