

HOUSING & BUILDING SERVICES

01506
775000

Housing Information and Advice

Customers with special requirements

Information is available in Braille, tape, large print and community languages. Please contact the interpretation and translation service on **01506 775000**

هذه المعلومات متوفرة بلغة بريل وعلى شريط وبخط كبير وبلغات الجالية.
الرجاء الإتصال بخدمة الترجمة على الهاتف **01506 775000**

এই তথ্য আপনি ব্রেইল, টেপ, বড় অক্ষরে এবং কমিউনিটির বিভিন্ন ভাষাগুলিতেও পাবেন। অনুগ্রহ করে ইন্টারপ্রেটেশন অ্যান্ড ট্রান্সলেশন সার্ভিসের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন। টেলি: **01506 775000**

這份資料是可以凸字、錄音帶、大字印刷及社區語言的式本提供。請聯絡傳譯及翻譯服務部，電話：**01506 775000**

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ (ਬ੍ਰੇਲ) ਠੋਕਰੀਨ ਦੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਲਿਖੀ, ਟੇਪ, ਵੱਡੇ ਫਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਕਰੀਏਨ ਅਤੇ ਟਰਾਂਸਲੇਸ਼ਨ ਸਰਵਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ : **01506 775000**

یہ معلومات بریل (تھروں کے رسم الخط)، ٹیپ، بڑے حرف کی طباعت اور کمیونٹی زبانوں میں دستیاب ہے۔
براہ مہربانی انٹرنیٹ یا ٹیلیفون نمبر **01506 775000** پر رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Informacje te mogą być przełożone na język Braille'a, dostępne na taśmie magnetofonowej lub wydane dużym drukiem oraz przetłumaczone na języki mniejszości narodowych.
Prosimy o kontakt z Usługami Tłumaczeniowymi pod numerem **01506 775000**

Text phones offer the opportunity for people with a hearing impairment to access the council. The text phone number is **18001 01506 464427**. A loop system is also available in all offices.

Published by West Lothian Council.

If you have used the Council's complaints procedure and you are still unhappy, you can pass your complaint, within a year, to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS Tel: 0800 377 7330 Email: ask@spsa.org.uk

westlothian.gov.uk

West Lothian Council delivers

westlothian.gov.uk



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



Emergency Numbers

When the office is closed the emergency numbers are:

(01506) 631240

(01506) 630288

(01506) 777401

(Social Work only)



Armadale CSC

Armadaleaho@westlothian.gov.uk

Bathgate CSC

Bathgateaho@westlothian.gov.uk

Blackburn Connected

Blackburnaho@westlothian.gov.uk

Broxburn CSC

Broxburnaho@westlothian.gov.uk

Fauldhouse CSC

Fauldhouseaho@westlothian.gov.uk

Linlithgow CSC

Linlithgowaho@westlothian.gov.uk

Livingston CSC

Livingstonaho@westlothian.gov.uk

West Calder CSC

Westcalderaho@westlothian.gov.uk

Whitburn CSC

Whitburnaho@westlothian.gov.uk

West Lothian Connected

CSC, Almondvale Centre

www.westlothian.gov.uk

online 24 hours a day

Log on and you can:

- Pay your council tax, rent, or fines online
- Apply for a house
- Report a repair to your home
- Make an enquiry for information
- Make a comment on any Council service
- Browsealoud



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Housing Information & Advice

Who can get information and advice?

Anyone in West Lothian, who has a housing related problem or query – whether you are a council tenant, an owner/occupier, a lodger, living at home, privately renting, a housing association tenant or even a landlord.

What sort of housing advice can we provide?

We can help you get general financial, housing or legal advice where appropriate. We can also provide general housing advice and assistance. Please contact us if you would like information or advice on any housing problem including:

- Homelessness/homelessness prevention
- Your housing options
- Information and advice on managing debt
- Mortgage arrears
- Rent arrears
- Repairs and improvement grants
- Disrepair
- Housing Benefit/other benefit entitlements
- Discrimination or harassment
- Relationship breakdown and your housing rights/options
- Help to allow you to stay in your own home, such as support, aids or adaptations
- Your rights with respect to the legal process of eviction
- Mortgagors' rights under the Mortgage Rights (Scotland) Act 2001 and Mortgage to Let Schemes



What sort of help is available?

It depends on the nature of the problem. Sometimes all that is needed is an explanation of services that are available and how to access them.

In more complicated situations you may need to speak to someone in depth about your housing problem, to enable them to help you. This will usually involve a confidential interview with a Housing Needs Officer or a specialist adviser. You will be interviewed in private to discuss your situation, but you can bring someone with you to the interview if you want to. Home visits can be arranged by appointment if you are unable to get to one of our offices.

Where can I get information & advice?

Get information and advice about any housing issue or problem by:

- Visiting your Local Council Office
- Phoning the Customer Service Centre on **01506 775000** anytime. (It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
- E-mailing customer.care@westlothian.gov.uk
- Going online to: www.westlothian.gov.uk and click on 'Housing'

Office opening hours

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri
Ability Centre	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 3	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 4
Armadale	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 3	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 4
Bathgate	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 3	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 4
Blackburn	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 3	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 4
Broxburn	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 4
Fauldhouse	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 3	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 4
Linlithgow	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 4
West Calder	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 4
West Lothian Connected	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	10 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 4
Whitburn	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 3	8.30 - 5	8.30 - 4

Independent advice?

You can get independent advice from the council's Advice Shop.

This free service has specialist advisors who can assist you with Welfare Benefits, Housing & Energy advice and Money Advice.

These advisors will help you to claim any Welfare Benefits you are entitled to, negotiate with landlords, mortgage lenders and creditors on your behalf, or provide you with advice or assistance on energy and its domestic uses, any grants available and billing issues.

Simply pop along to the Advice Shop at Unit 9, Waverley Industrial Estate, Waverley Street, Bathgate. Call **01506 776444**.

Advice Shop opening hours

	Open	Close
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday	9.00am	5.00pm
Wednesday	9.00am	1.00pm
Friday	9.00am	4.00pm

Open session at the Advice Shop

Wednesday	9.00am	1.00pm
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On occasion we may be able to assist you in finding an independent mediation provider. This can sometimes be a helpful way of dealing with an issue; this involves a mediator (someone who does not take sides, but whose job is to help both parties find a solution to the problem). The parties in dispute, and not the mediator, decide what will happen in terms of any agreement made.

You can also contact any of the following organisations for further information and advice:

Shelter

0808 800 4444

<http://www.scotland.shelter.org.uk>

Citizens Advice Bureau/Citizens Advice Direct

0844 848 9600

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

National Debtline

0808 808 4000

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk/scotland

Money Advice Scotland

www.moneyadvicescotland.org.uk

You also have the option of consulting a local solicitor; their details are available in the local phonebook/yellow pages.

The legal aid system in Scotland provides free or subsidised legal assistance for individuals who cannot afford to pay for it themselves. Advice and assistance may be provided by a solicitor on any matter of Scots Law, subject to a test for financial eligibility carried out by a solicitor. The Scottish Legal Aid board can provide more information about the legal aid system, for more details please check their website www.slaid.org.uk or call their helpline 0845 122 8688 between am – 11pm.

Welfare Benefits

Benefit health checks

Are you

- Confused by the range of benefits on offer?
- Daunted by the claims process?
- Unsure if you're receiving benefits at the correct level?

Sound familiar? If so, don't worry – help is at hand!

West Lothian Council is offering you the chance to find out everything you need to know about your entitlement to welfare, in the form of a free and completely confidential Benefits Healthcheck.

How do I know this service is for me?

The service is available to everyone – whatever the circumstances. We would strongly recommend that you use this service if you are:

- a new tenant
- caring for someone
- a lone parent
- struggling to pay bills
- on a low income
- claiming benefits but your circumstances have changed



So what will happen if I want to use this service?

If you are interested in the service, you'll be offered a private appointment with a benefits expert from the Advice Shop. Your adviser will ask a few simple questions about your circumstances and from this will be able to tell you about any extra income you may be entitled to.

Why is this service so special?

This service will tell you about every benefit available to you in one contact – there's no need to go chasing around different agencies for information. In short, it is a unique opportunity to get a complete check of your full eligibility for benefits.

How long will the Healthcheck take?

It shouldn't take more than about 15-20 minutes.

You need to have information on the following:

It would be helpful if you could bring your:

- benefits books
- wage slips
- details of rent
- details of council tax
- any other financial details you think might be relevant, e.g. details of savings

Are there any catches?

No. The service is free, easy to access and completely discreet. Any information you give to us will be held in the strictest confidence, and will not be disclosed to any third parties.

I'm interested, so what do I do now?

Contact your local Customer Service Centre for an appointment with a specialist adviser.

What happens if I'm unable to visit the office?

Please contact **01506 776444** and we will either collect the information by phone or arrange for someone to call at your home.

Energy Advice

West Lothian Council Energy Advice offers free, confidential and impartial advice on all fuel related issues, to all residents of West Lothian whether they are council or private tenants or homeowners. We can deal with a variety of issues including: new tenant advice, heating use, payment methods, cutting down your fuel bills, insulation measures, billing problems and energy efficiency grants.

We can negotiate on your behalf with your fuel supplier and if you have been caught by surprise with a large fuel bill, we can help arrange suitable payment plans and/or investigate the cause for you.

We are also available to give talks and training to community groups and organisations on all domestic fuel related issues and can also carry out home visits.

Based at the Advice Shop in Bathgate we are open for you to visit during the following opening hours:

9.00am – 5.00pm Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays

9.00am – 1.00pm Wednesdays

9.00am – 4.00pm Fridays

We can be contacted on

FREEPHONE 0800 834 672

By email:

energy.advice@westlothian.gov.uk

By letter:

West Lothian Energy Advice

FREEPOST EH3217

Bathgate

West Lothian

EH48 0BR