



Welcome to Edinburgh

A guide to your new area

Introduction

We hope you will enjoy your new home. This guide aims to help you settle in and get to know your local area. It has been written mainly with people who are new to Edinburgh in mind and includes a summary of some of the services and contacts you might need. You may find these useful even if you already know the city. There's also a checklist of things to think about when you move into your new home and a small section about things to do in Edinburgh too. Enjoy!



Tessa
Housing Options Scotland volunteer



This guide has been produced by volunteers at **Housing Options Scotland**. We are Scotland's housing charity for disabled people, older adults and members of the Armed Forces community. If you need help with your housing situation, contact us:

housingoptionsscotland.org.uk
0131 510 1567
info@housingoptionsscotland.org.uk

If you have any questions about this guide, contact Ben Parker on
ben@housingoptionsscotland.org.uk

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Moving home

Take gas and electricity meter readings.

Do this when you move out. This will make sure you only pay for the energy you used.

Settle up bills at your old property. Make sure you pay for all bills due including:

- Rent/mortgage
- Garden/common area maintenance
- Council tax
- Gas and electricity
- Telephone and broadband.



Change your address. It's important to let people know you're moving, including:

- Friends and family
- Your employer
- Your local **job-centre**
- The [Department for Work and Pensions \(DWP\)](#)
- Your bank, insurance, pension and credit card companies
- Your doctor and dentist
- Your local council
- The [electoral register](#)
- The [Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency \(DVLA\)](#)
- Telephone, TV and broadband providers
- [TV licensing](#)
- Charities you might support

Redirecting your post

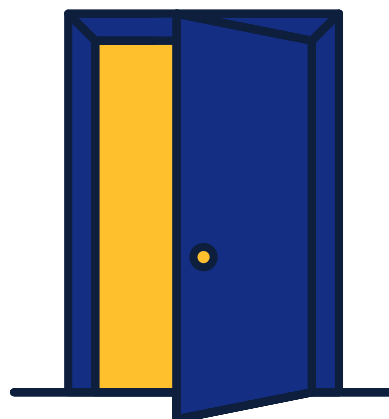
When you move home, you might miss some of the important information you get through the post. A simple way to make sure you keep receiving your post is to use the [Post Office redirection service](#). You can choose how long you want your post redirected for. There is a fee for this service.

In your new home

Register with your local council. Contact your new local council to register for Council Tax and the electoral register.

Register with a doctor - [How to register with a local doctor.](#)

Register with a dentist - [How to register with a local dentist.](#)



Spare keys. Get copies of your keys cut, so you have spares in case you need them.

Take gas and electricity meter readings. Do this when you move in to make sure you only pay for the energy you use. Comparison sites like [USwitch](#), [Compare the Market](#), [Money Supermarket](#), and [Go Compare](#) can help you find the best energy deals.

Household appliances. Ask for instruction booklets or manuals for the boiler, washing machine and all appliances in the property to be left for you. If any are missing, you can find instructions for most appliances with a quick online search.

Get to know your new home. Consider getting two copies of keys cut for your new home and ask for instructions / booklets for all appliances to be left for you. Also make sure you know where to locate the following:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gas and electricity meters | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fuse box |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thermostat for central heating | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landline telephone sockets |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water boiler | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TV and satellite aerial sockets |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hot and cold water tanks | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access points e.g. to loft points/under floor areas |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stopcock (to turn the main water supply on/off) | |

Essentials

Council Tax

The council tax you pay relates to the valuation band of your property. Water and waste water charges are set by Scottish Water and billed alongside council tax. You can apply and manage your council tax online and make payments through the council tax account. To find out up-to-date rates of council tax and waste charges, see the council website [here](#).

A full council tax charge is payable if there are two or more adults (aged 18 or over) living in a property as their main home. Students and carers aren't usually counted in your household numbers. Discounts can also apply for apprentices, school leavers, care leavers and hospitalised, disabled or severely mentally impaired people. For more detailed information about exemptions, please visit the council website [here](#).



Waste collection and recycling

Edinburgh Council's waste collection is based on a [reduce, reuse and recycle policy](#). Depending on whether you live in a flat or a house with a garden, you will either use the [communal bins service](#) or have your own bins for [individual kerbside collections](#). A [brown bin for garden waste](#) is optional; contact the council if you'd like one of these. There is a £25 a year charge for collecting garden waste. You can find information about bins and recycling [here](#). The website also gives details of the different bins and what to put in them.

Each area of Edinburgh has its own calendar for bin collection days. Just type your address into the search box [here](#) to find the calendar for your street.



Transport

Edinburgh has excellent public transport by bus or tram and there are good bus and rail links to other parts of Scotland and the UK. All **buses** and **trams** are wheelchair-accessible and have space for a pram or buggy. Dogs are allowed on at the driver's discretion. A National Entitlement Card provides free or cheaper travel for young people, older people and people with a disability. You can find all you need to know about local bus services [here](#).

If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to use ordinary buses you can apply for a **Taxicard** to help you get around. A Taxicard also entitles you to free rail travel in the Lothian area. You can find out more [here](#).

If you are over 60 and travel by **train** you can apply for a senior railcard and save a third of the fare each time you travel. If you have a disability you can apply for a disabled persons railcard. Find out more about these, and other railcards, [here](#).

Car owners may need a residents' parking permit for a space near their home. You can find out about parking permits [here](#). If you have mobility issues you may be eligible for a Blue Badge to allow you to park free of charge. You can apply for a Blue Badge [here](#).

The [Enterprise Car Club](#) is a great option for drivers who don't want the hassle and cost of running their own car. You can join for as little as £2 a month. Car club members are allowed to park for free for up to two hours anywhere in Edinburgh. You'll also save on lots of costs like car tax, insurance and parking permits. And you'll be helping the environment by reducing pollution and congestion!

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Education

You can find out about the council's schools, childcare facilities and adult education [here](#).

There are also several private schools in the city, while [Edinburgh University](#), [Edinburgh College](#) and other colleges offer many opportunities for full or part-time adult learning.

Edinburgh also has several schools providing **specialist support** to children and young people with complex additional needs. You can find addresses and contact details [here](#). Follow the links for further information about each school.

Primary only

[Prospect Bank](#); [Redhall](#); [Rowanfield](#)

Primary and secondary

[Braidburn](#); [Kaimies](#); [Oaklands](#); [St Crispins](#)

Secondary only

[Gorgie Mills](#); [Howdenhall \(secure unit\)](#); [Pilrig Park](#); [Woodlands](#)

Health and wellbeing

[NHS Lothian](#) provides a full range of hospital, GP and community-based services in Edinburgh and the surrounding area (Midlothian, East Lothian and West Lothian).



Hospitals

The four big hospitals in Edinburgh are the [Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh](#), the [Western General](#), the [Royal Edinburgh Hospital](#) (providing psychiatric and mental health services) and the [Royal Hospital for Sick Children](#). There are several other smaller, specialist hospitals. You can find a full list of hospitals and addresses [here](#).

Accident and Emergency services are provided at the [Royal Infirmary](#) and, for children under 13, the [Royal Hospital for Sick Children](#).

There are two [Minor Injuries Units](#) in Edinburgh, at the Western General and the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. They treat smaller injuries like cuts, burns, sprains, wound infections and simple fractures. You don't need an appointment although you'll have to wait your turn to be seen.

GPs and other services

You can find a list of **GP surgeries** using the 'NHS Inform' search facility [here](#). Type your postcode into the search box to find a local surgery, or type in Edinburgh for a list of all the practices in the city.

Dentists

You can find a list of **dental practices** in Edinburgh [here](#). In case of an emergency, if you aren't registered with a dentist, you can go to the walk-in dental service at Chalmers Dental Centre, 3 Chalmers Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9EW. You should go before 3pm for same-day care.

Social Care



If you need help because of illness, frailty, disability or if you are concerned about the safety of an adult or child at risk of harm you should contact **Social Care Direct** (**0131 200 2324**, or socialcaredirect@edinburgh.gov.uk). Social Care Direct can arrange for an occupational therapist to visit and assess your needs if health or mobility issues make it difficult to move around your home.

If you are over 80 or you have a disability and need help to look after your garden you may be eligible for **Garden Aid**. Garden Aid can provide a grass-cutting service on a three-weekly cycle between March and October and hedge-trimming twice a year in summer and autumn. You can find out more about the service [here](#).

There is more information about help and support to live at home [here](#).

Support for carers



[Edinburgh Carer Support Services](#) may be able to help if you are caring for a relative or partner, friend or neighbour who needs help with day-to-day living because of mental or physical illness, disability or alcohol or drug addiction. Contact them via **0131 536 3371** or carer.support@luht.scot.nhs.uk

[VOCAL](#) (Voice of Carers Across Lothian) is a charity run by carers for carers. You can contact them by phone on **0131 622 6666** or visit one of their local offices; the addresses are [here](#).

Leisure centres



[Edinburgh Leisure](#) manages sport and leisure services for the City of Edinburgh Council. They offer a variety of activities as well as the usual swimming pools and gyms and aim to 'create opportunities for everyone to get active, stay active and achieve more'.

Their website has separate pages for each [venue](#). These give details of the facilities available with accessibility symbols for parking, wheelchair access, lifts, changing facilities and pool hoists. If you have particular requirements you should contact the venue direct.

You'll find information about specific activities and membership rates for people with disabilities [here](#).

There are also number of privately-run health and fitness clubs in the city.

Money, work and debt advice

Council tax, benefits and grants

If you are on a low income you can find information about help with **Council Tax, welfare benefits and grants** [here](#).

The Advice Shop at 249 High Street provides free, independent and confidential advice and representation on benefits and tax credits for people living in Edinburgh. They can help you with:

- Filling in forms
- Rent arrears
- Representation at appeals
- Getting you all the benefits you are entitled to
- Appeals if you don't agree with a benefit decision
- Other problems with your benefits

Phone: **0131 200 2360**

Email: advice.shop@edinburgh.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Edinburgh

Citizens Advice Edinburgh provides information and advice on a wide range of matters by face-to-face appointment, by phone and online. It can offer home visits for people with impaired mobility. The service specialises in welfare rights, including Universal Credit, debt, budgeting, employment, housing, energy, immigration and consumer rights. It also delivers the national Pensionwise and Patient Advice and Support Services.

Pensionwise is a free service that helps people over the age of 50 understand the different ways they can take their defined contribution pension pot. The guidance offered is impartial so advisers won't recommend any particular products or companies and won't tell you how to invest your money.

The **Patient Advice and Support Service** provides free, confidential and independent advice and support for NHS patients in Scotland.

Citizens Advice is available city-wide with five offices and 13 'outreach' sites across Edinburgh. You can find their addresses and opening times [here](#). To arrange an appointment, call **0131 510 5510**.

Scottish Welfare Fund



The Scottish Welfare Fund helps families and people in Scotland who are on low incomes through Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants. You can apply through the City of Edinburgh Council for a:

- **Crisis Grant** – if you're in crisis because of a disaster (like a fire or flood), or an emergency (like losing your money or an unexpected expense); or a
- **Community Care Grant** – to help you or someone you care for to start to live, or to carry on living, a settled life in the community.

You can find more details and how to apply [here](#).

Jobcentres



Jobcentres deal with new or existing benefit claims and provide advice and support with finding work. There are three Jobcentres in Edinburgh:

- Jobcentre Plus
20 High Riggs, Edinburgh, EH3 9HU
- Leith Jobcentre
199 Commercial St, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6QP
- Wester Hailes Jobcentre
Murrayburn House, 1 Westside Plaza, Wester Hailes Rd, Edinburgh, EH14 2SP

If you want to contact them by phone you can use the same number for each of the Jobcentres: **0800 169 0190**

Supported employment services



[All in Edinburgh](#) is a group of organisations called the Edinburgh Supported Employment Consortium. The organisations are The Action Group, ENABLE Scotland, Forth Sector and IntoWork. They work together to support people who have a disability or long term health condition to find a job, and aim to match people with the organisation – and the job – that is right for them. You can find out more [here](#).

Things to do in the city

There are so many places to visit and activities to enjoy here that it's impossible to list them all! What's below is just a small selection which we hope you get to explore. Enjoy the city, it's a beautiful place.



The **National Museum of Scotland** in **Chambers Street** is open every day from 10am-5pm. Refurbished a few years ago, the building is light and spacious. It's full of interesting things (including Dolly, the world's most famous sheep!), and there's a great view across Edinburgh from the top floor balcony.



The building is fully accessible with lifts to every floor, and assistance dogs are welcome. There's a hearing loop and other facilities, available on request, include wheelchairs for use in the museum and portable folding chairs. To find out more, ask at the Information Desk near the Chambers Street entrance or visit the website [here](#).



The **Scottish National Gallery** below **the Mound** holds Scotland's national art collection and hosts regular exhibitions. It opens daily from 10am-5pm (7pm on Thursdays). A free gallery bus service runs regularly between the National, the Portrait Gallery in Queen Street and the two Modern Art Galleries in Belford Road.



The main entrances are already wheelchair accessible and wheelchairs are available on request for use in the gallery. There is no disabled parking while the building work is going on and no lift access to the upper galleries. However there are bicycle racks and baby changing facilities, and there's plenty of seating available throughout the gallery. For further information about access, see the website [here](#)



Edinburgh has many theatre and cinemas. The **Festival Theatre** on **South Bridge**, the **Traverse Theatre** in **Cambridge Street** and the **Filmhouse Cinema** on **Lothian Road** are particularly good in terms of accessibility.

Further information about accessibility and support for disabled visitors is available on each of their websites:

[Festival Theatre](#); [Traverse Theatre](#); [Filmhouse Cinema](#).



Central Library on **George IV Bridge** and a number of **local area library branches** throughout the city are treasure houses of information about Edinburgh and any other topic you can think of. As well as books, DVDs and CDs, all the libraries have free WiFi. They offer a range of online resources: e-books, magazines, newspapers, and learning facilities.

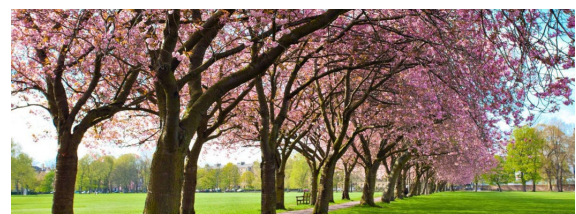
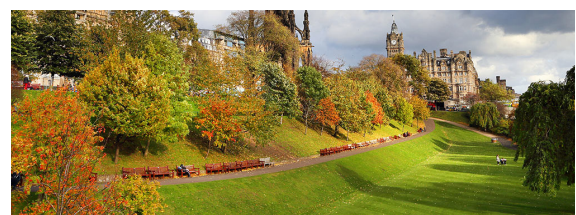
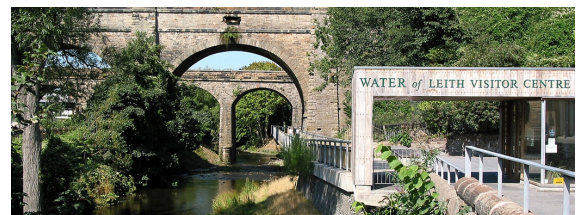


There are 'Get Online' courses on using your laptop/tablet, and 1-1 sessions are available to help people with a visual impairment learn how to use the voice-over function on an iPad/phone. There's also a free bus service, Library Link, for anyone who finds it difficult to get to the library. The libraries can also arrange a home delivery service for housebound readers. Opening times and access arrangements vary between branches. See [here](#) for further info.



If you like being outside Edinburgh is full of **green spaces**. Wherever you live in the city it's likely that there will be a park or other open space nearby - here are a few to explore:

- The **Water of Leith** runs right through the city from Balerno out in the South-West to Leith in the North-East of Edinburgh. It is a favourite route for walks, long/short!
- **Arthur's Seat** in **Holyrood Park** is one of Edinburgh's best-known landmarks, with fantastic views across the city. It's another good place for walking, jogging or cycling, even if you don't feel up to climbing the seat!
- **Princes Street Gardens** is the focal point for annual firework displays at the Edinburgh Festival and Hogmanay. During the summer months it's a favourite spot for picnics and family fun when the weather is good.
- **The Meadows** is also a popular space, especially with students. There are tennis courts at one end and a cricket pavilion at the other.
- **The Royal Botanic Gardens** in **Inverleith Row** is one of the most popular places for an outing in Edinburgh all year round. It's accessible and wheelchair friendly.



Key contacts

Edinburgh City Council

Your local council office can help you with:



- Paying Council Tax and rent
- Housing, including bidding on properties through Key to Choice
- Reporting noise and anti-social behaviour
- Information about grants for community projects
- Parks and green spaces
- Road issues

You can find the address of your local office [here](#).

If you have a query or problem that the local office can't resolve you can get in touch with your local councillor. Find out who your councillor is and how to contact them [here](#).

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MPs and MSPs



The Scottish Parliament is at the foot of the Royal Mile, opposite Holyrood Palace. You can visit the parliament if you like - more details are [here](#).

Find out who your local MSP is and how to contact them by using the Parliament's search facility [here](#). As a constituent, your MSPs are there to help you.

Find out who your local MP is [here](#). As a constituent, your MP is there to help you.

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Inclusion Scotland



Inclusion Scotland is a charity aiming to ensure inclusive policy, practice and decision-making for disabled people. Their website has information about employability, human rights, poverty and social security and encourages disabled people to become active citizens to secure their rights and entitlements. Find out more [here](#).

Euan's Guide EVAN'S

Euan's Guide is a website which reviews the accessibility of different venues across the UK. You can search by location on the website [here](#).

Housing Options Scotland

Housing Options Scotland offer information and advice to disabled people, older adults and members of the Armed Forces Community. Contact us on: **0131 247 1400** or via the website [here](#).

Veterans

Veterans can receive specific support from national veteran charities and groups. **Veterans Scotland** have produced an information guide [here](#) which covers lots of contacts and advice.

The Scottish Government has also produced two guides - one with [general information](#), and one with [information about housing](#).

[Poppy Scotland](#) are also able to offer advice and support.