

Finding a Place To Live



This leaflet gives you information about finding a place to live. It gives details of temporary accommodation and also longer term housing solutions. You can also find information on our website at www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/housing/.

IF YOU ARE HOMELESS

If you are homeless, please contact the Housing Needs & Advice Team on 01296 585168 or 585197. If they are unable to help, you may be able to get emergency accommodation from one of the options listed below.

Hostels & night shelters

There are a variety of different types of hostels and night shelters. Most are "direct access" which means that you may contact the hostels directly regarding accommodation, whilst some only accept a referral from a Housing Advisor in the Housing Needs & Advice Team. A Housing Advisor can be contacted on telephone 01296 585168.

If you wish to be referred to a hostel, please contact a Housing Advisor on the above number.

Women's refuges

Women's refuges offer accommodation for women and their children who have suffered emotional or physical abuse from a partner or member of their family. They are ordinary houses, shared by other women and their children. Women do not have to go to a refuge in their own area, and the address is kept secret to protect women from those they

have fled. The Aylesbury Women's Aid Centre may be contacted on 01296 436827 and for a 24 hour emergency service contact the Samaritans on 01494 432000 and ask for Aylesbury Women's Aid Centre.

Staying with friends

This may be a good emergency option but if you are looking for more permanent accommodation, please refer to the next section.

LOOKING FOR MORE PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION

a) Private rented accommodation

How to find a place to rent

- Ask friends, family, work colleagues
- Check shop windows, notice boards in newsagents, libraries etc.
- Advertise yourself by putting an advert in a local newspaper or shop, or a notice board at work, saying what type of rented accommodation you are looking for and how much rent you could afford to pay
- Look through local newspapers, since they usually have a section on rented places and flat shares. Local newspapers include:

The Bucks Herald - *available on Wednesdays*

The Bucks Advertiser - *available on Fridays*

The Buckingham & Winslow Advertiser - *available on Fridays*

The Bucks Free Press - *available on Thursdays*

The Citizen - *available on Fridays*

All of the above are available in your local library.

- Letting Agencies - may charge you for certain services. It is a good idea to ask what they charge for before accepting accommodation
- The internet

Money in advance

You will probably need a deposit (usually equivalent to one month's rent) plus a month's rent in advance. You may also be asked for references from your previous landlord, your employer or bank.

You should always get a receipt for any money you hand over.

What about Tenancy Agreements?

An agreement may be verbal or written and both are legally binding. You should always read an agreement carefully before signing it.

Your rights as a tenant differ depending on the type of tenancy you have. Our Housing Advisors can advise you further if you are unsure about your rights. They can also give advice about issues of harassment or illegal eviction, or see our leaflet called "*Harassment & Illegal Eviction Factsheet*", available online at the website address at the end of this leaflet.

b) Affordable rented housing

To apply for the Council's Housing Register you need to complete an application form. You can apply on-line at www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk.

Anyone can apply to the Register. The only reasons we would not accept you would be:

- i) If you were not an eligible person because of your immigration status or;
- ii) your current or past behaviour was such that we believe you would be unsuitable to be a tenant.

We would let you know if this applied to you and you would have the right to appeal against our decision.

The Housing Register, via Bucks Home Choice, is a way of allocating housing. Bucks Home Choice gives you more choice about where you live and when you want to move. You decide which properties you would like and you can then express your interest in them.

c) Shared ownership schemes (Homebuy)

Shared ownership is a part buy part rent scheme which aims to help people who cannot afford a property outright.

[Catalyst](#) run the shared ownership scheme in Aylesbury Vale.

d) Registered Social Landlords (or Housing Associations)

Most housing associations are non-profit making organisations and are members of the National Housing Federation.

A list of housing associations is available on our website <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/housing/housing-services/other-sources-of-help-and-advice/housing-association-contact-details>. Some housing associations are pleased to accept direct applications from enquirers without the support of the Council.

CAN I GET HELP TO PAY MY RENT ?

If you are on a low wage, or receiving any welfare benefits, you may be eligible for help towards your rent through Housing Benefit.

The Housing Benefit Team at AVDC can advise you on the maximum rent they would cover for a property, before you decide to rent it. This is known as a **Local Housing Allowance (LHA)**. The LHA is a flat rate allowance based on your family size and the location of your property.

Housing Benefit is usually paid directly to you unless your landlord is a registered social landlord.

Special Rules for Under 35's

If you are single and under 35 and eligible for Housing Benefit, the Housing Benefit Regulations restrict the amount of benefit you can receive (This regulation does not apply to you if you rent from a Housing Association.)

This means that many single people under 35 who need to claim Housing Benefit may find that a self-contained place (i.e. not sharing with anyone else) will be too expensive for them. However, it is always worth contacting the Housing Benefit Team to check your entitlement and to establish whether a place is likely to be affordable for you.

For other general housing needs enquiries please visit our website www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/housing , email us on housingneeds@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk or call 01296 585197 or 585168.



AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 8FF

Tel: 01296 585197/585168 E-mail: housingneeds@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk

www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk

