

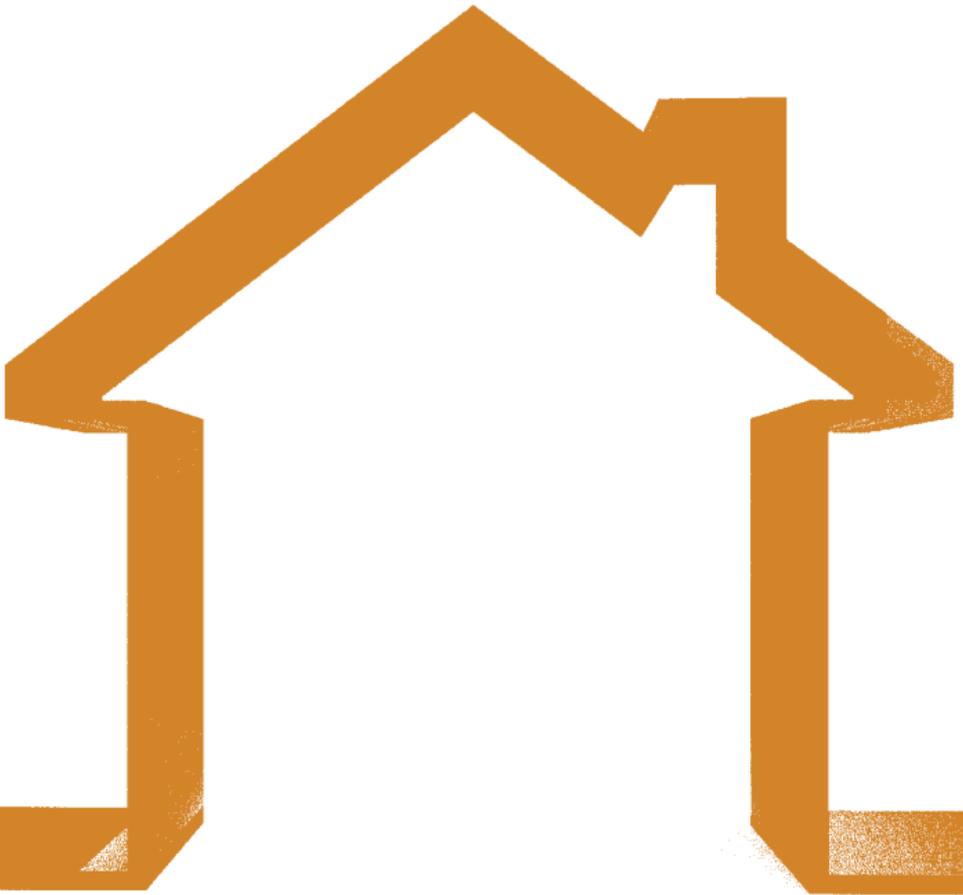


WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.westoxon.gov.uk

Housing

*Information for young
people*



*Information on housing options that are available as well as
information should you be homeless*

Leaving home

Leaving home is one of the most important decisions you

It's not a good idea to rush into it or just leave on the spur of the moment until you can move out in a planned way. You may decide to leave home - no parents telling you what to do, your own private space

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will ever make.

of the moment. Ideally you should stay with your family to leave home because you think that it will be exciting e.

Things to think about:

- Can you really afford to leave home?
- Are you really ready to live on your own?
- Will you get lonely?

Disadvantages

- You will have to pay rent.
- You will have to pay your own bills, eg gas, electricity, water rates etc.
- You may have to live on benefits which means you will have to budget very carefully. You will need to pay your bills before buying things like clothes or CD's and other things you want.
- You may not be able to continue your education.
- You may not be able to afford to go out with your friends as often.
- You might not be able to live where you want - close to friends and family.
- You will have to do your own washing and ironing, shopping and cooking.

Different Housing Options

Flat Share

This is where you have your own bedroom but share the kitchen, bathroom and lounge. You will need to pay a deposit and possibly a months rent in advance. The Council may be able to help with a deposit. For more information see 'Deposit Guarantee Scheme'.

Supported Accommodation

Supported accommodation is used to support young people, young parents, care leavers, ex-offenders, those with mental health issues or those who have had drug or alcohol problems. You will need to be referred by the Council or other referring agency, to one of these projects.

Housing Associations

Housing Associations provide housing at affordable rents.

The Council operates the Waiting List and will provide an application form for you to register. How long you will have to wait, will depend on your circumstances. It's a good idea to put your name down on the list in any case, unless you are sure you don't want to live in this kind of property.

How do I apply for housing?

You should complete an 'Application for Accommodation in West Oxfordshire' form. These are available from:

- The Town Centre Shop, Witney
- The Guildhall, Chipping Norton
- Or by contacting Housing Services, Elmfield, New Yatt Road, Witney OX28 1PB.

Privately rented accommodation

It is not possible for the Council to assist everyone who applies for housing. You should also try to resolve your own housing situation by looking to rent privately.

How do I find privately rented accommodation?

We produce a weekly Accommodation List normally available every Tuesday from the Town Centre Shop, Witney. You can also contact local estate agents and property letting companies in the District and look at advertisements about housing in the local newspapers and property papers.



Housing benefit

You may be able to get help with rent if you are not working or you are working but on a low income. The benefit office can let you know how much benefit you may get before you agree to take a tenancy.

Things to remember:

- Single people under 35 (without children) are expected to find a single room in a shared house and will not get enough housing benefit to cover the costs of a self contained flat.
- Housing Benefit will only cover the amount of rent they think is right for properties of the same size and location. This may be less than the landlord is charging. You would be responsible for paying the difference.
- If you sign a tenancy agreement and then only get part of the cost of the rent in housing benefit you may build up rent arrears and debt.

Contact the Town Centre Shop or Benefit Services for an application form.

The Deposit Guarantee Scheme

We operate a Deposit Guarantee Scheme which aims to help people in housing need access privately rented accommodation. (A separate leaflet is available for further information).

Rent in Advance Scheme

We operate a Rent in Advance Scheme which can help people who will qualify for Housing Benefit to pay the rent in respect of privately rented property. (A separate leaflet is available for further information)

Leaving home in an emergency

Unless you are in danger it is better to stay where you are until you can plan your move with help and support.

- Have a think about why you're leaving. If it's because you feel restricted by other people around you, remember that wherever you live you'll have other people to consider, whether it's parents, flatmates or neighbours.
- If you have family problems, think carefully before you go as it may be better to try and sort things out if you can. That way, you can plan your move and leave at a time that suits you. Mediation may be available to help in this situation.
- Talk to a friend, relative, teacher, counsellor, doctor or anyone you trust.



Homelessness

If you don't plan leaving home properly you could end up in difficulty and possibly homeless. You could find yourself with no regular place to stay, perhaps sleeping on friends sofas, sleeping in hostels or even on the street.

Despite what you hear, making a homeless application does not guarantee that you will be offered accommodation.

- The law says we must give you help and advice to find a place to live. This does not mean that you will automatically be housed.
- Whether we have to provide you with somewhere to live, either temporary or permanent will depend on your circumstances.

We can help you if you are homeless or at risk of losing your home or even if you are just planning to move.

What can we do to help?

We can provide advice and may be able to assist you with:

- Assessing your legal rights under homelessness law. This may lead to emergency/temporary accommodation.
- A referral to supported accommodation or floating support.
- Getting support to move, or stay in your home.
- Advice regarding private renting.

What next?

If you have been kicked out or have to leave home, call in at the Town Centre Shop to make a private and confidential appointment and have a chat with one of our housing advisers. Alternatively call Housing Services on 01993 861010.

We will need evidence that you are:

- homeless, or are about to become homeless and that it was not your own deliberate actions that have caused your homelessness.
- a UK citizen. If you are not the rules are very complicated and your rights will depend on your immigration status.
- in priority need. You are in priority need if you fall into one of the following categories:
 - You are pregnant; or
 - You are 16/17 years old; or
 - Vulnerable as a result of a physical or mental disability; or
 - Homeless due to a fire, flood or similar disaster; or
 - Forced to leave home because of violence or abuse, and more at risk than most people.

If we think you are entitled to help, we may arrange temporary accommodation for you while we carry out a more in-depth investigation.

If we accept your homeless application we will make sure that you have somewhere to live until you receive an offer of suitable housing.

However, there are more people than properties and you are highly unlikely to get offered the exact property you want. We may also offer you private rented or supported accommodation.

If you are under 18

Some important facts you should know.

- If you 16/17 years old you and your family will have to be assessed by the Children and Families Assessment team (CAFAT).
- If you're under 16 you can't normally leave home unless there are serious problems such as violence. If this is the case immediately get in touch with CAFAT, police or another advice agency for help or support.
- If you are 16/17 years old you will still have to go through the homelessness assessment procedure. An assessment will be carried out jointly with Housing and CAFAT.
- If you are 16 or 17 it is unlikely that you will be able to claim benefits, unless you have special circumstances. It is best to get specialist advice on this.
- You will not be considered to be homeless if you choose to leave accommodation that is suitable for you and which you can return to.
- For legal reasons landlords may be unwilling to offer you a tenancy agreement.

If you are pregnant

Being pregnant does not make your application any quicker or easier. The homeless process is the same for everyone. You will be asked the same questions and provide the same documents.

Where to go for more advice and information

West Oxfordshire District Council

Town Centre Shop

Welch Way

Witney

Tel: 01993 861000

Email: enquiries@westoxon.gov.uk

Housing Services

Elmfield

New Yatt Road

Witney OX28 1PB

Tel: 01993 861010

Email: housing@westoxon.gov.uk

Visit: www.westoxon.gov.uk

**Children & Families Assessment Team
(CAFAT)**

Samuelson house

Tramway Road

Banbury

Oxon OX16 5AU

Tel: 01865 816670

Fax: 08456 054187

Witney Early Intervention Hub

Tel: 0845 6029284

Email: EIWitney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Base 33

4 Welch Way

Witney OX28 6JF

Tel: 01933 200682

Email: base-33@ntlworld.com

Monday-Friday, 9am - 4pm. Point of access for young people, particularly those with complex, multiple needs

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

Young Addaction

CR 1 Oxfordshire

23 Park End Street

Oxford

Tel: 01865 723909

Advice and support for 10 - 18 year olds with complex and serious substance misuse issues.

Other useful contacts

askTheSite

Visit: www.thesite.org

Is for all young people aged 16 to 24 across the UK. It offers free, confidential answers to your questions within three working days. They are currently answering queries to do with general health, drink and drugs, housing, your legal rights, money and sexual health. The service is all based on line.

Youthnet

Visit: www.youthnet.org

Is a web based charity dedicated to providing frank and unbiased information to enable young people to make informed decisions

Centrepoint

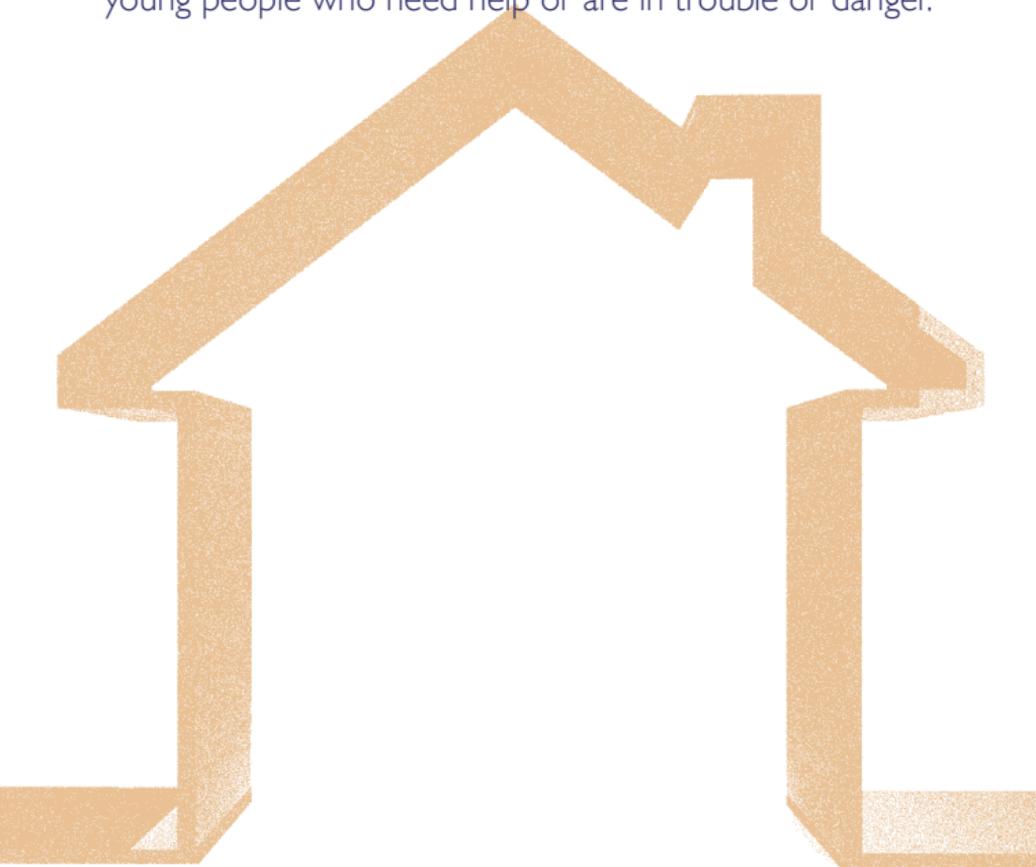
Visit: www.centrepoint.org.uk/streetlevel

Childline

Tel: 0800 1111 (Free Phone)

Web: www.childline.org.uk

Is a free, 24 hour counselling service for all children and young people who need help or are in trouble or danger.



Housemate

Visit: www.housemate.org.uk

Shelter

Tel: 0808 800 444 (Free Phone)

Visit: www.shelter.org.uk

Provides free telephone housing advice between 8am and midnight 7 days a week.

Shelternet

Visit: www.shelternet.org.uk

Youth Centres

Allandale Centre Carterton	01993 842416
Chipping Norton School	01608 644745
Back Lane Eynsham	01865 880630
Witan Way Witney	01993 772731



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

We are happy to provide this information in other formats. Please contact us if this is required.