

HOUSING AND UTILITIES

Council Housing

Dumfries and Galloway Council no longer have any council houses. Housing associations are the main providers of new and affordable social housing in Dumfries and Galloway.

Applications for social rented housing can be made through Homes4D&G. This is the name of the common housing register and is a partnership between:

- Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership (DGHP)
- Cunninghame Housing Association
- Irvine Housing Association
- Home Scotland
- Dumfries and Galloway Council

You can submit an application to Homes4D&G which is considered using the same allocation policy to assess applications and allows you to be considered for a tenancy with any of the partnership landlords.

Loreburn Housing Association utilises a Choice Based Lettings system to allocate properties. You can register online at **Loreburn Lettings**.

Anyone aged 16 or over can apply and allocations are made based on a number of factors. Prioritisation takes account of individual circumstances and identifies people with the greatest need. This includes:

- your medical needs
- the number of occupants and bedrooms in your home

- the standard of your current property
- the type and length of your tenancy agreement
- whether you have to share facilities with others
- whether you are living in a flat with children
- if you need to move to provide or receive care

Other sources of support

Depending on your situation you may also find help and support from other services. You can find out who might help you locally by using **find my nearest** and choosing 'Housing Support Outreach Services'.

You can also access support in the following range of housing issues and projects through clicking on the links below:

- Empty homes
- Help for homeless people
- Maintaining standards of repair for private rented properties
- Registering as a private landlord
- Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme
- Tenancy deposit schemes
- Houses in multiple occupation (HMO)
- Social Sector Size Criteria (Bedroom Tax)
- Advice and grant support for private homeowners

Housing Options

Housing Options is the information and advice process that we use when you approach us with a housing problem. Housing Options aims to prevent homelessness wherever possible and there has been a fall in homelessness applications since the process was introduced nationally.

Housing Options focuses on your personal circumstances, helping you to explore all options including social and private rented accommodation. It can also provide support for underlying issues that can underpin housing problems such as debt, family breakup and mental health problems. This process means our staff can work with other services to help people before they reach crisis point. Rather than just making a homeless application.

You can find out more about Housing Options in Dumfries and Galloway via <http://www.dandghousingoptions.org.uk/>

Help for Homeless People and People Facing Eviction

Our Council have a legal duty to help people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. If you facing any issues at the present time, please get in touch with us as soon as possible so that we can assist you and help to save your tenancy.

We do this by arranging temporary or permanent accommodation if circumstances warrant it and by providing support and advice.

We can help you if:

- you have nowhere to stay and are sleeping rough
- you are at fleeing or are at risk of violence and abuse
- your home is not safe to live in
- your home is overcrowded
- you are living with friends or family with no home of your own
- you are living in a home that is not suitable because of illness or disability
- you have rent or mortgage arrears
- you are leaving prison
- you are leaving local authority care

Get Homeless Support

Support is available throughout the region. We can assist you with immediate, short term and long-term support by:

- arranging emergency accommodation if you have nowhere to stay
- providing you with a support worker who can help organise temporary and permanent accommodation referrals
- help you manage a tenancy
- provide debt advice
- provide benefit advice
- provide links to education training and employment opportunities
- provide you with links to other agencies such as domestic abuse and drug or alcohol misuse
- assist you with any welfare support
- assist you to settle into your new home

To arrange support you can call your nearest Homeless office between 9am to 5pm on weekdays at:

- Annan 01461 207019
- Dumfries 01387 260783
- Kirkcudbright 01557 332234
- Stranraer 01776 888312

You will be offered an appointment and seen the same day if you are homeless tonight.

Emergency help

Call 01387 273660 or

email socialworkoutofhours@dumgal.gov.uk outside of office hours if you need urgent help to find somewhere to stay tonight.

What happens next

We'll interview you to assess your circumstances and options. We try to arrange interviews as soon as possible, especially if you already have nowhere to stay.

It's easier for us to deal with your application if you can supply evidence, such as:

- proof of your identity
- information on your personal circumstances
- details of your income from working, benefits and pensions
- information on your children (or proof you are pregnant)
- documents showing why you're homeless or are at risk

We'll decide if you qualify for accommodation within 28 days, but this may be delayed if we don't have all the information we need. Temporary accommodation is provided in urgent cases.

We'll refer you to Homes4D&G if we decide you're unintentionally homeless and they'll try to find accommodation for you. You'll be offered temporary accommodation until somewhere more permanent is found.

Other support

Depending on your situation you may also find help and support from other services. You can find out who might help you locally by using find my nearest and choosing 'Housing Support Outreach Services'.

Further Information

Download Dumfries and Galloway Council's Annual Assurance Statement 2018/2019 [PDF - 126.5KB] to the Scottish Housing Regulator. We have been working closely with the Regulator to improve service areas highlighted in the Local Area Network Local Scrutiny Plan 16/17. The Council agreed a 5 year Homeless Strategy in June 2018 (below) which incorporates actions to address areas of performance and drive improvements.

Dumfries and Galloway Council's Housing Options and Homeless Strategy 2018-23 sets our priorities for tackling homelessness in Dumfries and Galloway.

Fuel Poverty

Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service

We know that anyone can suffer from fuel poverty and that you may be struggling to cope with the costs of heating your home. You might even be worried about how you will cope with the costs for our fast approaching winter of 2020.

Help is available for you through Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service who can have specialist Fuel Poverty Advisors who are specifically training to help the range of situations in which both individuals and families might find themselves in. Your Utility Bills can be significantly reduced and help can also be provided on ensuring that you can access lower monthly bills moving forward.

Click on the link below or contact DAGCAS on 0300 303 4321

<https://www.dagcas.org/what-we-do/debt-and-money>

Lemon Aid Fuel Poverty Service

Cunninghame Housing Association's Lemon Aid aims to address fuel poverty experienced by the most vulnerable residents Dumfries and Galloway. The teams work on a one-to-one basis directly with clients, often in their own homes, and deliver a holistic 360-degree service working with established partners in care, support, and financial inclusion and looking at all aspects relating to energy and fuel poverty.

The teams of advisors provide:

- Home visits to vulnerable residents experiencing or at risk of fuel poverty providing them with a full range of advice
- A hand holding fuel switching service to break through the fear of switching that many vulnerable and fuel poor tenants have and secures cheaper tariffs and genuine financial savings for fuel poor households
- Advocacy services including negotiating with energy suppliers and other agencies to write off debts and secure grants and other resources to maximise disposable income

The teams target fuel poor households in Dumfries and Galloway – with many also experiencing issues such as debt problems, poor mental or physical health, homelessness, chaotic lifestyles, addiction problems and tenancy sustainment issues.

The advisors provide a comprehensive service including:

- gathering information in relation to energy use and cost
- advocating on behalf of clients to obtain grants,
- securing debt write off,
- negotiating meter exchanges,
- resolving incorrect billing,
- obtaining refunds from suppliers, reconnecting those who have self-disconnected from supply due to inability to pay bills,
- securing Warm Homes Discounts and
- enabling switching to new suppliers to secure deals on tariffs

Please contact Cunninghame Housing Association on 01294 468 360 for more details or click on www.cunninghame-housing.org/ for more details