



**Vale  
of White Horse**  
District Council

# Welcome

to your new home

# Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Welcome</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>1. Your new temporary home</b>                     | <b>3</b>  |
| ▪ Your lease  | 3         |
| ▪ Utilities and bills                                 | 4         |
| ▪ Household waste                                     | 6         |
| ▪ Emergency numbers                                   | 7         |
| <b>2. Finance, money and benefits</b>                 | <b>8</b>  |
| • Your rights   | 8         |
| • Benefits  | 8         |
| • Money management                                    | 9         |
| <b>3. Shopping and food</b>                           | <b>11</b> |
| • Online Shopping                                     | 11        |
| • Food support  | 12        |
| • Healthy Start vouchers                              | 13        |
| <b>4. Work and education</b>                          | <b>14</b> |
| • Work  | 14        |
| • Education   | 14        |
| • Learning English                                    | 16        |
| <b>5. Healthcare</b>                                  | <b>18</b> |
| ▪ Finding a GP  | 18        |
| • Accident and emergency                              | 19        |
| • Mental health                                       | 19        |
| <b>6. Living in the UK</b>                            | <b>20</b> |
| • Culture   | 20        |
| • Refugee support                                     | 21        |
| • Prayer and religion                                 | 22        |
| • National holidays and celebrations                  | 23        |
| • Local information and things to do and places to go | 24-29     |
| <b>7. Personal Integration Plans (PIPS)</b>           |           |

# Welcome

Dear Tenant,

On behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council, we extend you a very warm welcome as you move into your temporary home.

We will support you to settle into your new temporary home and local environment. This welcome pack will give you some essential information about your accommodation, the local area and where to go for help on lots of different things such as food, health care, schools and leisure facilities.

Your accommodation has been prepared for you to help provide a safe place to live and be part of a local community while you find more permanent housing for your stay in the UK. We hope you have everything you need. We will meet with you to talk through this Welcome Pack and go through any questions you have.

In the meantime, we hope your new house provides you with a feeling of security and you are able to adjust well to life in the district.

Warmest wishes,



*Adrianna Partridge*

**Adrianna Partridge**  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Vale of White Horse District Council

# 1. Your temporary new home

## The next step in finding your permanent home

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We are here to help you settle into this short-term housing arrangement while you find a more permanent home for you and your family to live.

You will be assigned a **Housing Officer** and a **Community Support Officer** to work with you.

Your Community Support Officer will help you to settle in, take you through the information in this pack and help you get to a position where you are able to move into a more permanent home.

Your Housing Officer will talk you through how to look for a more permanent home and support you through this process.

While you are living in this house, we want you to be as comfortable as possible. This pack will help you learn more about the house, the UK and the area in which you live.

We have provided you with a welcome pack of food and will order a meal for your first evening in your new temporary home.

We will also provide vouchers that you can use to buy food and any household essentials. This is a one time offer and **we won't be able to help with money or food again in the future. We will help you to draw up a budget of household outgoings so that you can manage your money, if that is helpful for you.**

If you have any questions, your Community Support Officer is here to help you.

Your Community Support Officer is \_\_\_\_\_

Your Housing Officer is \_\_\_\_\_

You can also call us on 01235 422600 (option 3) and speak to the Community Hub team (open Monday to Thursday 8:30am - 5:00pm, and Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm).

### Your new housing arrangement

The house you will be moving into is temporarily leased to the council from the Ministry of Defence, the Council is your landlord and we are letting the house to you, the tenant. You will pay us rent every month.

Your Community Support Officer will help you to apply for Housing Benefit, if you are eligible. This will help you to pay your rent.

As your landlords, we will show you around the house and you will be asked to sign a **tenancy agreement**.

### What is a tenancy agreement?

- It is a legal document about the rights and responsibilities of the landlord and the tenant, made to protect both parties.
- It will tell you what your landlords (the council) promise to do and what your responsibilities are when you live in the property.
- The temporary accommodation agreement will include an 'inventory.' This will tell you which items in the house belong to the landlord and need to stay in the property at the end of your tenancy.

# 1. Your temporary new home

- To help you settle in, we have purchased items which you will need to live in your temporary accommodation. We have provided a list of these items.
- Some items are a gift from us and you will be able to take those with you when you find a new home. We have provided a list of these items. If any of those items gets broken or lost we will not be able to replace it.
- You will need to purchase any other items that you need, we will not be able to provide anything else.

## Utilities and bills – water, gas, electricity

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### Water from the cold tap is safe to drink.

Water, gas and electricity supplies are provided to your temporary home by private companies.

- How much water, gas and electricity you use is measured by a meter. Generally, the companies who provide your utilities will ask you to provide regular meter readings so that they can calculate your bill. Alternatively, they may provide you with a smart meter.
- When you move in, we will take readings and supply them to the companies.
- We will show you where your meters are when you move in.
- Your water is provided by \_\_\_\_\_
- Your gas is provided by \_\_\_\_\_
- Your electricity is provided by \_\_\_\_\_

If there is a problem paying your bill or with the supply, contact the company providing that service, they are there to help you.

There is a list of helpful numbers in case of emergencies at the end of this section.

- **Council tax** This is a payment made by each household to the local council that goes towards supporting local services like schools, libraries, and waste collection. You may be eligible for financial support to reduce your bill e.g. if you are on a low income and have less than £16,000 in savings. Your Community Support Officer will help you to apply for a reduction if you are eligible.
- **TV licence** You need to be covered by a TV licence to watch anything live or on streaming services - such as BBC, ITVX, All 4, YouTube, Amazon Prime Video, Now TV. It is important that your TV licence is up to date as you can be fined up to £1,000 if you watch live TV without one.

**NOTE:** You don't need a TV licence if you use services to watch pre-recorded programmes on platforms such as Netflix or Disney+.

Apply for a TV licence here: [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)

# 1. Your temporary new home

▪ **Insurance** You may want to consider arranging 'contents insurance' to provide cover in case items in your temporary accommodation are damaged or stolen. You won't need 'buildings insurance' (which protects against something happening to the structure of your temporary home) because the landlord (Vale of White Horse District Council) must pay for that.

▪ **Internet** You can pay for internet access to be set up at your expense. If you are on Universal Credit you can apply for six months free home broadband – ask your Job Centre Work Coach for more information.

▪ **Social tariffs**

Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits. Some providers call them 'essential' or 'basic' broadband.

## Social tariffs available in England (Prices as of June 2023)

| Package                          | Price          | Average Speed    |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| BT Home Essentials               | £15 a month    | Around 36 Mbit/s |
| BT Home Essentials 2             | £20 a month    | Around 67 Mbit/s |
| EE Basics                        | £12 a month    | Up to 25 Mbit/s  |
| NOW Broadband Basics             | £20 a month    | 36 Mbit/s        |
| Sky Broadband Basics             | £20 a month    | 36 Mbit/s        |
| Virgin Media Essential Broadband | £12.50 a month | 15 Mbit/s        |

You will need to check which packages are available in your area.

## Mobile phones

You can buy a mobile phone and SIM card from a local mobile phone shop including EE, O2 or Vodafone. You can either:

- Buy a 'pay as you go' phone where you can pay for calling or texting credit when you need to. If you have little money, a 'pay as you go' phone may be more affordable than fixed monthly charges.  
OR
- Set up a contract which requires you to pay a monthly charge in exchange for an amount of calling time and texts.

You may be able to get access to a refurbished phone, if you do not currently have a device. Speak to your Community Support Officer who might be able to help you connect with a local organisation that may be able to help.

# 1. Your temporary new home

## Heating your home

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Most homes will have central heating, where water is heated by gas or electricity and circulated through radiators. Gas and electricity is very expensive right now. You may need a smart meter so that you can see how much energy you are consuming.

### Dealing with condensation in your household

Unfortunately, condensation and mould, a fungus that grows where moist conditions exist, can be an issue even in well insulated houses in the UK. It's important to ventilate your household. Extractor fans must be used when cooking, and you are encouraged to open windows from time to time, ideally in the mornings and especially where people have been sleeping.

### How can I reduce condensation?

There are a few things that you can do at home to help manage this potential issue.

**Reduce steam and moisture:** the main daily activities which produce a lot of water very quickly are: cooking, washing and drying clothes and having baths and showers.

**Cooking:** reduce the amount of moisture given off by covering pans and do not leave kettles boiling.

**Washing and drying clothes:** dry washing outside if possible. If drying washing indoors is unavoidable, then dry it in a heated and well ventilated room, such as a bathroom.

**Wipe down windows and sills:** if condensation appears on them, wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator or in front of a heater.

**Baths and showers:** keep the bathroom warm and well ventilated.

## Household Waste

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We will give you bins to collect waste, which will be emptied regularly. In your area, coloured bins are used to identify which waste goes in which bin.

**Green (big):** recyclables including all paper and cardboards, glass, empty plastic bags, bottles, pots, tubs and trays. Metals: aerosols, clean foil, food tins, steel and aluminium food cans.

**Green (small):** all your raw and cooked food waste, such as leftovers and spoiled food.

**Black/Grey:** general rubbish (all non-recyclable waste). Most households use black bags as indoor bin liners. You can buy these from supermarkets.

**Brown:** garden waste (such as grass, leaves, weeds, flowers and plants, hedge clippings, branches – not more than 10cm thick). There is an additional annual fee for this service.

You can find out more at: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/recycling). If you have any questions, you can contact our waste department for advice.

- Tel. 03000 610610
- Email:  
[admin.vale@biffa.co.uk](mailto:admin.vale@biffa.co.uk)

# 1. Your temporary new home

## Emergencies and Help

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It is important to know how to get help if things go wrong.

**FIRE: if there is a fire in your home, get everyone out and stay out. Telephone 999 and ask for the fire service. Do not return to get personal belongings.**

Gas leak: if you can smell gas you may have a leak.

- Find the main gas tap, turn it off and open the doors and windows.
- Do not switch any electrical items on or off, including lights (this may ignite the gas).
- Do not light any naked flame i.e. a flame from a match or cigarette.
- Call the National Grid Gas Emergencies 0800 111999.

## Neighbours

People are generally nice and friendly. Your neighbours may greet you and, if you feel comfortable, you can greet them back. Being noisy (especially at night) may upset your neighbours.

If anyone has entered your house illegally or is causing you serious problems, telephone 999 and ask for the police.

## Emergency Numbers

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| Organisation  | What they do  | Telephone number      |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Emergency Services</b>                                 | Fire, ambulance and police emergency services   | 999                   |
| <b>National Health Service (NHS)</b>                      | Non-emergency health helpline   | 111                   |
| <b>Police</b>   | Non-emergency crime helpline  | 101                   |
| <b>Thames Water</b>                                       | Water supplier also responsible for drains and sewage emergencies such as no water supply                   | 0800 316 9800         |
| <b>National Grid Gas Emergencies</b>                      | Who to call if you suspect a gas leak in your house.  | 0800 111 999          |
| <b>National Grid Electricity Supply Emergencies</b>       | Who to call to report a power failure   | 105                   |
| <b>Vale of White Horse District Council</b>               | Local authority dealing with council tax, bins, housing, planning   | 01235 422422          |
| <b>Vale of White Horse District Council Community Hub</b> | Local authority providing advice and guidance if you are struggling financially or need some practical help | 01235 422600 option 3 |
| <b>Oxfordshire County Council</b>                         | Local authority dealing with highways, social care, education   | 01865 792422          |
| <b>SOHA</b>   | Repairs and Maintenance   | 01235 515 900         |
| <b>Asylum Welcome</b>                                     | Charity offering support to refugees and asylum seekers   | 01865 722082          |
| <b>Refugee Resource</b>                                   | Charity offering support to refugees and asylum seekers   | 01865 403280          |
| <b>Universal Credit</b>                                   | Payment to help with living costs if you are in receipt of low/no income                                    | 0800 328 5644         |
| <b>Vale Community Impact</b>                              | Free, non-judgmental financial advice   | 01235 765348          |