

housing

a guide to services for older
and disabled people in Hackney



HACKNEY

housing

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your home

Having a home where you feel safe, secure and happy is an important part of life. Often, it is something you may have worked many years to achieve. Whether you are in a position where you want to stay put, move on or are dealing with a crisis, this guide is designed to help you find the support you need.

Age Concern Hackney Information Service

22 Dalston Lane
London E8 3AZ

 **0800 917 9830**

Opening times Phone Service: 9.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday.
Drop-in Service: 10am to 1pm Monday to Thursday
& 2pm to 4pm on Tuesday.

If you need help or advice about a housing issue, the Information Service is a good place to start. It is able to refer you on to more specialist services such as Age Concern Hackney's Coldline and has details of sheltered housing schemes in the borough. Staff can also take you through the Elderly Accommodation Counsel's HOOP questionnaire on moving home (see page 27 for more details).

Age Concern Hackney Coldline

Coldline provides free, confidential and independent advice to those in the community 'at risk' from the cold. It is open to older people, people with a disability or parents with a child under 5 years old who are experiencing problems keeping warm and live in Hackney. The Coldline office is open all year round, with a 24-hour 7 days a week Emergency Helpline operating between 1st November and 31st March. Outside normal office hours, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5.30pm, the Helpline is answered by LBH Emergency Services. If your heating breaks down in the winter ring this line:

Emergency Helpline

 **020 7241 2299**

staying put

Keeping up with repairs or doing the gardening can be a problem as you get older. Getting help from your landlord can sometimes be difficult and if you own your home, paying for work to be done can be a worry. This section highlights some of the things you can do to help you remain living independently.

HELP WITH REPAIRS

If you are a council, housing association or private tenant, your landlord has a legal duty to carry out certain repairs to your property. The information contained under the heading Tenants (see below), takes you through some of the procedures you can follow to ensure that repairs are carried out within a reasonable time.

If you own your own home, the responsibility for the upkeep rests with you. However, there are organisations listed in this section under the headings Small Repairs (see page 4) and Large Repairs (see page 5) who can help you to get good quality work done at an affordable price.

TENANTS

Most repairs to your property will be the responsibility of your landlord. This could include anything from a broken tap to a leaking roof. Your tenancy agreement should state clearly what you can expect your landlord to do regarding the upkeep of your home and which areas are your responsibility. However, to ensure you do not undertake any work which is your landlord's responsibility, you should report any disrepair to them first.

If you are in disagreement with your landlord about who is responsible for a repair to your home, you should seek advice and support. Some of the organisations listed in the Useful Contacts section (see page 26) such as Hackney Community Law Centre, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Hoxton Trust Legal Advice Centre, may be able to help.

Contacting Your Landlord

If you decide to telephone your landlord to report a problem it is important to make a note of the date you phoned. You should also note the nature of the repair you told them about. Landlords seldom keep a record of your telephone calls, so if you have to phone them again you will be able to refer to your earlier call.

It is often better to write to your landlord with details of the repair, asking them to repair it as quickly as possible. If you have already telephoned them, refer to the date of the phone call in your letter. Make sure you date letters clearly and keep a copy of them.

Complaining to Your Landlord

If you are having difficulties getting your landlord to carry out a repair in a reasonable time, you may need to make a complaint. This should be in writing with copies taken of everything sent. Council, housing association and large private landlords often have a complaints procedure and target times in which repairs have to be carried out. If you have a tenant's booklet or tenancy agreement, it will state the landlord's duty to carry out repairs. It may also set out the target times for repairs or how to make a complaint.

Complaints procedures are set out in stages or steps, with target times of when the landlord should reply to you. If the landlord ignores or delays in dealing with your complaint, you should approach the most senior manager at the landlord's office. Often, referring your complaint to the highest level in the landlord's office can obtain fast results because it is the role of senior managers to ensure that correct procedures are followed.

If your landlord does not have target times for carrying out repairs or a complaints procedure, it is still important to make a written complaint, referring to the previous times you contacted them about the problem. If you need help to make a complaint, some of the organisations listed in the Useful Contacts section (see page 26) such as Hackney Community Law Centre, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Hoxton Trust Legal Advice Centre, may be able to help. They will also be able to advise you on other actions that you can take to make sure your landlord sorts out your repair.

Compensation

Your landlord has a legal duty to carry out repairs within a reasonable length of time once they have been notified. If your landlord fails to do this, you have a legal right to obtain compensation from them.

If the problem is large, such as dampness or rain water getting in over several months or even years, then the compensation you are owed can be as much as several thousand pounds. How much you could receive in compensation will depend on the type of disrepair and the length of time you have had to put up with it.

Large or small, if your landlord has failed to carry out a repair within a reasonable time or has taken too long to complete the job, you have a right to claim compensation for your distress or inconvenience. To get help with making a claim, you can either contact one of the groups previously mentioned on page 2 or go to a local solicitor who specialises in housing. Depending on your income and savings you may be eligible for free or low cost legal assistance. The Age Concern Hackney Information Service (see page 1) has lists of local solicitors.

SMALL REPAIRS

If you are a tenant and you need help with work in your home which is not the responsibility of your landlord or if you are a home owner, the following services may be able to help.

Mobile Repair Service

2 St Paul's Road
London N1 2QN




 **020 7226 8431**

Opening times 10.30am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday.

It provides a Small Repairs Service which is open to all older people in Hackney and a General Service which is targeted at people with disabilities and older people who have been assessed by Social Services as needing support to remain living independently. Both services undertake a wide range of jobs including plumbing, electrical and security work. Mobile Repair Service will also be starting a new Community Falls Prevention Service in December 2002.

Anchor Staying Put

133 Stoke Newington High Street
London N16 OPH

 **020 7249 6012**
 **020 7249 4543**
 **020 7241 0362**

Opening times 9am to 1pm & 2pm to 5pm Monday to Friday.

It provides help for older and disabled home owners and private tenants who need repairs, improvements and adaptations to their property. It can undertake major renovations such as roof repairs, damp-proofing and replacing rotten windows and doors, as well as small repairs such as minor plumbing work, putting up shelves or hanging pictures. For major work, Anchor Staying Put will help you apply for grants and benefits to pay for the work. There is no charge for the Small Repairs Service; you only pay for the materials used and they will give you an estimate before the work is carried out.

Anchor Hospital Discharge

Anchor also provide a service for older and disabled home owners and private tenants who are having difficulty being discharged from hospital because of their housing conditions. It can undertake a variety of repairs and adaptations to your home and can arrange for temporary accommodation whilst the work is being carried out. You can contact the service at the above address for Anchor Staying Put.

LARGE REPAIRS

If you are a tenant it is likely that large repairs to your home will be the responsibility of your landlord. If you are a council or housing association tenant this should not pose a problem. However, private landlords may be unable or unwilling to pay for major repairs or improvements. If this is the case you should seek advice and support from one of the organisations mentioned earlier under the heading Tenants (see page 2). You should also contact Anchor Staying Put (see above) as it may be able to help your landlord obtain grants to help pay for the work. Home owners requiring help should also contact Anchor Staying Put, as its advisory service is free and it can help you meet the cost of any work through grants and benefits.

PERSONAL SUPPORT

With age, illness or disability, the everyday tasks which you have always taken for granted may become increasingly difficult to cope with. This can begin to affect your ability to look after yourself and your home. The Council, however, may be able to offer the help you need.

Community Care Services

Social Services in Hackney provide support to older and disabled people through Community Care Services. These services help people who are frail or need assistance to live independently. Examples of the kind of support provided for older people are:

- help with personal care such as washing and dressing
- meals on wheels
- equipment and adaptations to help you at home

In order to receive a service you must first be assessed. This assessment will look at the kind of help you need and see if you meet the Council's eligibility criteria. The criteria set out the rules for who can get help from its Community Care Services.

Access Service

205 Morning Lane
London E9 6JX



020 8356 6262

Opening times 9am to 7pm Monday to Friday.

For more information and to request an assessment you should contact the Council's new Access Service. It is made up of two parts, a Call Centre and an Assessment Team. The Call Centre is staffed by Customer Service Officers who are your first point of contact. They will take a referral from you if you need an assessment for Community Care Services. The Assessment Team is made up of Care Managers and Occupational Therapists (OT's). They will carry out an assessment of your needs and where appropriate, arrange for you to receive services such as Meals On Wheels, help with personal care or access to a day centre.


AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

You may be able to receive help from Social Services if you need equipment or adaptations to help you live at home. This is provided through their Community Care Services. How to gain access to Community Care Services is described in more detail on page 6

ALARMS

Community Alarm Service

205 Morning Lane
London E9 6JX

 **020 8356 5630**

Hackney Council has recently transferred the running of its Community Alarm Service to Hanover in Hackney Housing Association. However, this change will not affect the way in which the system operates. Like all the schemes listed here, you will be given a pendant or wrist strap to wear which can be pressed if you need help. You will then be able to talk to an operator who will summon the help for you. In the case of this system, the operator will also contact the Community Alarm Service who will call round to see you. Cover is provided 24-hours a day, 365 days a year and currently costs £2.90 per week. This includes installation and there are no additional charges for call outs. Anyone wishing to be linked to the scheme should contact the above address.

Help the Aged SeniorLink Service

Contact number

 **01255 473 999**

This system is operated by Help the Aged and works in a similar way to Hackney's Community Alarm Service. When you press your pendant or wrist strap, an operator will talk to you and summon help from the Emergency Services if necessary. However, the system does not then link to staff who are based in the borough. Instead, you have to nominate a relative, neighbour or friend who could call round to see you. Installation of the system is free for people of pensionable age who do not pay income tax and whose savings do not exceed £16,000. You will still have to pay a weekly fee for monitoring and maintenance which is currently £1.50 plus VAT.

Age Concern Aid-Call

Contact number

 **0800 772266**

Age Concern's alarm system works in the same way as Help the Aged's SeniorLink Service with an Aid-Call Button linking you to a trained operator. With this scheme, you will also need to nominate a relative, neighbour or friend who can call round to see you if you need help. However, you will need to pay an installation charge for this service, as well as a quarterly maintenance fee. If you elect to pay £99 for installation, you will have a quarterly charge of £37 which is equivalent to paying £2.85 per week. Alternatively, if you can afford to pay £249 for installation, you will pay an annual charge of £94 which is equivalent to paying £1.80 per week. Anyone able to pay £349 for installation will have an annual charge of £57.50 which is equivalent to paying £1.10 per week.

SECURITY

If you are concerned about the security of your home you should contact your local Police Station and ask for the Crime Prevention Officer to visit you. Anchor Staying Put (see page 5) and Mobile Repair Service (see page 4) can both undertake security work such as fitting new locks or spy holes. Alternatively, you can contact the Help the Aged HandyVan service. Trained fitters visit your home and install equipment such as door chains and viewers, window locks and smoke detectors. This is a free service for people of pensionable age who do not pay income tax and whose savings do not exceed £16,000.

Help the Aged HandyVan Service

 **01255 473 999**

GARDENING

Keeping up with your garden can be a problem as you get older. Anchor Trust (see Anchor Staying Put on page 5 for contact details) are currently setting up a scheme to undertake work in the garden for older people aged 60 and over. The work will be carried out by volunteers who will begin with routine maintenance before going on to plant fruit and flowers. There will also be a window box service for people without gardens.

moving on

There may come a time when you want to move, perhaps to a smaller home or one nearer relatives. You may also be considering moving into sheltered accommodation. This section looks at the different options available to you and outlines some of the procedures you will need to go through in order to move.

YOUR CHOICES

The procedures involved in moving home differ, depending on where you live and on whether you are currently:

- living in council housing
- renting from a housing association
- living in private rented accommodation
- an owner occupier
- homeless

The procedures also differ depending on where you want to move to. Housing is labelled '**non-supported**' and '**supported**' because various levels of help are available in supported housing from people such as wardens. Special schemes can also enable you to move out of the borough, allowing you to be closer to friends and family.

MOVING TO NON-SUPPORTED HOUSING

There are three types of non-supported housing which do not have wardens or other supportive people:

- council housing
- private sector (own home or private rented)
- housing association

COUNCIL HOUSING

Housing Waiting List

Anyone over 16 who can demonstrate that they live in Hackney may apply to join the Housing Waiting List. Existing Council tenants who wish to move may also apply and will join the same list.

To join the List you will need to complete a Housing Register Application Form, copies of which are available at the Housing Advice and Homelessness Centre (see page 28) or your Housing Neighbourhood Office. Once you have returned your form your details will be entered on the Council's computer and you will receive a letter telling you which letting 'band' or group you are in.

Housing Points and Priority Bands

Everyone applying to the Council for housing will initially have their housing priority assessed within a very simple points scheme. You will be allocated points according to your circumstances. For example, if you are homeless you will gain 40 points, whilst if you want to move from a family home to a smaller property or have a serious medical need you will gain 100 points. The number of points you gain will place you within one of the following bands: emergencies, urgent, priority, general and reserve. Each band covers a particular points range. To get into the urgent band, for example, you will need to have between 100 and 240 points.

Each band is organised in date order so you will join at the bottom. When the Council tell you which band you are in, they will also tell you how many people are ahead of you and how long you are likely to have to wait. If the type of home you have chosen is in short supply or you have picked a popular area, you may have to wait a long time even if you are near the top of the Urgent Band. For more information on points and bands contact the Housing Advice and Homelessness Centre (see page 28) or your Housing Neighbourhood Office.

It is worth noting that all applicants to the Housing Waiting List will automatically be considered for a nomination to a housing association. Your housing priority for a housing association property will be assessed in exactly the same way as for a Council property.

What If I Don't Have Enough Points?

The Council and housing associations have long waiting lists for people wanting to be re-housed. However, if your situation becomes urgent or your circumstances change whilst you are waiting, you must tell the Council as it could increase your points total. A Community Care Assessment from Social Services (see page 6) may also help you to get extra points if a high level of need can be shown.

Getting an Offer

The Council will normally only make you one offer of permanent housing. However, if they are offering you property which is set aside for older people or if you need a home adapted for a disability, the Council may make you more than one offer if it helps to find a home that best meets your needs. So, in these instances you may receive a second offer if you can show that you had a good reason for refusing the first one.

When you refuse an offer you will be asked to provide a written reason for your refusal at the time of the viewing. If the Council agree that there is a good reason for your refusal they will make you another offer. However, if the Council decide that the offer made to you was reasonable, you will be put back to the bottom of your band.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

If you want to move to the private sector for renting or buying, you should contact a local estate agent. It should be noted, however, that there are less safeguards in place for tenants in the private sector. Prospective older and disabled tenants should consider approaching housing associations before considering the private sector.

HOUSING ASSOCIATION PROPERTY

There are a large number of housing associations with property in Hackney. However, many will only accept nominations from the Council's Housing Waiting List. This means you will be unable to make a direct application to them. You can get a list of housing associations and the criteria they use for accepting applications from the Housing Advice and Homelessness Centre (see page 28).

MOVING TO SUPPORTED HOUSING

Supported housing includes:

- sheltered housing (involving minimal support)
- housing where there are much higher levels of support such as residential homes, supported living schemes or nursing homes

SHELTERED HOUSING

Sheltered housing might appeal to you if you want to live independently, perhaps in a smaller and easier to run home but like the idea of having someone to call on in an emergency. It is specially designed for older people and has a scheme manager (or warden) on the premises or nearby, who you can contact via an alarm system in an emergency. The accommodation is usually a self-contained one-bedroom flat within a block or sometimes a bungalow in a courtyard setting. Some have also been designed specifically for wheelchair users. Most schemes have communal areas where you can join in activities and a guest room if you want to have someone to stay.

SHELTERED HOUSING IN HACKNEY

Hanover In Hackney Sheltered Housing Service

205 Morning Lane
London E9 6JX

 **020 8356 5640**

Hackney Council has recently transferred the ownership and management of all its sheltered housing properties to Hanover in Hackney Housing Association. This change in management will not affect the way in which sheltered housing is let. Hanover in Hackney has also taken on administration of the Common Register. This means that you only have to register once with them to be considered for sheltered housing properties belonging to other housing associations.

Eligibility

You have to be over 55 to qualify for sheltered housing schemes run by Hanover In Hackney. Some of the other housing association schemes operating in Hackney have a minimum age of 60.

Applying for Sheltered Housing

If you wish to apply for sheltered housing in the borough you should contact the Hanover in Hackney Sheltered Housing Service at the above address. They will complete a referral form for you and arrange to visit you to carry out an assessment. This is to make sure that sheltered housing is appropriate for your current housing needs. The assessment should take place within 20 working days. After your assessment you will be allocated points according to your circumstances. Hanover in Hackney operate the same points system as the Council and this is described in more detail on page 10.

When you apply for sheltered housing you will be able to choose the area where you want to live and you can specify a particular scheme if you wish. However, although there is less demand for sheltered housing than for other types of housing, the more restricted your choice is, the longer you will have to wait for an offer. What happens when you receive an offer from Hanover in Hackney is the same as described for the Council on page 11.

If you own your own home and would like to move into sheltered housing, it is important to remember that when you sell your home the money you receive from the sale may mean that you are not eligible for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. You may then have to use your capital to pay your rent and Council Tax bills.

Sheltered Housing for Black & Ethnic Minority Groups

There are eight sheltered housing schemes in Hackney that offer accommodation which is specifically aimed at members of black and ethnic minority communities.

Bells Project - Ujima Housing Association

1 Peppie Close

Off Bouverie Road

London N16 0AG




020 8802 6384

Provides supported housing and care for African-Caribbean older people with specific emphasis on individual and cultural needs. Professional care gives 24-hour cover to residents. Each flat has an alarm which can be connected to Hackney Emergency Control.

Agudas Israel Housing Association


206 Lordship Road
London N16 5ES

 **020 8802 3819**

Provides a scheme for frail and elderly Orthodox Jews. Has a communal lounge, social activities and a Synagogue.

Ajex Housing Association

5a East Bank
Stamford Hill
London N16 5RT

 **020 8800 2844**

Provides sheltered housing flats for Jewish ex-servicemen and women and their dependants. Has a resident warden, communal lounge, social activities and a small wartime museum.

Circle 33 Housing Association

1-7 Corsica Street
London N5 1JG

 **020 7288 4087**

Runs two schemes in Hackney which are aimed at members of the African-Caribbean community. One scheme has a warden living on the site, the other does not. Both have a communal lounge and social activities.

Anchor Trust

6 Church Street
Waltham Abbey
Essex EN9 1DX

 **01992 782000**

This scheme is aimed at members of the Chinese community. Has a resident warden, a communal lounge and social activities.

Bnai Brith Housing Association

Harmony Close
Princes Park Avenue
London NW11 0JJ

 **020 8731 0914**

Provides two schemes in the borough which are aimed at members of the Jewish community. Both schemes have a communal lounge and social activities.

Almshouses

Almshouses are provided by charities and are often for people of a particular religious faith. There is one scheme in the Borough which offers sheltered housing:

Pilgrims Lodge Charity

Anchor London
6 Church Street
Waltham Abbey
Essex EN9 1DX

 **01992 782000**

Provides sheltered accommodation for people who are of the Protestant religion. Has a resident warden, communal lounge and social activities.


Buying Sheltered Housing

If you are a homeowner already, it may be easier to buy sheltered housing (also known as retirement homes). However, Hanover in Hackney and other housing associations will also consider you for their rented sheltered housing schemes. There are two private schemes in the Borough which have flats you can buy:

De Beauvoir Place - Dalston

 **020 7241 2919**

Tyson House - Victoria Park

 **020 8985 5821**

Private schemes involve a service charge made by the management company as well as the initial outlay and your everyday running costs. It is important to get expert financial and legal advice before making any commitment to buying into a sheltered scheme.

Buying Sheltered Housing out of Hackney

If you want to move out of the Borough, there are two organisations who may be able to help you. The Elderly Accommodation Counsel (see page 27 for a full description of its services) can offer a range of help and advice about housing. This includes providing details of sheltered housing schemes to buy in any area of the country.

(cont.)

The other organisation to contact is:

Help the Aged Retirement Property Services Helpline

Contact number

 **0800 592 605**

This is a national matching service for people who are buying or selling retirement housing. The service offers specialist guidance on specific matters relating to retirement property, alongside all the usual services offered by an estate agent.

HOUSING WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF SUPPORT

You may reach a point where you need more support and staying in your own home without help is no longer possible. If this is the case, there are three options to consider offering different levels of support:

- Supported Living Schemes are a joint venture between various housing associations and Hackney Council's Social Services. There are seven schemes in the borough providing housing and care for older people in a domestic setting to encourage continued independent living. They offer more support than sheltered housing.
- residential homes provide help with things like getting up, washing and dressing and can look after you if you have a minor illness such as a cough or cold.
- nursing homes have qualified nursing staff available 24-hours a day to care for people who are very frail or have a medical condition requiring nursing care.

Registration for Homes

Residential homes have to register with Hackney Council, which should inspect each home at least twice a year. Nursing homes are registered and inspected by the local health authority.

Some homes are dual-registered with both the local authority and the health authority. A dual-registered home will have both residential and nursing care residents, which means that if your care needs increase, you could just move to a different part of the same home.

Community Care Assessment

If you are not already receiving Community Care Services, the first step in making the move to residential or nursing care is to contact Hackney Council's Social Services and request a Community Care Assessment. If you have already been assessed but think that you need more help now, you should contact the Care Manager who is looking after your case.

To request a Community Care Assessment contact the Access Service (see page 6). After your assessment you may be offered a care package to help you stay in your present home, or it may be decided that the best way to meet your needs would be residential or nursing care.

Once the Council has agreed that you need residential or nursing home care, you should have some choice as to which home you move to. However, it must be a home that it is suitable for your assessed needs. The home does not have to be in Hackney, as the Council can arrange payment to a home in a different authority's area. This would enable you to move nearer to relatives living in another part of London or to somewhere else in the UK.

Charges for Care

How much you have to pay towards the cost of residential or nursing care is determined by rules set down by the Government. The rules set limits on how much of your income and savings will be taken into account when the calculations are made. This should be explained to you in detail as part of your Community Care Assessment.

Both your weekly income and any savings you may have will be included in the calculations to determine how much you will have to pay. For example, if you have savings under £11,750 then currently these will not be taken into account. However, savings of between £11,750 and £19,500 mean you will have to make a small weekly contribution towards the cost of your care and savings over £19,500 mean you will have to pay the full cost of your care. You will also have to sell your home if you own it and the proceeds from the sale will be counted as savings. The exception to this is if your partner or another relative with a recognised need is continuing to live in the house.

Arranging and Paying For Your Own Care

You can arrange to go to a residential home of your own choosing and pay for it yourself if you can afford to do this. You would need to go into the costs carefully and if you think you may need help with fees in the future, it is better to contact Social Services for a Community Care Assessment before you make any private arrangements.

Financial Advice

If you have some capital you may want advice on the best way of investing it to pay for care. You can speak to your solicitor or a financial advisor, or try the following service which is designed to help you plan your finances so you can meet future costs.

Help the Aged Care Fees Advisory Service ☎ **0500 76 74 76**

MOVING OUT OF THE BOROUGH

Housing Organisations Mobility & Exchange Services (HOMES)

242 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 1AU

☎ **020 7963 0200**

HOMES works with councils and housing associations all over the UK, offering a range of services to help people move home. There are three schemes generally available and one specifically for people over 60. The Age Concern Hackney Information Service (see page 1) has information about the schemes or you can contact them directly.

HOMES Mobility Scheme

Contact number ☎ **020 7963 0200**

This scheme can be used for short or long distance moves. It puts your council or housing association in touch with other landlords who may be able to offer you a home or put you on their waiting list. There is no charge to tenants for moving through this scheme.


If you need to move for one of the following reasons you may be eligible to apply:

- if you are taking a job which is too far away for you to travel every day
- if you need to be closer to relatives or friends so that they can give you support or so that you can give them support
- if there are other pressing reasons, such as domestic violence or harassment

You do not have an automatic right to move and the organisation in the area you are asking for does not have to re-house you. However, landlords do agree to re-house a certain number of people through this scheme each year.

HOMESWAP Scheme

Contact number

 **020 7963 0200**

This is another option if you are a council or housing association tenant. Swapping your home with a tenant in the area you want to go to can be a good way of moving. This service is also free to tenants.

Once you have registered on HOMESWAP, the UK-wide computer matching service, HOMES searches for possible swap partners for you and sends you their details. You should also check the HOMESWAP lists for people wishing to move into your area. These are kept at your local council or housing association office and are updated every month. Your details are also displayed on the HOMESWAP lists in the areas you have chosen. (Your name and address can be withheld if requested). Both partners need the permission of each landlord to swap homes.

Shared Ownership HOMES Service

Contact number

 **020 7963 0200**

If you would like to own your own home, but cannot afford to buy on the open market, this could be for you. Shared Ownership allows you to buy a share of a property from a housing association or local authority and pay rent for the remainder. You could be eligible to apply if you have sufficient means to finance your mortgage and fulfil certain criteria. There is an advertising and registration fee for this service.

The Seaside & Country HOMES Scheme

Contact number

 **020 7963 0218**

The scheme is open to tenants with council or housing association landlords who live in London. All applicants must be at least 60 years of age and capable of independent living. The properties are located in coastal and country areas from Cornwall in the South West to Norfolk on the East Coast, as well as in the Midlands and Lincolnshire.

There are approximately 3,200 flats and bungalows with about 250 vacancies a year. All the bungalows have two bedrooms. The flats have either one or two bedrooms. Rents vary depending on many things, including size, location and services.

You should think carefully before deciding if you wish to move through this scheme:

- many of the properties are quite isolated from shops and local or cultural services
- buses are less frequent and in many cases local councils do not offer concessions to pensioners, so fares may be more expensive
- the cost and choice of foods will be different and may be more expensive, especially in the remote areas

You also need to think carefully about why you want to leave London and the family and cultural ties that you may be leaving behind. You must decide that the move will really be of benefit to you.

If you decide to go ahead you will need to complete an application form. All applicants are considered within a points system. Points are awarded if you are living in an under-occupied home. They are also awarded to reflect the housing needs of each London Borough and whether the property being vacated will help to meet these needs.

Properties are offered to applicants with the most points, who will have a chance to visit the property. Only three properties in total will be offered, after which the applicant will be removed from the scheme. Applicants have to pay their own travelling expenses for visits.

making a complaint

This section covers what to do when things go wrong. If you are not satisfied with a service or are having difficulties with your landlord, you have a right to make a complaint. Most organisations have a written procedure about this and are pleased to have feedback as it helps them improve services.

Council Tenants

The Council have an official complaints procedure for tenants to use. You can get a complaints form from your Housing Neighbourhood Office. All complaints are fully investigated. You can also complain to your local Councillor who will take up the matter on your behalf. If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint or if you would like help and support in making a complaint, you should contact one of the organisations listed in the Useful Contacts section (see page 26) such as Hackney Community Law Centre, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Hoxton Trust Legal Advice Centre.

Housing Association and Private Tenants

Housing associations and large private landlords often have their own complaints procedure. If your landlord does not have a complaints procedure it is still important to make a written complaint, referring to the previous times you contacted them about the problem.

As mentioned above, there a number of organisations in Hackney who can help you with your complaint. You may also be eligible for free or low cost legal assistance from a solicitor. This will depend on your income and savings. The Age Concern Information Service (see page 1) has lists of solicitors in the borough.

emergencies

Housing emergencies may come in many forms. You may find that you are experiencing problems with your landlord or you may be suffering abuse within your home or local community. You may even have become homeless. Whatever the nature of your problem, this section lists services that can

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND RACIAL HARASSMENT

Domestic Violence and Racial Harassment Team

298 Mare Street
London E8 1HE

 **020 8356 4459**

Opening times 9.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

You may need to move if someone you live with is violent towards you or you suffer racially motivated attacks on you or your home. The DVRH Team can provide support, counselling and advice on emergency housing or obtaining an injunction.

Community Safety Unit

Shoreditch Police Station
4-6 Shepherdess Walk
London N1 7LF

 **020 7275 3673**



Opening times 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

If you don't want to move or go to a temporary refuge, but would like help in dealing with a problem you can contact the Community Safety Unit. It is based at Shoreditch Police Station and covers the whole of Hackney, working in conjunction with the Council to deal with domestic violence, racial harassment, homophobic crime, elder abuse and other forms of "hate crime". They also have access to Language Line for people needing help with interpretation.

Hackney Womens Aid


HWA Central Office
PO Box 6566
London E8 3ST

Advice Line

 **020 7683 1270**
 **020 7683 1210**

Opening times 10am to 5pm Monday to Friday.
Advice Line: 10am to 1pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday. 1pm to 4pm Tuesday and Thursday.

Hackney Womens Aid has an advice service offering help on issues such as benefits, housing and legal matters. It can also provide emergency accommodation for women suffering violence or abuse. Contact the 24-hour Refuge Crisis Line on the following number:

24-hour Refuge Crisis Line  **08705 995 443**

ELDER ABUSE

Elder Abuse Response

Contact number  **0808 8088 141**

Opening times 10am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

This helpline is part of Action on Elder Abuse, an organisation concerned with the maltreatment or neglect of people in residential care. If you are worried that a relative or friend may be subject to abuse it can provide a range of contacts including legal advice and social services.

NUISANCE FROM NEIGHBOURS

Hackney Mediation Service

Contact number  **020 8356 4794**

Hackney Mediation Service helps neighbours settle disputes about noise, boundaries, children etc. It is free, confidential and impartial.

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Trained mediators visit people in their homes and help the parties to find a solution to the problem. The Service also has access to interpreters.

Noise Service

Environment Division
Dorothy Hodgkin House
12 Reading Lane
London E8 1HJ

 **020 8985 7711**

Opening times 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

If you are having a problem with noisy neighbours or want to avoid causing a problem yourself, contact the Noise Service. It has the power to stop noise nuisance. It is part of the Council's Pollution Group which also tackles other issues such as smoke, smell, asbestos and contaminated land and water.


PROBLEMS WITH PRIVATE LANDLORDS

If you are experiencing problems with a private landlord such as harassment, you can get help from the Council's Housing Advice and Homelessness Centre (see page 28). Some of the other organisations listed in the Useful Contacts section, such as Hackney Community Law Centre, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Hoxton Trust Legal Advice Centre, may also be able to offer help and advice.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE HOMELESS

Homeless Persons Unit

Christopher Addison House
72 Wilton Way
London E8 1BJ

 **020 8356 2929**

Opening times 9am to 4pm weekdays **except** Wednesday.

If you are an older or disabled person and you have nowhere to live or are about to be made homeless, the Council has a duty to assist you on the grounds of your age, medical or social condition. This duty

(cont.)

extends to providing you with emergency accommodation whilst they decide how best to help you. Emergency accommodation should be provided for you within 24-hours. The Council will then investigate your case. If they have a duty to provide you with long-term housing they must move you out of your emergency hostel and into a suitable permanent home. The Council aim to do this within 33 days but you may have to stay in an emergency hostel for up to 6 months. If you are unhappy with your emergency accommodation, you should contact the following department who are responsible for it:

Emergency Accommodation Unit



020 7275 0188

useful contacts

This section lists a number of organisations who can provide support and advice on a wide range of housing issues. Some of them are based in Hackney, whilst others cover the rest of London or the UK. They can offer help with everything from repairs, benefits or even moving to a new part of the country.

Age Concern Information Line

Age Concern
Freepost (SWB 30375)
Ashburton
Devon TQ13 7ZZ

 **0800 00 99 66**

Opening times 7am to 7pm Monday to Sunday.

Age Concern has over 40 helpful and impartial factsheets, covering topics such as housing, heating, money, legal matters, health, community care, transport, leisure and education. These are available free from the Information Line. Phone or write to the above address.

Citizens Advice Bureau – Dalston

491 Kingsland Road
London E8 4AU

 **0870 126 4013**

Opening times In person to book an appointment: 10am to 12pm Monday and Tuesday.
Phone advice: 1pm to 3pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Hackney's Citizens Advice Bureau is based on two sites in the borough. Anyone wanting to use the service is asked to go to the office which is nearest to where they live. The organisation provides free, confidential, impartial and independent advice on a wide range of topics including benefits, housing and legal matters.

Citizens Advice Bureau – Mare Street

236 Mare Street
London E8 1HE

 **0870 126 4013**

Opening times In person to book an appointment: 10am to 3pm
Monday to Thursday.
Phone advice: 1pm to 3pm Monday, Tuesday and
Thursday.

Please see the entry for the Dalston Office on the previous page.

Counsel and Care

Twyman House
16 Bonny Street
London NW1 9PG

 **0845 300 7585**

Opening times 10am to 1pm Monday to Friday.

Free and confidential advice for people over 60, their carers, friends and relatives on housing, residential care homes, welfare benefits and other issues of concern.

Elderly Accommodation Counsel

3rd Floor
89 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TP

 **020 7820 1343**

Opening times 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Offers a free service to clients to decide how best to meet their housing preferences and needs, as well as some useful factsheets. The organisation has also produced a Housing Options for Older People (HOOP) questionnaire designed to help you decide what is the best move for you to make. HOOP is designed for you to use on your own or with an advisor and you can phone the above number for a copy. Alternatively, if you would like to go through the questionnaire with someone, the Age Concern Hackney Information Service (see page 1) has copies of the questionnaire. Telephone for an appointment to discuss it with an advisor.

Hackney Community Law Centre

236 Mare Street
London E8 1HE

 **020 8985 8364**

Opening times 10am to 1pm Monday to Friday.

Gives free advice and representation for those who live or work in Hackney on many topics including housing, homelessness and community care. For advice and appointments telephone at the above times.

Help the Aged Seniorline

Contact number

 **0808 800 6565**

Opening times 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

Provides a wide-ranging telephone information and advice service, as well as factsheets on housing issues.

Housing Advice and Homelessness Centre

Christopher Addison House
72 Wilton Way
London E8 1BJ

 **020 8356 2929**

Opening times 9am to 4pm weekdays **except** Wednesday.

Based in the same building as the Homeless Persons Unit (see page 24), the Council's Housing Register and Advice Team offer free and confidential advice on a range of housing issues to private tenants, housing association tenants and owner occupiers. Council tenants should contact their Housing Neighbourhood Office for help. The Centre advises on finding and keeping private accommodation, owner occupation, relationship breakdown, disrepair, illegal eviction and re-housing inside and outside Hackney. Anyone wishing to be included on the Council's Housing Waiting List can obtain a Housing Register Application Form at the above address. The Centre also has access to interpreters.

Hoxton Trust Legal Advice Service

156 Hoxton Street
London N1 6SH

 **020 7613 4174**

Opening times New clients: 10.30am to 12.30pm Monday &
Thursday.
Existing clients by appointment.

Provides advice on benefits, debt and housing.

The information in this guide was correct at the time of publication. However, Age Concern Hackney cannot be held liable for any inaccuracies or for the quality of any service listed, other than its own. Please let us know about any errors or changes to information.

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