

## **FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE**

### **Can I stay where I am?**

Firstly, it's worth finding out if you can stay where you are if you don't want to leave. Even if your landlord or mortgage lender has told you to leave, you probably don't have to move out immediately. As soon as you receive anything in writing from your landlord, lender, or the court, you should seek advice by contacting either the Students' Union Advice and Support Centre or your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

### **What if I'm homeless?**

If you are homeless (or likely to be within the next 28 days) you may be able to get help from the council. What sort of help will depend on your personal circumstances.

The council can provide temporary accommodation for certain groups of people. You may be able to get temporary accommodation if you are homeless, eligible for assistance, and:

- you, or someone you live with, is pregnant, or
- you are responsible for children, or
- you are homeless as a result of flood, fire or other disaster, or
- you are considered 'vulnerable'

you may be considered 'vulnerable' if:

- you have a mental or physical illness or disability
- you are young
- you are an older person
- you have recently left care
- you have recently left an institution (e.g. prison or the armed forces)
- you are fleeing harassment or domestic violence

## **I need accommodation for tonight**

If the council has been unable to help, you may be able to get emergency accommodation from one of the options listed below:

**Hostels and Nightshelters** (lists available from local council housing department)

**Bed and Breakfast Hotel** (local lists available in the Yellow Pages and Students' Union Advice and Support Centre)

**Lodgings from University Accredited Landlords**

([www.studentpad.co.uk](http://www.studentpad.co.uk) or University Residential Services)

**Women's refuges**

**Staying with friends**

## **Looking for a more permanent place**

If you are looking for somewhere to live long term, you need to think about what kind of accommodation you want. This will depend on what you can afford and what is likely to be available in your area. You should consider:

- how much you can afford to pay each week
- what facilities you want (eg. Central heating, telephone etc)
- what type of property you want
- the location
- who you want to live with (eg. Sharing a house with other tenants, living with landlord in lodgings etc)

## **Private Rented Accommodation**

There are different kinds of private rented housing. It can be self-contained, or shared with other people. It is most important to be realistic about what you can afford. Sharing is usually cheaper.

The University Landlord Accreditation Scheme lists private accommodation available to students. The majority of these properties are house shares, but the list also holds information on available flats for 1-2 people and lodgings.

Up-to-date housing lists can be obtained from University Residential Services, Students' Union Advice and Support Centre or direct from [www.studentpad.co.uk](http://www.studentpad.co.uk)

The Advice and Support Centre also holds lists of local letting agents who will let to students. However, we are unable to recommend or vouch for any property or agency that has not been inspected and/or accredited by the University.

You can also obtain information on living in University Halls from Residential Services or the Advice and Support Centre. The advantage to living in student halls is that the rent is inclusive of all bills and utilities, generally speaking, other privately rented accommodation is not.

***N.B. Halls will not accept students with outstanding debt to the university***

You must be a full-time student to get a place in halls, other private landlords usually accept part-time students (subject to paying council tax), but will not accept students with dependants and/or pets.

**Can I get a council place?**

Permanent council housing is a very good option for many people, as council tenants have stronger rights and lower rents than most other tenants. However, waiting lists are extensive and usually work on a points basis according to need. Therefore if you are a single person living with your parents for example, you are unlikely to be awarded any points based on your situation. This will leave you at the bottom of a waiting list for a *very* long time.

However, once you are on the waiting list, you can also ask the council to put you forward for a housing association place.

## **Housing Associations**

You can also make an application to some housing associations directly, but most of their waiting lists are also long. You can get a list of local housing associations from your local council housing office and also from the Students' Union Advice and Support Centre, which holds a list of current housing associations in the West Midlands area.

## **Paying Council Tax**

As long as you are a full-time student, you are exempt from paying council tax for the duration of your course. You will need to provide your local council tax office with confirmation of your full-time status as soon as you can in order to make sure you receive your exemption. You should do this as soon as you enrol by going through e:vision and requesting a letter confirming your full-time status. Make sure the address the letter is to be sent to is correct. You will need to take this letter to your local Council Tax office as soon as possible, or pass onto your landlord for action.

*N.B. Registry will only issue one letter per year, so please make copies!*

*N.B. Council Tax liability starts as soon as your course ends (not at Graduation!)*

## **Useful Contacts**

Students' Union  
Advice and Support Centre  
Tel: 01902 322038  
Email: [advice@wolvesunion.org](mailto:advice@wolvesunion.org)

Shelter Housing Aid Centres  
Tel: 020 7505 2000  
[www.shelter.co.uk](http://www.shelter.co.uk)

Shelterline  
Tel: 0808 800 4444 (24 hours a day)

Wolverhampton City Council  
Tel: 01902 556556 (ask for relevant department e.g.  
Homeless Families Unit, Council Tax etc.)

University of Wolverhampton  
Residential Services      Tel: 01902 321930/321282