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decent homes



Lettings
Waltham
Forest



Tenant Information Pack



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From arranging the removal to settling into the new accommodation, moving home can be a stressful and costly time. Remember there is help available.

ARRANGING REMOVALS

We cannot recommend any particular removal or van hire company. We suggest you check local phone directories, get recommendations from friends or check the Internet before choosing which company to use. Get a few quotes so that you can compare prices. Here is a list of things you may wish to consider when arranging the removal.

- How much furniture do I have? This can help you decide the size of van or car you need.
- Do I need help with packing? Remember this may cost extra.
- What is the approximate distance between the two properties?
- Can I hire a van and do it myself? Remember, you will probably need some help from friends and you must have the appropriate licence to drive the van.

GETTING GOODS OUT OF STORAGE

If the Council stored your belongings while you were in temporary accommodation, please contact us for this furniture to be taken out of storage and delivered to your new address. You must mention it to Lettings Waltham Forest at the time you accept the property. You must arrange for your belongings to be delivered as soon as you accept the property. If you do not arrange this quickly the Council may dispose of your belongings.

BUYING FURNITURE AT A REASONABLE PRICE

Whether buying new or used furniture, buying it all at the same time can be expensive. On page 4 is a list of furniture projects who sell new and used furniture. You may need to be referred to the project and the Housing Support and Resettlement Team can do this for you.

GETTING A GRANT OR LOAN FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS (DWP)

If you are in receipt of Income Support or non-contribution based Job Seekers Allowance [JSA], you may be eligible for a payment from the Social Fund to help buy essential furniture.

Whether you get a loan or grant depends on your personal circumstances. If you work and are on a low income we may be able to assist you by applying to various charities or trusts that assist families in need. Ask your Caseworker for more information; they may be able to refer you to the Housing Support and Resettlement Team.

EBAY

There are a large number of used items of furniture advertised on eBay, an online auction website. To view advertisements, go to <http://home-garden.shop.ebay.co.uk/>

You can sort the items that appear by distance to your new home, so that the closest items appear on the list first. Most of the bulkier items will be available for pick up only. You should read the descriptions of the products carefully before you place any bids and you can always contact the sellers in advance of the auction ending to see whether you can arrange to view the item if you are unsure.



Moving in – What help is available?



GUMTREE

Gumtree is a website where sellers can advertise any used goods that they have for sale. Gumtree can be accessed by going to www.gumtree.com/home-garden You can sort advertisements by location (there is a special London section) and also search advertisements if you are looking for particular items of furniture. You should always view the item before purchasing and only offer cash on collection of any items.

FREECYCLE

Freecycle is a website where all items offered must be free of charge. There is a dedicated webpage for each London Borough, www.freecycle.org/group/UK/London If you require certain items you can also post a wanted ad encouraging anyone with that item who is willing to offer it for free to contact you direct. You can view all items offered for free by clicking on the "Offers" tab. You will need to arrange collection of any items that you want.

Moving in checklist

There are a number of things to do when you first move into a new home. Use the checklist below as a reminder.

Action	Tick (when completed)
Check the inventory (if applicable) and make a note of any discrepancies on the inventory and notify your Landlord or Managing Agent in writing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take a reading of the electricity meter and ring the electricity company to get the bills changed over into your name (see Utilities – What do I need to do? for guidance)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take a reading of the gas meter and ring the gas company to get the bills changed over into your name (see Utilities – What do I need to do?)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take a reading of the water meter and ring the water company to get the bills changed over into your name (see Utilities – What do I need to do?)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Familiarise yourself with the appliances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating system – radiators, thermostat, hot water, boiler • Cooker, grill and oven • Washing machine 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gain permission from the private landlord or managing agent for any internal decoration you wish to do	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep a copy of your Tenancy Agreement in a safe place	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete and submit Housing Benefit claim form with supporting documents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notify companies, friends and family of change of address	<input type="checkbox"/>



Furniture projects

RESTORE COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Austin Willet Unit 18, Ashley Road, Tottenham, London, N17 9LJ
Tel: 020 8493 0900
Email: info@restorecp.org
Website: www.restorecommunityprojects.org

HOMESTORE

Unit 2, Maryland Industrial Estate, 26 Maryland Road, Stratford, London, E15 1JW
Tel: 020 8519 6264
Website: www.quakersocialaction.com





Rent – What are my responsibilities?



It is very important that you keep up with your rent payments. Failure to do so may result in you losing your home and may prevent you from being re-housed again. You should arrange with your landlord how they wish to receive the rent payments. It is advisable to set up a direct debit from your account to the landlord to ensure that they receive the rent payments on time.

HOW MUCH RENT AM I LIABLE FOR?

The amount of rent you are liable for is detailed in your tenancy agreement

HOW DO I CLAIM HOUSING BENEFIT?

- You need to complete an intention to claim Housing Benefit form. Or if you are currently claiming Housing Benefit you must complete a change of circumstances form.
- We refer all received documents to the dedicated Housing Benefit team who will contact you via telephone/e-mail or letter to make an appointment to complete your claim.
- All claims are completed on line. To make a claim visit Waltham Forest Direct or visit www.walthamforest.gov.uk/benefits You must provide all the original documents requested by Housing Benefit within the timescales and without delay.
- You must inform Housing Benefit immediately if there are any changes in your circumstances such as a change in your income or the number of people that live at your home.



As the tenant, you are responsible for paying the rent. If at any time you are unable to do so you should contact Housing Solutions, Cedar Wood House, 2d Fulbourne Road, E17 4GG. Tel: **020 8496 5575** Email: **Housing.Advice@aschamhomes.org.uk** in order to discuss your options if your home is in Waltham Forest.

How can I contact the Council?

You can access information about the services the Council and Ascham Homes have to offer by calling Waltham Forest Direct on:

020 8496 3000

open 24 hours every day of the year

If you wish to access information online, our website is www.walthamforest.gov.uk

For those who would like to attend in person there are several options available. To speak to someone face to face you can attend one of the following offices:

Customer Service Centre
 137 Hoe Street
 E17 4RT

Opening times:
 Monday to Friday 8.30am – 6.00pm
 Saturday 9am – 1pm

Walthamstow Town Hall
 Forest Road
 Walthamstow E17 4JF

Opening times:
 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

You can also pop into one of the following libraries to get information on a range of Council services:

- Leyton Library
- Leytonstone Library
- North Chingford Library
- Walthamstow Library

Find out more at:
www.walthamforest.gov.uk/libraries

IN AN EMERGENCY
 If you have an emergency and you need to contact the Council out of hours please call Waltham Forest Direct.
020 8496 3000





Who you contact when you need repairs to be done in the home depends on who your landlord or managing agent is. The first thing to do is report it.

WHAT AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR?

	Your Responsibility
Give the Landlord access to the property to carry out any repairs/maintenance that are his/her responsibility	✓
Garden upkeep (the responsibility for this will be determined in your Tenancy Agreement, it usually rests with the Tenant)	✓
Changing light-bulbs	✓
Gaining permission from the Landlord (private landlords/managing agents and Lettings Waltham Forest only) before making holes in the wall to put up pictures	✓
Gaining permission from the Landlord (private landlords/managing agents and Lettings Waltham Forest only) before decorating internally	✓
Minimising the effects of condensation wherever possible by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drying clothes outside • Keeping lids on saucepans when cooking • Opening bathroom windows when running baths or taking showers • Using ventilation fans wherever fitted 	✓
Regular testing and replacing the batteries in the smoke alarms if provided	✓
Notifying your Landlord as soon as a repair issue arises	✓
Minimising the occurrence of drain and sewage blockages by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not pouring fat down sink plugholes • Minimising food waste down sink plugholes • Not flushing nappies, condoms, wipes, tampons or sanitary towels down toilets 	✓



PRIVATE LANDLORDS/MANAGING AGENTS

The law says that the landlord is responsible for certain repairs:

- Structure (roof, walls, windows, floors)
- The outside (gutters, drains, pipes)
- Installation for heating water and space
- Baths, sinks, toilets and basins

You should report repairs directly to the Managing Agent or Landlord, their details will be found in your tenancy agreement.

If the private landlord or managing agent has not carried out the repairs you have requested then you can contact the Housing Standards Team on **020 8496 3000**. You should provide them with information on the type of disrepair, when you informed the landlord of the issue and the landlord/agent's response.

LETTINGS WALTHAM FOREST

If the property that you are living in is being managed by Lettings Waltham Forest, you can contact the Lettings Team on 0208 496 5525 or lettingswalthamforest@aschamhomes.org.uk to make any repair requests.

REGISTERED PROVIDERS

Most registered providers have their own arrangements for repairs. Contact your housing officer or look at your tenancy agreement or Tenants Handbook for details of who and where to report repairs. If a reference number is given, keep a copy, and refer back to it if you are dissatisfied with the service.





Bidding is a process which allows those on the Council's housing register to choose properties from a list available via our Choice Based Lettings scheme. For more information visit the Council's website at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/housing.

You can see the properties available in the 'Choice Homes' magazine which can be picked up from Cedar Wood House, libraries and the Customer Service Centre.

This system allows you to bid (express an interest in specific empty properties). It doesn't involve money like bidding in an auction! There is only one application cycle (Thursday to Monday) during each week. You are allowed to bid for up to two properties.

There are no guarantees that you will get the property you are bidding for as others will bid for the same property. Remember people housed in private leased properties can continue to bid while they are in this property.

Choice Homes
How to bid for properties
 You can bid by:

- phone on 0845 650 4125
- text on 0778 148 6526
- visiting the website at www.ellchoicehomes.org.uk

To bid you will need to know which properties you can choose from. The icon beside each property will tell you which group can apply. To find out which icon relates to your case or get further advice or assistance contact:
The Registrations Team on: Tel 020 8496 5425/5427

Examples of the icons used in our bidding magazine

- Council Tenants Seeking Transfer
- Priority Homeseeker
- Homeless Homeseeker
- Adapted for Disabled people only
- Available to applicants over the age of 50 only

To apply for a vacancy, you will need to enter

- Your Housing Registration number
- Date of birth as stated on your Registration letter
- The reference number of the property you wish to apply for.

[Contact the Registrations Team on the numbers listed above]



When you move into new accommodation you will be responsible for payment of all utility bills.

There are many companies offering deals and promotions. Be careful and shop around to get a good deal. Remember to check payment methods, call out services and billing methods. Do not sign up to any agreement until you are sure you want to use the company.

If you are thinking about switching suppliers there are a number of websites that will help you compare the best deals.

Remember to always take a meter reading when you move into the property and write it down to give to the new utility company. If you are not sure where your meter is, give your landlord or managing agent a call.

Who provides my gas, electricity and water?

To find out who supplies your gas, you can call the M Number Enquiry Line (formerly Transco): **0870 608 1524**

To find out who supplies your electricity, you can call your local electric distribution company. For the London region, call: **0845 601 5467**.

If you are living in London, your water supplier will be Thames Water: **0845 9200 888**

Gas emergencies National Gas Emergency Service **0800 111 999**

Electricity emergencies London emergencies: EDF Distribution **0800 028 0247**

Water emergencies Thames Water emergencies: **0845 9200 800**

Ways to pay

- Monthly or Quarterly Billing
- Direct Debit or Standing order
- Postal payment
- Pre-payment card
- Key meter

Please note: Speak to your fuel provider before deciding which payment method suits you.



It is important to notify various people and companies that you have moved address. Below is a list of organisations/individuals that you may find useful to check against.

The Council manages the admissions process for schools in the borough. The process differs depending on the age of the child and type of school required. Information for parents can be found on our website at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/education-and-learning or by contacting the helpdesk (details below).

FOR YOUR NOTES:	Contacted? (✓)	Date contacted
Bank or building society		
Credit or store cards companies		
Financial companies with whom you have hire purchase agreements		
HM Revenue and Customs		
Gas, electricity and water suppliers		
DWP*		
Insurers – motor, contents, life, travel		
DVLA for driving licence		
TV licence <small>Form available at Post Office</small>		
Mobile phone and internet companies		
Charities and clubs		
Magazine subscriptions		
Health services – GP, Dentist		
Friends and family		
Other (please list)		

*If you are using a different office your address will be changed automatically when you make your new claim. If your office has not changed you will need to notify the office of the change of circumstances

RE-DIRECTING MAIL

If you wish to have your mail redirected (sent by the post office to your new address) you must complete a form which you can pick up from the Post Office or call Royal Mail on 08457 740 740 and they will send you one. There is a charge for the service (in August 2012 the charge was £12.50 for one month) and you must provide 2 forms of original identification from a list they provide. You can arrange for your post to be re-directed for up to 12 months.

Helpful tips when looking for a new school/college place

- Get a full list of what is available in your area so you can make an informed choice
- Visit the school - check if they have an open day or if someone from the school can show you around
- Try to speak to parents/carers of current pupils
- Check that the school can provide a curriculum that can meet your child's needs
- Consider as many schools as possible, try not to restrict yourself to one school only
- Submit applications on the correct form and with all the relevant supporting evidence
- Make sure you send your application in on time
- You can appeal against decisions you do not agree with.
- Advice available from DfES Tel: **0870 000 2288**.

Waltham Forest Community Learning and Skills Service (CLaSS)

Waltham Forest Community Learning and Skills Service (CLaSS) is Waltham Forest Council's direct provider of adult education and work based training. They provide a range of accredited and non-accredited learning opportunities for adults and young people across the borough. Visit www.walthamforestclass.gov.uk to find out more.

Pupil admissions service will advise you on many things including

- Information about all LBWF schools
 - Comprehensive list of schools
- To find out more about school admissions visit the website at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/school-admissions

The Tenant Support and Resettlement Team is based in Housing Solutions at Cedar Wood House. Our role is to provide support, assistance and information to residents who are in temporary accommodation or who have just been awarded settled accommodation. We can also provide advice on training and employment opportunities. You can contact the team on **020 8496 5450**.



As the Green Tree symbol, which represents the borough suggests, Waltham Forest takes environmental issues seriously. Please take part in the important efforts made by this authority and many residents in keeping our community a safe and environmentally friendly place to live in.

Environmental services

You can contact Waltham Forest Direct on **020 8496 3000** for the following services:

- Refuse collection
- Street cleansing
- Public lighting
- Recycling collection
- Abandoned vehicles

Waltham Forest Council can provide advice and information on a range of issues including,

- Noise nuisance
- Pest control
- Public Health nuisances

If you require a pest control officer to carry out treatment of an infestation, there may be a charge. You can also report any environmental issues to any of the offices detailed in the section 'How can I contact the council?' on page 7.

Recycling centres

There are three recycling centres in Waltham Forest. These are owned and managed by the North London Waste Authority. You can find out where they are and what they recycle at :

www.walthamforest.gov.uk/recycling
or contact Waltham Forest Direct on **020 8496 3000**.

Waltham Forest is a religiously diverse borough, which is reflected in the many different places of worship available.

International Muslim Movement
12, East Avenue, London, E17 9NG
Tel: 020 8520 4121

Voice of Faith Ministries
209, Wood St, London, E17 3NU
Tel: 020 8503 6969

Walthamstow United Reform Asian Christian Church
103, Orford Rd, London, E17 9QU
Tel: 020 8552 0100

Methodist Church
Winchester Rd, London, E4 9JP
Tel: 020 8531 8663

Christ Church Leyton
52, Elm Rd, Leytonstone, London, E11 4DW
Tel: 020 8539 4980

The Chingford Islamic Society
92, Chingford Mount Rd, London, E4 9AA
Tel: 020 8523 5826

Jamia Mosque Ghosia
439-451, Lea Bridge Rd, London, E10 7EA
Tel: 020 8539 4282

Waltham Forest Hebrew Congregation
140, Boundary Rd, London, E17 8LA

Christ Apostolic Church Gospel Generation
12-14, Ferndale Rd, Leytonstone, London, E11 3DN
Tel: 020 8556 3031

Wesleyan Holiness Church
1, Harrow Green, London, E11 3HP
Tel: 020 8558 8353

Ridgeway Evangelical Church
The Ridgeway, London, E4 6PU
Tel: 020 8524 1410

Gurdwara Sikh Sangat
71, Francis Rd, Leyton, London, E10 6PL
Tel: 020 8556 4732
St. Margarets
Woodhouse Rd, Leytonstone, London, E11 3NG
Tel: 020 8519 0813

Church of the Nazarene
50, Church Hill, Walthamstow, London, E17 9RY
Tel: 020 8923 8890

The London Chingford Congregation Of Jehovahs Witness
86, Larkshall Rd, London, E4 6PE
Tel: 020 8529 0027

Elim Pentecostal Church
Hainault Rd, London, E11 1EL
Tel: 020 8539 2286

Leytonstone Mosque
8 Dacre Road, London, E11 3AG
Tel: 020 8539 7251

Chingford United Reformed Church
2b, Buxton Rd, London, E4 7DP
Tel: 020 8529 8888

This list is not exhaustive and contact details may be subject to change. For additional places of worship please contact Waltham Forest Direct on **020 8496 3000**, the local telephone directory or **www.yell.com**



Leisure facilities

You can find several parks, gardens and open spaces in Waltham Forest, which often hold events and activities for the whole family.

For more information contact **020 8496 3000** and ask for 'Greenspace'.

LEYTON LEISURE LAGOON

763 High Road
Leyton
London E10 5AB
Tel: 020 8558 8858
Fax: 020 8558 7150

Tube: Leyton (Central Line)
Train: Leyton Midland
Buses: W16, 69, 97

Free parking is available

CATHALL LEISURE CENTRE

Cathall Road,
London E11 4LA
Tel: 020 8539 8343
Fax: 020 8558 7544

Tube: Leyton or Leytonstone (Central Line)
Bus: W14, W15, 257 and 69

Free parking is available

KELMSCOTT LEISURE CENTRE

Markhouse Road
Walthamstow,
London
E17 8RN
Tel: 020 8520 7464
Fax: 020 8509 0845

Tube: Walthamstow Central or Blackhorse (Victoria Line)

Free parking is available

LARKSWOOD LEISURE CENTRE

Larkwood Leisure Park
New Road
Chingford
London E4 9EY
Tel: 020 523 8215

Nearest Train: Highams Park

Free parking is available

Waltham Forest manages five leisure centres in the borough and is working in partnership with Greenwich Leisure Ltd to provide a wide variety of quality sporting facilities including sports halls, swimming pools, fitness centres, steam rooms, saunas, children's play areas and much more. Further information can be found on the Council's website at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/leisure-centres

POOL & TRACK

Chingford Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 5AA
Tel: 020 8527 5431
Fax: 020 8531 9299

Tube: Walthamstow Central or Blackhorse Road (Victoria Line)

Free parking is available



Transport links

The borough is well connected by a wide range of bus, underground and train services as well as several miles of cycle paths.

UNDERGROUND STATIONS

- Walthamstow Central
- Blackhorse Road
- Leyton
- Leytonstone
- Victoria Line
- Victoria Line
- Central Line
- Central Line

TRAIN STATIONS

- Chingford
- Highams Park
- Wood street
- Walthamstow Central
- St James Street
- Walthamstow Queens Road
- Leyton Midland Road
- Leytonstone High Road
- Walthamstow Central

LONDON TRAVEL INFORMATION

- Including buses, routes and times
- Tel: **020 7222 1234 (24hrs a day)**
- Email: travinfo@tfl.gov.uk
- Website: www.tfl.gov.uk

FREEDOM PASS

If you were born on or before 5 May 1951, your principal residence is in London or you have an eligible disability, you may be eligible for a Freedom Pass.

Find out more at www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/freedompass

Children under 16 can travel free at any time on trams and across the entire London bus network, including sections outside Greater London. Visit www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets

Under-11s can also travel free on the Tube and DLR during off-peak hours when they are travelling with an adult who has a valid ticket, are using Oyster to pay as they go or has a Freedom Pass.





Waltham Forest Community Credit Union (WFCCU) is a financial cooperative for people who live, work, study or worship in the borough.

Their purpose is to provide members with low cost financial services. Members pool savings to provide a source for inexpensive loans. Free life insurance is provided on all savings and loans. WFCCU continue to help benefit recipients through encouragement of on-going savings geared towards improving your long-term financial standing.

LOANS

The provision of low cost loans to members is a vital part of the objectives of the credit union. The credit union has a credit committee that is responsible for the general supervision of all loans to members.

How much does it cost?

Loans from your credit union carry an interest rate of less than 2% per month on the reducing balance of the loan. You must be a member and there is an administration fee of £3 per loan.

What are the criteria to qualify?

To qualify for a loan you should:

- Be a member
- Be 18 years or over
- Demonstrate your ability to repay the loan
- Intend to use the loan for a provident or productive purpose

You no longer need to have had savings over 3 months. New members and existing members can apply today!

Top-up loans and refinancing services are also provided at members' requests and based on circumstances. Feel free to contact us for further information.

How quickly are loans granted?

Your loan may be approved and issued within minutes of your application or it may take up to two weeks. The time it takes will depend on the loan value requested, the information provided and the next scheduled date for the credit committee's meeting.

Emergency loans will be considered for faster approvals.

Find out more at www.wfccu.org

Fire safety tips

Keeping yourself and your family safe is important. Here are a few safety tips, which we hope will assist you:

- Most fires that happen in the home start accidentally. By following a few basic steps you can stop these fires from happening – you are responsible for fire safety in your home.
- If a fire breaks out, get out, stay out and call the Fire Brigade by dialling 999 – don't try to fight a fire yourself, unless you have to.
- If a fire starts (if you can), close the door of the room where the fire is and close all other doors behind you. Don't waste time trying to pick up valuables or possessions, your life is more important.
- Never open a door unless you have to escape through it. If you have to open a door, use the back of your hand to touch it first. If it feels warm, don't open the door. The fire could be on the other side.

- If you can't get out, you need to find one room for everyone to take shelter in. Go into the room and close the door. Use towels, sheets or clothes to block any gaps under the door to stop smoke spreading into the room. Go to the window and try to attract attention. Ask people to call the Fire Brigade.
- Do not leave saucepans, chip pans or kettles unattended
- Do not forget to turn off the cooker when you have finished cooking. Switch off and unplug all electrical appliances not designed to stay on before you go to bed.
- Make sure there are no cigarettes still burning and never smoke in bed.
- Fit a smoke alarm. This safety measure could save your life. You can get one for under £5 from a DIY, electrical or hardware shop. The London Fire Brigade will carry out a free fire safety check and will fit a free smoke alarm where needed. Contact them free on 08000 28 44 28.
- Never leave children in the kitchen unsupervised

For more information on fire safety contact www.londonfire.gov.uk or your local Community Safety Unit on 020 8345 2529



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