

Your Housing Options



HILDA Project at Dalkeith CAB

**Free, confidential,
impartial information &
advice on housing issues**

Phone 0131 660 1636
(Mon-Thu, 10-2 or Fri 10-12.30)

Bureau@DalkeithCab.org.uk



Introduction

HILDA project (Housing Information Local Development Advice) is a project of Dalkeith CAB and provides free, confidential, impartial holistic advice and information to people with concerns related to housing or homelessness. The service is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

The service can be accessed directly or by referral from another organisation. HILDA is available by phone, email, or face-to-face at Dalkeith CAB or one of its outreach advice clinics in communities around Midlothian.

Whether you are facing homelessness, having problems with your tenancy or looking for support and guidance on another housing-related issue, this pack includes information on a range of options available to you. It also includes details of financial support including through housing benefit, Scottish Welfare Fund, discounts and schemes.

In addition, this pack includes guidance on your rights as a tenant and how to access support services if you are struggling with other issues impacting your housing situation such as mental health, substance abuse, or domestic abuse.

We hope this information pack will be a valuable resource which will encourage you to take advantage of the many support services available. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need further assistance.

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1. Homelessness

1.1 What should I do if I become homeless?

If you are homeless or potentially going to be homeless you need to contact 01312713397 or 0808 196 2292. You can email homeless.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk. If deemed homeless, you will be given a homeless officer to support you.

1.2 What if the Homeless Office is closed and I have nowhere to go?

Call the out of hours service **0131 353 0555** where they will provide immediate assistance.

1.3 What is the Homeless Process?

When you make contact with Midlothian homeless team you may be asked to attend an assessment with the officer where a full homeless assessment interview will be performed. The purpose of this interview is to determine if the council has a statutory duty to provide you with permanent accommodation.

1.4 What if I need emergency accommodation?

Contact Midlothian Council Homeless Team, weekdays on **0131 271 3397** or **0808 196 2292** and evenings and weekends on **0131 535 0555**.

The Homeless Team can provide emergency accommodation and will advise you to attend a Homeless Interview as soon as possible.

1.5 Do I have to pay for emergency accommodation?

If you are working, you will have to pay rent, as well as Council Tax, gas and electricity for the emergency accommodation. If you are unemployed or on a low income, you may be entitled to Housing Benefit to help with the cost of temporary accommodation. Your Case Officer will discuss this with you during the Homeless Interview.

1.6 How do I apply for Housing Benefit?

If you move to temporary or permanent accommodation, you should be given support from the Homeless Team to apply. You can also get help from Dalkeith CAB (see front of this pack) or you can apply for Housing Benefit yourself by visiting www.tinyurl.com/HB-Form.

1.7 What do I do if I have furniture?

Midlothian Homeless team can provide a Storage Request Form and confirm what items can be stored and the cost for storage. You can also arrange storage yourself. You may wish to keep some items with you in temporary accommodation.

1.8 How long will I stay in temporary accommodation?

If you are assessed as unintentionally homeless, you will be able to stay in temporary accommodation until you have secured permanent housing. How long you stay depends on the areas you select on your housing application form and the number of suitable properties that become available in those areas.

Your case officer will discuss areas where you may have the best chance of being offered housing. They will also discuss other housing options, including Housing Association and renting from a private landlord.

1.9 Can I have my pet with me in temporary accommodation?

Midlothian Council does not currently accept pets into temporary accommodation. You could explore alternative options, like asking if a friend or relative can care for them until you are in permanent accommodation. Or you could consider pet fostering through Pet Fostering Service Scotland www.pfss.org.uk or Dogs Trust Together Through Homelessness www.dogstrusthopeproject.org.uk.

1.10 Will the council provide a permanent home through the homeless route?

If you are considered unintentionally homeless, Midlothian Council has a duty to provide you one offer of permanent accommodation. Your Case Officer will discuss areas where homes are available. It is important to select areas that you would be happy to live in and that you pick as many areas as you can to give more options.

If you are found to be intentionally homeless during your assessment, the Council still has a duty to provide temporary accommodation and give advice and assistance with finding permanent accommodation.

If your circumstances change, you should get in touch with your Homeless Officer, or the Housing Service, if you have submitted a mainstream (not emergency) housing application.

1.11 What if I do not think the one permanent offer is acceptable?

You have the right to ask for a review of the permanent housing offer. They will take into consideration any significant changes in your circumstances if you have valid evidence to support the changes.

You have the right to appeal the housing offer within 21 days of the offer being made. If it is decided the permanent offer of a home *is* reasonable, you will not be offered another, and will be asked to leave the temporary accommodation. Your Homeless Officer will provide advice and assistance before they discharge their duties to you.

1.12 What if I disagree with the homeless decision?

Your Homeless Officer will carefully consider your application and all the evidence you have provided and will advise you in writing of the decision within 28 days. They will state whether they have assessed you as unintentionally or intentionally homeless.

As with decisions on temporary accommodation and suitability of the one permanent offer, you have the right to appeal or request a review of the decision on whether you are unintentionally or intentionally homeless. The request for a review can be made verbally to your Homeless Officer and you will be advised to provide evidence to support your appeal.



2. Housing options

2.1 Where can I get advice about my housing options?

You can contact Midlothian Homeless Team or Dalkeith CAB's HILDA Project Housing Adviser or the Midlothian Homeless Team. The Hilda Adviser will ask for information about your situation and can refer you to a colleague for help with issues that are not housing-related, if you like.

The HILDA Adviser will discuss things like benefits, arrears, evictions and how to maximise points on a mainstream housing application.

2.2 What is the difference between a homeless and "mainstream" housing application?

Any person can apply to Midlothian Council for social housing regardless of their situation. This is often called a "mainstream application."

You can request the type of property that you want and areas where you would like to live. You will be awarded "points" depending on your circumstances and needs. The more points you accumulate, the higher you will be in priority for accessing a new home.

A **homeless application** is for people who are or are about to become homeless. You need to present to the Council's Homeless Service before you can submit a homeless application. If you are assessed to be unintentionally homeless, Midlothian Council has a duty to provide permanent accommodation. Please see sections 2.9 to 2.11 above for further information.

You will not be able to change the property type requested if submitting a **homeless application**, apart from in exceptional circumstances. This will usually require a Community Health Assessment to confirm a different property type is required.

2.3 I have questions about points and my mainstream housing application.

Midlothian Housing Services team manage mainstream applications for housing. You can contact them by phone on **0131 271 3394** or email at HousingEnquiries@Midlothian.gov.uk.

If you are in permanent accommodation, you can speak with your Housing Officer. A list of Housing Officers for areas in Midlothian is available here: www.tinyurl.com/Midlothian-Housing-Officers.

If you are not permanently accommodated, should contact the Officer in the Midlothian Homelessness Team that has been allocated to you. There is a list of Officers and their contact details here: www.tinyurl.com/Midlothian-Homeless-Officers

2.4 I'm over 55. How do I find out about supported accommodation?

Contact Midlothian Council if you require supported accommodation. You can complete a Housing Application and will join the housing list the day you submit it. Phone the Council on 0131 271 3394 or email Housing.Enquiries@Midlothian.gov.uk.

Amenity Housing provides accessible one bedroom homes for people over 55 that are near public transport links and town centres. These will involve a monthly rent and an additional service-charge to cover the upkeep of communal areas. The Council can advise on how to access these homes.

2.5 What is Mutual Exchange or House Swap?

If you have a permanent Council or Housing Association tenancy, you can choose to swap homes with another person who also has a permanent tenancy in Midlothian or other parts of the UK. This may be useful if you or your family's needs have changed or you wish to move closer to family.

Midlothian Council uses the www.HouseExchange.org.uk website to list homes that people wish to swap. It is important both parties are aware that once exchanged, their tenancy will be for the property "as seen," so they cannot refuse it.

2.6 What is Ready-to-Rent Midlothian?

Midlothian Council advertises properties on a website that have been offered to people but refused more than two times. They may still be suitable for some people. You can ask to be on a text alert waiting list to find out when new properties become available. Email Housing.Enquiries@Midlothian.gov.uk to be added.

2.7 What is Mid Market Rent or MMR?

This is a type of affordable housing where rents and deposits are lower than on the private rental market, but higher than for Council or Housing Association homes. MMR aims to help households on modest incomes, that have difficulty accessing social rented housing, buying their own homes, or renting privately.

Find out more about MMR here: www.tinyurl.com/Midlothian-MMR



3. Solving problems with your home

3.1 I have issues with the Landlord. Who can help me?

You can reach out to the HILDA Housing Adviser at Dalkeith CAB. We can also help with wider issues related to managing in your home, including benefits, budgeting and home energy efficiency. Phone or email for an appointment (details on the front of this guide.)

You can also contact Shelter Scotland (Scotland.Shelter.org.uk) or the Scottish Association of Landlords (scottishlandlords.com) for information on Landlord responsibilities.

3.2 What can I do about condensation, damp or mould in my home?

Condensation occurs when moist air meets a cold surface like a window or mirror. Excessive condensation can lead to damp and mould walls, furniture and fabrics. It can be reduced by opening windows when showering, venting tumble dryers to the outside, and turning on extractor fans if they are fitted in your home.

If black mould appears on your walls, you can remove it with a solution of 1 part chlorine to 3 parts water. Wear rubber gloves. Use a stiff brush to work into the area, remove residue with wet cloth and dry. Opening windows more often in an area helps stop mould returning.

If the damp and mould keep returning after cleaning, this requires attention from your landlord. Report it as soon as you realise it is not getting better

If it is a council property, request a repair by phoning **0131 663 7211** or emailing ContactCentre@Midlothian.gov.uk. If your home is Housing Association or private rented, contact the landlord directly.

You can find out which repairs Landlords are required to provide from this Citizens Advice information page www.tinyurl.com/Landlord-Repairs

If you are unsure what to do, contact the HILDA Housing Adviser at Dalkeith CAB.

3.3 I have had a notice to quit. What should I do?

If you receive a notice to quit from your Landlord, it is important to get advice without delay. Contact Dalkeith CAB for an appointment to discuss your housing options with advice and information tailored to your situation. Phone 0131 660 1636 as soon as possible.

3.4 What happens during the eviction process?

Your landlord must apply to the Housing and Property Chamber following the date of your notice to quit to evict you from the property. This is the case whether your landlord is the Local Authority, a Housing Association or a private landlord.

The processes vary depending on which of these is your landlord, and the process often changes. We advise checking the Scottish Government website to view the current process (www.mygov.scot/eviction-council-tenants/the-eviction-process.)

The HILDA Housing Adviser at Dalkeith CAB can discuss the steps with you during your appointment.

3.5 I have found a home to rent privately. Can I get financial assistance?

Unfortunately, there is no financial assistance available from Midlothian Council. However, you can still contact the Council's Housing Service or your Homeless Officer to discuss other options. If there is help available, they will assess your case based on merits.

In some cases, you may be eligible for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to cover the deposit or first month's rent. Information can be found on the Scottish Government website (www.mygov.scot/discretionary-housing-payment.) or you can find out more from the HILDA Housing Adviser.



4. Other sources of help

4.1 Housing Providers and Rental Agencies in Midlothian

Melville Housing Association,

200 High Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AZ
Tel. 0131 654 2733 melville.org.uk

Places for People (formerly Castle Rock)

Rossglen Court, Main Street,
Roslin EH25 9PG
Tel. 0131 448 2074
www.placesforpeople.co.uk

Neilson's Solicitors and Estate Agents

72 High Street, Bonnyrigg EH19 2AE
Tel. 0131 663 9988 www.neilsons.co.uk

Housing Options Scotland

(Helps find homes for disabled people,
older people and ex-forces community)
The Melting Pot, 15 Calton Road,
Edinburgh EH8 8DL
Tel. 0131 510 1567
housingoptionsscotland.org.uk

Bield Housing and Care

55 Hunterfield Road, Gorebridge EH23 4AD
Tel. 01875 820832 www.bield.co.uk

Viewpoint Housing Association

(homes for older people)
Glensek House, 8 Avenue Rd,
Dalkeith EH22 3BP
Tel. 0131 454 9006 www.viewpoint.org.uk

Ninety Property Estate Agents

16 Scollon Avenue, Bonnyrigg EH19 3QB
Tel. 0131 341 6990
www.ninetyproperty.co.uk

List of **Housing Associations** in the area here: www.tinyurl.com/Housing-Associations

4.2 Emergency Funding – Scottish Welfare Fund

This fund assists people living in the Midlothian Local Authority Area. It provides two types of discretionary grants – Crisis and Community Care. They do not have to be paid back.

Apply online here: www.tinyurl.com/Scottish-Welfare-Fund or phone 0131 270 5600,
Monday-Thursday, 10am to 4pm and Friday 10am to 3.30pm.

4.3 Emergency Food – Midlothian Foodbank

If you are in a crisis and cannot afford to buy food, follow these steps:

- A. Either phone or email the Foodbank (077 8917 3276 JaniceBurns@MidlothianFoodbank.org.uk) and explain your situation.
- B. The Foodbank will put you in touch with a relevant local agency like Dalkeith CAB.
- C. Visit the agency. They will discuss your situation, provide additional information or assistance, and provide a Foodbank Voucher if appropriate.
- D. Take the Foodbank Voucher to the Foodbank to collect a food parcel.

The Foodbank is at Gorebridge Parish Church, 96 Hunterfield Road, Gorebridge EH23 4TT and it is open Monday to Friday, 10 am to 2 pm.

4.4 Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse support

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse or coercive control from a partner or ex-partner, the following can help:

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline - Phone 0800 027 1234 (24 hours), or visit their website here: www.sdafmh.org.uk

Women's Aid East & Midlothian – 0131 561 5800, M-F, 9am to 4pm womensaideml.org

Men's Advice Line – 0808 8010327 – mensadviceline.org.uk

Abused Men in Scotland - 03300 949 395 M-F, 9am to 4pm abusedmeninscotland.org

Rape Crisis Scotland - Phone 08088 01 03 02 or Text 075 37410027 5pm to Midnight
Email support@RapeCrisisScotland.org.uk Webchat www.RapeCrisisScotland.org.uk
(For people of all genders in Scotland 13+ who've been affected by sexual violence.)

4.5 Help with Substance Misuse

MELD (Mid & East Lothian Drugs) offers accessible, confidential and non-judgmental services, to promote recovery and reduce harm associated with substance use.

Phone 0131 285 9553 (M-F, 9am to 5pm) or visit their website www.meld-drugs.org.uk
11 St Andrew Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AL.

ELCA (Edinburgh & Lothian Council on Alcohol) ELCA (Edinburgh & Lothian Council on Alcohol) provides support to people over 18 who are concerned about their alcohol use, or that of a friend, partner or relative. In addition to Edinburgh, the provide services in Dalkeith and Bonnyrigg.

Phone 0131 337 8188 or email ELCA@btconnect.com.

4.6 Mental Health Support

Midlothian Mental Health and Resilience Service (MHARS) is a service for people in Midlothian over 18 who want to talk with someone about their mental health without needing to be referred by a GP or other health professional.

Phone MHARS on 0800 118 2962 between 8am and 10pm, 7 days a week.

A list of other mental health and addiction support services and resources can be found on the Midlothian Council website here: www.tinyurl.com/Mental-Health-Addiction

4.7 Disability Information and Support

Disability Information Scotland provides reliable and accessible information for disabled people in Scotland. The service is available Monday to Friday, 10am-12 and 1-3pm.

Phone - 0300 323 9961

Text - 0798 436 7599

Email - info@disabilityscot.org.uk

We hope you have found this resource useful. Please let us know if you did, or did not find it useful in your situation.

Dalkeith CAB strives to provide a quality service to people in Midlothian. We continually look at ways to develop and improve our services. Please contact us if you have any concerns or suggestions by emailing Bureau@DalkeithCAB.org.uk.

If you are concerned about any of our services, you may wish to lodge a complaint. The Complaints procedure is available at the bottom of our website WWW.DalkeithCab.org.uk.

Dalkeith CAB offers free, impartial, confidential, quality-assured advice and information by phone, email and in person at the CAB and through more than 12 outreach clinics and projects throughout the community.

We strive for a fairer Scotland where people are empowered and their rights are respected. We use evidence from our work to amplify the voices of our service-users and advocate for policies that will end poverty in Midlothian.

Phone 0131 660 1636

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