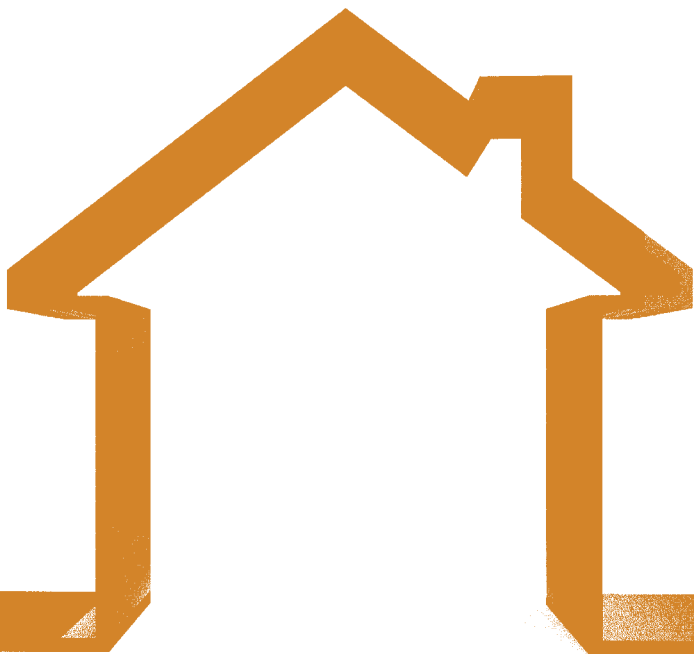




WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.westoxon.gov.uk

Homelessness



Information on what help is available in West Oxfordshire

Worried about losing your home?

We receive many requests for help from people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness. Our housing advisers will do their best to provide advice and information to prevent homelessness from happening. If it cannot be avoided, families with children or single people deemed to be vulnerable will normally be provided with accommodation where they have a local connection and have become homeless through no fault of their own.



Who is homeless?

We produce a weekly Accommodation List normally available every Tuesday from the Town Centre Shop, Witney. Homelessness legislation is extremely complicated. However, it is our policy to treat each case individually and we will look at your own particular circumstances. In order to qualify for help from the us you will have to be:

- 1 Eligible for assistance - this is usually in relation to your immigration status
- 2 Statutorily homeless - that is you do not have any accommodation anywhere in the world that is legal, safe or reasonable for you to occupy
- 3 In priority need - this includes families or single people with dependent children, a pregnant woman, vulnerable due to age, physical or mental illness. Fleeing violence or any kind of threats of violence, emergency such as fire or flood or other reasons.
- 4 Not intentionally homeless - that is you haven't lost your home because of something that you have done or something that you haven't done (ie failing to pay your rent when you had the means to do so)
- 5 Local connection with the District - you have lived in the District for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years, you work in the district, you have close relatives or other special circumstances

Making an appointment

If you are homeless or might become homeless you should contact:

Housing Services Tel: 01993 861010
Elmfield Email: housing@westoxon.gov.uk
New Yatt Road
Witney OX28 1NB

At the appointment

A Housing Adviser will talk to you about your housing problem in private. You are welcome to bring a friend or support worker along if you wish.

The Housing Adviser will:

- Ask you a number of questions about your personal details and financial circumstances.
- Discuss with you whether there is a possibility for you to stay in or return to your home; or
- Look at the different housing options that are available to you.
- Housing Advisers are expected to show understanding and be approachable and helpful. The information you are given should be appropriate to your circumstances, comprehensive and accurate.

How we can help?

Each case is different and once enquires are complete, your Housing Adviser will explain to you the decision the Council has made.

If the Council accepts a duty to help you, you will be provided with suitable temporary accommodation. You will also be placed on the Common Waiting List and considered for permanent accommodation.

If you are not to be rehoused, the Council will explain your options to you and provide you with free advice and information to help you find your own alternative accommodation in the private sector. We have a Deposit Guarantee and Rent in Advance scheme that you might be eligible for.

If you are homeless, an officer will see you that day. If your problem is less urgent, we will make you an appointment to see an officer at the Town Centre Shop, Witney.

What information do you need to bring?

To help us help you, please bring any information relating to your housing problem such as:

Proof of Identity

(Birth Certificate, National Insurance Number, Passport)

Details of Income

(Your last 5 wage slips, if you are unemployed or retired, your payment book, details of savings such as Bank Statements, Building Society book, Post Office Savings book)

Family Details

(Child Benefit books, Birth Certificates, Separation papers, Maternity Certificate, Hospital or Doctors notes)

Other Documents

(Tenancy Agreement, Letters from your Landlord, Notice to Quit/Court papers, Possession Summons/Court Orders, Letters from Solicitors, Arrears letters from your Mortgage Lenders etc)

Our service standards

- If you are homeless on the day you approach us, you will be seen by a Homelessness Officer that same day.
- If you are going to be homeless at some point in the future, we will give you some general information and immediately make you an appointment to see a Homelessness Officer.
- At the interview we will explain the Council's policy and what the law states about your homeless application. You will be given a leaflet that explains how your homeless application will be dealt with.
- If the Council does not have a duty to provide you with emergency accommodation we will give you information and try to assist you to secure alternative accommodation in the private sector.
- If you are provided with emergency or temporary accommodation and we have accepted a duty to house you we will try to secure permanent accommodation as soon as possible.
- We will make a decision on your homeless application and give the reason for our decision in 14 working days.
- You can appeal against the Council's decision
- We aim to keep you informed on the progress of your application whilst you are in emergency/ temporary accommodation.
- Our aim is to provide a quality service.
- We do our best to maintain our high standards and hopefully you will never have cause to complain. However, if you feel that your problem has not been given proper consideration then you can make a complaint to the Head of Housing. Your complaint will be investigated and acted upon within 5 working days.

Confidentiality

The information that you provide to us will be treated as confidential and will not be discussed with a third party without your consent. We will not pass on information to other agencies unless we have your permission or there are specific reasons to do so.

Fair treatment for all

We are committed to delivering our services fairly regardless of age, gender, sexuality, religion, race or disability.

Our offices, The Town Centre Shop and Interview rooms have level access to help wheelchair users. If you have social needs please let us know and we will try to help.

Useful contacts

For advice regarding your housing circumstances you may wish to contact:

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Old Print House Tel: 01993 705691
Marlborough Lane
Witney OX28 6DY
Email: bureau@westoxfordshirecab.cabnet.org.uk

Open Mon, Wed, Fri 10-12 noon.

Telephone advice: Mon, Wed & Fri 1.30 - 3.30pm

31 High Street Tel: 01608 641367
Chipping Norton
Oxon OX7 5AD

Tues, Wed, Fri 10-12 noon

West Oxfordshire District Council

www.wwestoxon.gov.uk

Town Centre Shop

3 Welch Way

Witney

Oxon OX28 6JH

Tel: 01993 861000

Email: enquiries@westoxon.gov.uk

Benefit Services

PO Box 32

Witney

Oxon OX28 6JH

Tel: 01993 861030

Email: benefits@westoxon.gov.uk

Housing Services

Elmfield

New Yatt Road

Witney

Oxon OX28 1PB

Tel: 01993 861010

Email: housing@westoxon.gov.uk

This leaflet can be made available in a larger print size, electronically or in other formats. Please contact us if this is required.