



Welcome to West Lothian

A guide to your new area

Introduction

Hello and welcome to your new home! As you start to settle in and make this house your home, please give this booklet a read. It is a useful guide aimed at people who are new to the area and provides a summary of the main services, contacts and facilities you might need. I live just on the boundary to West Lothian in South Queensferry, but spend most of my weekends in the green spaces and leisure facilities that make West Lothian a great place to be. I hope you get chance to make the most of them while living here!



Heather
HOSHelps Development Worker



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:

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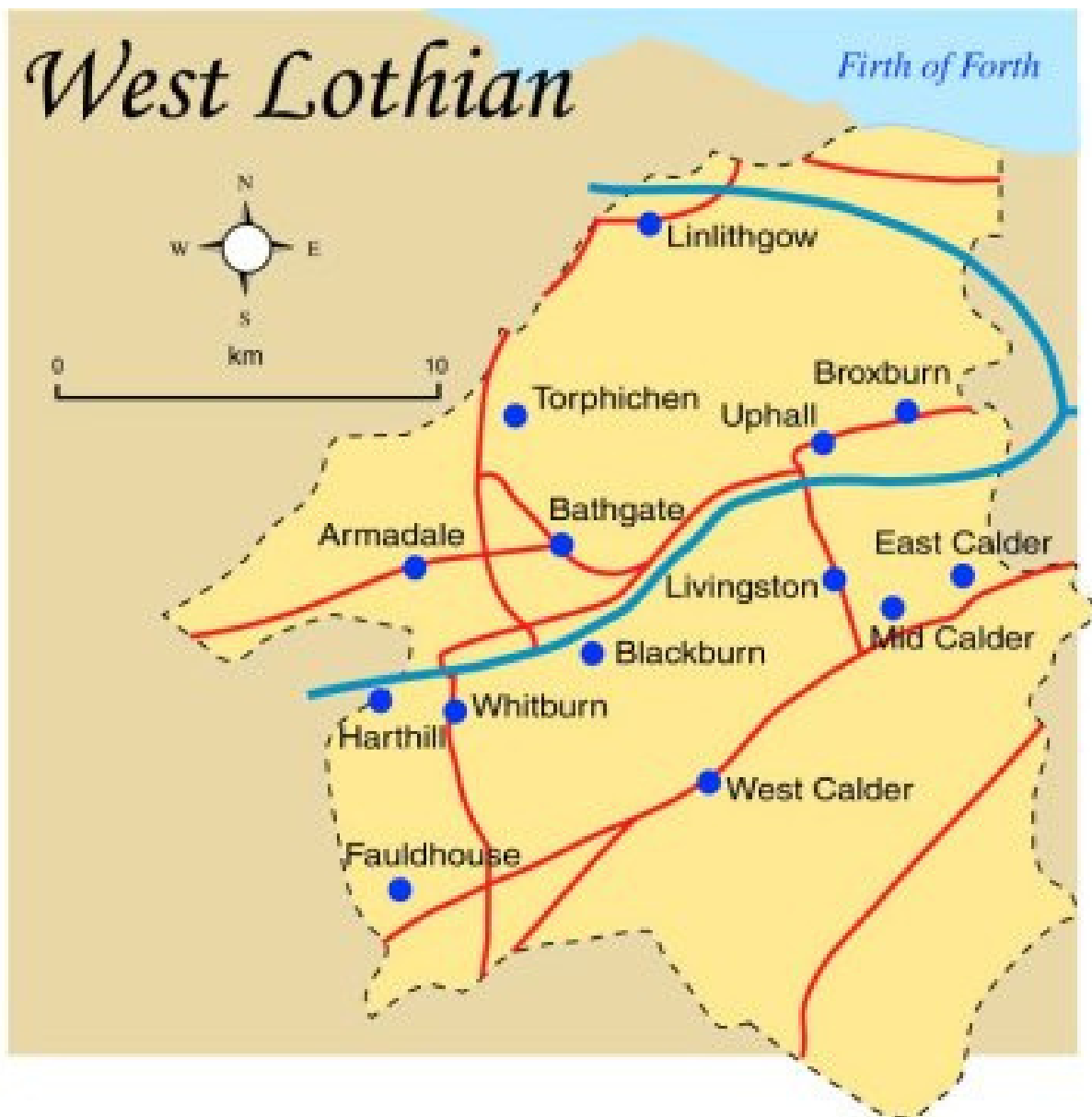
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Background information

West Lothian is one of Scotland's original counties, also formerly known as Linlithgowshire. **Livingston** is the largest town, with **Linlithgow** and **Bathgate** also being large areas. The county is bordered by North and South Lanarkshire, Falkirk, City of Edinburgh, The Borders and the Firth of Forth to the North.

There are great connections to the rest of Scotland's central belt, with Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling all reachable in under an hour on public transport.



Moving home

When you move into a new home there are several things you need to think about:

Tell others about your change of address.

This might include:

- 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
- [West Lothian council](#)
- The [electoral register](#)
- The [Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency](#) (DVLA)
- Telephone, TV and broadband providers
- [TV licensing](#)
- Charities you might support
- Post Office re-direction service [here](#)



Find your way around 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) | |

- **Take gas and electricity meter readings.** Do this at your old and new property when you leave/move-in. This will make sure you only pay for the energy you use.
- **Settle up bills at your old property.** Make sure you pay for all bills due - rent/mortgage; council tax; gas/electricity; garden/common area maintenance.
- **Think about changing providers.** Moving to a new home gives you the chance to review the costs of services you use and try to find better deals. Look at comparison sites [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) to help.



The following websites might also prove useful for you throughout/after your move:



[Home Energy Scotland](#)

For advice about energy saving, keeping warm at home, renewable energy, greener travel, cutting waste and more. They can offer advice for applying for grants or loans.



[West Lothian Trusted Traders](#)

This site contains a list of traders who have successfully passed an assessment process carried out by 'Which?' trading standards professionals. Just select the service you require and type in your postcode to find a list of traders locally.



[Care and Repair \(Scotland\)](#)

Provides independent advice and assistance to elderly and disabled homeowners to repair, improve or adapt their homes in order to live safely and comfortably. The website has a page specific for enquiries [here](#).

Essentials

Council Services

You can find details of all West Lothian Council services [here](#), including recycling, schools, and health and social care. If you have any questions, you can find their contact details [here](#).



Council Tax

The amount of 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 account online and make payments through the council account. To find up-to-date rates of council and water charges, please click [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 usually aren't counted in your household numbers. Discounts also apply for apprentices, school leavers, care leavers and hospitalised, disabled or severely mentally impaired people. For more detailed information please click [here](#).

Waste collection and recycling

West Lothian Council operates a 3-bin waste collection (grey, brown and blue) and recycling service for most residents. You can find which day your bins are collected by downloading a PDF calendar or postcode search of the bin collection dates [here](#).

If you're not sure what to do with a waste item, check [here](#) for advice on re-using and recycling.

If you need uplift of a bulky item that does not fit in your bins, please click [here](#).

Recycling centres open 7 days a week (except bank holidays, when times may differ):

- Blackburn Community Recycling Centre, East Main Street, EH47 7QU Broxburn
- Community Recycling Centre, Greendykes Industrial Estate, EH52 6PG Linlithgow
- Community Recycling Centre, Braehead Road, EH49 6HF Oakbank (Livingston)
- Community Recycling Centre, Oakbank (A71, Livingston), EH53 0TP Whitburn
- Community Recycling Centre, Burnhouse Industrial Estate, EH47 0LQ

Transport

Public transport

[Traveline Scotland](#) is an excellent resource to use for finding public transport. Their website has a journey planner which you can use to plan all sorts of journeys across Scotland and the UK.

The local bus operators in West Lothian include [Stagecoach](#), [First Scotland East](#) and [E&M Horsburgh](#). There are good, direct connections to hospitals including those in Edinburgh.

In areas of West Lothian where no mainstream public transport service is available, the Council operates an [on-demand taxibus service](#). Passengers must book their journey at least one hour before they intend to travel, stating which bus stop they wish to be picked up from.

If you have limited mobility and are unable to use ordinary buses, [HcL Transport](#) provides an on demand transport service. The driver will give you any help you need to get on or off the bus, it has been designed for easy access and is wheelchair friendly. Register for their service [here](#).

Information on bus passes, concessionary travel for school pupils, and the HcL Transport service can be found [here](#).

If you need help going to hospital appointments, please see the [NHS Lothians Patient Transport](#) page.

The Thistle Assistance Card

If you need extra assistance when travelling, such as needing more physical help from bus drivers or more time to get on and off public transport, you can get a Thistle Assistance Card. This is not a concession card but allows you to ask for extra help. The card is free and you can get it by completing the form on this [web page](#). If you have any questions see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page [here](#).

The Young Scot Card

If you are aged between 11 and 26 you can apply for a Young Scot card which will give you travel discounts on rail, bus, and ferry services, as well as other discounts. The discount is generally a third off bus and rail fares. For more information check [here](#).



Railcards

If you are over 18, a [Railcard](#) may be a good idea. These cover all trains in Great Britain (a different scheme is used in Northern Ireland) and give 30% discount on train travel for people in various categories, including:

- 16- 25 Railcard
- 26- 30 Railcard
- Two Together Railcard
- Family & Friends Railcard
- Network Railcard
- Senior Railcard
- Disabled Persons Railcard
- HM Forces Railcard
- Veterans Railcard
- Regional Railcard

Airports

The nearest major airport is Edinburgh Airport. This airport has international and domestic flights and is approx. 11 miles from the centre of Livingston. To get there, you can take the train to Edinburgh Park, followed by the tram to the Airport. Alternatively, there is a low cost [park and ride](#) at Ingliston.

Education

West Lothian Council provides a [free search facility](#) for anyone wanting to find out about childcare in the area. This includes local authority and private **nurseries**, and **primary and secondary schools**. There are both denominational and non-denominational schools available. You can filter by the name of your town on the right hand side.

All West Lothian schools with **special education departments** can be found [here](#).

There is also a national website called [ENQUIRE](#) which offers general advice and information about additional support for learning.

Adult and Community Learning West Lothian College has a range of **further and higher education opportunities**, see their website [here](#).



Money, work, and debt advice

Financial advice



Citizens Advice Bureaux are useful sources of information too. They offer free information and advice on a range of matters including welfare benefits, tax, debt, housing, relationships, healthcare, discrimination, work and employment, your rights under Scottish law, etc. You can access their website [here](#).



The Advice Shop in West Lothian covers a wide variety of topics. These include help with energy advice, money and debt, financial wellbeing, benefits, Macmillan cancer support and advice on volunteering. There is a self-referral form to get help through speaking to an advisor [here](#).



Scotland's Financial Health Service is a gateway to free and impartial advice about your finances.



Age Scotland **Money Matters** can provide tailored money advice for people aged 50 and over.

Pensions

You can find free and impartial information from [The Pensions Advisory Service](#), and its sister service, [Pensionwise](#), which also offers free individual advice appointments to people aged 50 or over. Both services are funded by the UK Government. Age UK also provides clear information about pensions [here](#).

Debt advice

The money advice contacts above can provide debt advice. You can also find specialist advice and assistance to manage debt at:

- [Step Change Debt Charity](#) provides free advice and support tailored to your circumstances and in line with Scottish debt law.
- [National Debtline Scotland](#) offers free independent advice on 0808 808 4000 or by [Webchat](#).



Benefits and Grants



Benefits and grants provide an additional source of income people on low incomes or in circumstances which mean they have extra costs for living, housing or working.

- For up-to-date information and advice about benefits contact the Council's [Welfare Rights Team](#) or [Citizen's Advice Scotland](#).
- [General information](#) about benefits can be found on the UK Government website. It gives information about entitlement and who to contact to make benefit claims.
- [Local job centres](#) can provide practical advice about benefits, whether you are a new claimant or an existing one.
- If you are a Housing Association tenant, ask your landlord if they offer money and benefits advice services.
- [Turn2Us](#) and [Entitled To](#) offer reliable online benefits and grants calculators as well as good information and advice.

Various organisations and charities also have useful information about different welfare benefits. For example:

- [Sense](#)
- [Age UK](#)
- [Scope](#)

Scottish Welfare Fund

This discretionary fund helps people on low incomes with grants that do not need to be paid back. There are two types of grant:

**The Scottish
WELFARE FUND**

- **Crisis Grant**, where you need help in because of a disaster (like a fire or flood), or an emergency (like losing your money or an unexpected expense);
- **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.

Applications need to be made through the Council and you can find more details and how to apply [here](#).

Adaptations to your home

You may be entitled to financial help to adapt your home for the needs of a disabled person. You can find more information on entitlements [here](#) and on the local policy and process [here](#).

Working and employment



The UK Government website has useful information about looking for work [here](#). This site has information about finding a job, contacting Job Centre Plus, training, internships and apprenticeships, support for (finding) work if you have a long-term illness or disability and employee rights.

Livingston Job Center is located at Unit 16B Regional Centre, Almondvale S, Livingston EH54 6NQ, United Kingdom and can be contacted on **+44 800 169 0190**.



Skills Development Scotland is a national agency that supports people of all ages to develop work and employability skills, undertake further learning and manage their careers. Check their website [here](#).



Those in West Lothian also has access to [Access2Employment](#) team. They are professional employment advisors who run courses to support clients find new or better employment, training or educational opportunities.

Health and wellbeing

GPs and other services



You can find your nearest local GP, dentist, pharmacy, optician, Accident & Emergency and sexual health clinic by following the link [here](#), adding your postcode and using the click down menu to point to the correct service.

Find out more about how to register with a GP [here](#) and download the registration form if you want to manage registration by email. It is useful if you have proof of your new address to register, but this is not essential.

Hospitals



[St Johns Hospital Livingston](#) is the main hospital for the county. It is a teaching hospital with a 24-hour Accident and Emergency department and a range of specialist services.

You may also be treated at [Western General Hospital](#) in Edinburgh, or other Edinburgh hospitals.



Social Care



West Lothian Council's social care services have very busy phone lines, but in my own experience, they have given quick and clear responses per email:

adultsocialcare@westlothian.gov.uk.

There is also information on different kinds of therapy and rehabilitation [here](#). This includes speech and language therapy, podiatry and physiotherapy.

Mental Health



If you are struggling with your mental health, these services might be able to help:

- [West Lothian Mental Health Advocacy Project](#)
- [Smile Counselling](#) (for children and young people)
- [West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service](#)

Support for carers



[Carers of West Lothian](#) provides help and support to unpaid carers of people with all types of illnesses and disabilities throughout West Lothian. Email them on office@carers-westlothian.com for a self-referral form.

Health and social care for veterans and the armed forces



NHS Inform also has useful information if you are a veteran seeking help with health care. Find out more [here](#).

Every NHS Board in Scotland has an **Armed Forces and Veterans Champion**. NHS Board champions are usually senior members of staff who hold overall responsibility for making sure that the priority treatment guidelines are understood and applied in their NHS Board area. It is important to tell your GP that you have served in the armed forces as this will ensure you receive appropriate information and services specifically for veterans. More information about your NHS rights as a veteran can be found [here](#). There are a number of NHS dedicated services for veterans about which you can find out more [here](#).

The **Veterans Welfare Service** is a UK Government service provided through Veterans UK. It aims to provide a free welfare service that promotes independence, maintains dignity and provides continuous support through life. Check details [here](#).

Leisure

Sport and leisure centres



West Lothian [leisure centres](#) (known as Xcite) are in Bathgate, Linlithgow and Livingston.

Libraries



To join the library in West Lothian, please follow the link [here](#). If you require help filling in the application form, please get in touch per email at: library.info@westlothian.gov.uk.

Once you have joined the library, [this link](#) takes you to the webpage where you can search, reserve and renew books.

There is also an e-library, accessible [here](#).



Theatres and Cinemas



West Lothian has three cinemas and theatres:

- [Vue Livingston](#) provides lift access, and features subtitled and autism-friendly screenings. Find more about the cinema's accessibility [here](#).
- [Bathgate cinema](#)
- [Reconnect Regal Theatre](#) is also located in Bathgate and puts on live shows.



Heritage and outdoor activities



West Lothian is also home to a variety of museums and stately homes. Click [here](#) for the council's website about the museums.

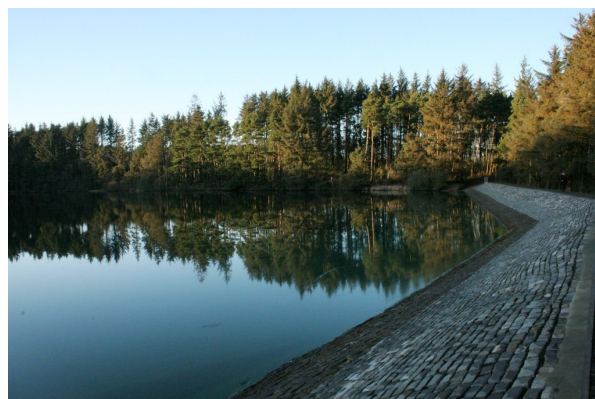
Linlithgow Palace and Loch is not only beautiful, but has a range of activities available. There's an angling club, canoeing, walks and also the obvious, the palace itself! Entry to the palace, as well as all other Historic Scotland properties, costs just £1 for YoungScot Card holders, making it a potentially cheap day out with the family. For accessibility information, see [Euan's Guide](#).



Hopetoun Estate is largely open to the public, with well-kept paths in the grounds and along the coast that can take you all the way from the edge of South Queensferry to Blackness Castle, and further to Bo'ness. In the summer the estate is also open for visits in the private grounds and stately home, with a tearoom and ranger led tours available. In the autumn the "Wonderous Woods" light show is also a big hit, and in winter there are usually Christmas and Advent activities. See [Euan's Guide](#) to accessibility information.



Beecraigs Country Park is another outdoor activity that won't break the bank. Entrance is free and there are paths to enjoy by foot or bike, as well as an adventure play area for children. There are also events led by the park ranger team, and animals such as herds of deer and highland cattle to see. For eating, BBQ facilities are available or you visit the visitor centre.



For accessibility information, click [here](#).

West Lothian has only a short stretch of coastline, but personally I regard it as one of my favourites. The Firth of Forth is home to amazing bird and wildlife that can be enjoyed on the **beaches near Abercorn**, with seals and dolphins being regular visitors.

Useful contacts

West Lothian Council & Councillors

Your [local council office](#) can help you with:

- Paying Council Tax and rent
- Housing, including bidding on properties
- Reporting noise and anti-social behaviour
- Parks and green spaces
- Road issues



Local councillors may be able to help with queries or problems that council officials cannot resolve. West Lothian Council has nine multi-member wards. Please see the [council website](#) to find out who represents your ward.

MPs and MSPs



UK Parliament

MP for Livingston is Hannah Bardell (SNP), who can be contacted on 020 7219 5907 and hannah.bardell.mp@parliament.uk.

MP for Linlithgow and East Falkirk is Martyn Day (SNP), who can be contacted on 020 7219 5930 and martyn.day.mp@parliament.uk

Scottish Parliament

There are two constituency MSPs in West Lothian, and 7 regional MSPs who cover the whole Lothian region:

The Almond Vale constituency MSP is Angela Constance (SNP) and the Linlithgow constituency MSP is Fiona Hyslop (SNP).

The regional MSPs are Miles Briggs (Scottish Conservatives), Alison Johnstone (Scottish Green Party), Sarah Boyak (Scottish Labour), Gordon Lindhurst (Scottish Conservatives), Neil Findlay (Scottish Labour), Jeremy Balfour (Scottish Conservatives), and Andy Wightman (Independent).

Please see the following [map](#) for information on MSPs in your area. You can email any of your eight MSPs using the standard format: firstname.surname.msp@parliament.scot.

Volunteer organisations

[The Tower Bar:](#) The Towers Covid Action Group has volunteers who can help the elderly, disabled and single parents cope with emergency repairs, retrieving shopping and prescriptions and liaising with food banks during the Covid-19 lockdown.

[Food Train:](#) The food train helps older and infirm people with access to food and company. They do this through befriending services, food delivery from supermarkets and meal kits.

[Kidzeco:](#) Kidzeco have two centres in West Lothian, one in Bathgate and one in Livingston. They have community projects including a family food pantry.

[Riverkids:](#) Riverkids is a kids charity in West Lothian that ensures no child goes without a present on their birthday and at Christmas. They can also provide limited help with household essentials, such as furniture for new babies.

[Macmillan:](#) Macmillan offers information and advice to people affected by cancer. They do drop in sessions at centres throughout West Lothian.

[HomeAid:](#) HomeAid have furniture and white goods for low prices and can arrange delivery and pick up. There is also a scheme to pay for the goods over time, with a referral through the Advice Shop.

West Lothian Council Switchboard

From the Switch Board, you can be put through to The Advice Shop, who can give lots of advice on many matters from energy usage to financial planning and more: 01506 280000.

Social housing organisations

[Almond Housing Association:](#) 01506 439291

[Horizon Housing:](#) 0330 303 0089

[West Lothian Housing Partnership:](#) 01506 416 438

Information for Disabled People

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](#).



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](#).



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](#), one with [information about housing](#).

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