

How can the Council help you?

You can ask St Albans City and District Council for help as soon as you get the Home Office decision letter.

This is called making a homeless application. You do not need to wait for your residence permit, a national insurance number or an eviction notice. The Council might ask to see these things later.

The Home Office letter should be enough for the Council to start looking into your situation and how they can help.

Not everyone who approaches their local council is entitled to housing.

Everyone can get advice from the Council and the Council might have a duty to provide temporary accommodation and support with other longer term housing solutions.

Where a Council is satisfied that a person is eligible and homeless or threatened with homelessness, it must draw up a personalised housing plan based on its assessment of your need. The plan should contain the steps to be taken to prevent or relieve the applicant's homelessness.



The Housing Crisis in the UK

In the UK the supply of available housing has not kept up with demand. Getting access to housing of any type is becoming increasingly difficult for low-income households.

There are areas in the country that have cheaper rents. London and the south of England tend to have higher rents than other areas, depending on where you live.

When considering where to live, you must look at what is realistic, affordable and most accommodating to your circumstances. You will probably need to rent privately at first.

For advice that may apply to your circumstances please visit:

www.migranthelpuk.org

righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/infoline/

england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/refugee_and_migrant_charities

General Housing Advice for Refugees



Different types of housing

Private rented sector

This is a property owned by a landlord and rented to a tenant.



Self-contained accommodation.

This is rented accommodation where only you and your household have sole use of a kitchen, bedroom, living room and bathroom. In this type of accommodation, you are usually responsible for all bills including rent, gas, electricity and Council Tax.

Shared accommodation

This is accommodation where a tenant does not have exclusive use of more than one room in a property and shares facilities such as bathrooms and kitchen with other tenants. This type of accommodation usually includes bills such as gas, electricity and water within the monthly rent and tends to be cheaper types of accommodation.

Social housing

Houses and flats that are owned by Local Government or Housing Associations and are rented to people with a low income or have a housing need. Not everyone is eligible for social housing. St Albans Council has a long housing waiting list.

What do I pay for in housing?

The types of things you will most likely need to pay for, depending on your type of accommodation, are rent, gas and electricity, Council Tax, water charges and internet and phone costs.

Where do I look for housing?

Here are some useful links:

www.spareroom.co.uk

www.idealflatmate.co.uk

www.openrent.co.uk

www.rightmove.co.uk

www.zoopla.co.uk

www.onthemarket.com

If you need help with the first month's rent and deposit you can contact St Albans Community Bank via:

www.stalbanscommunitybank.co.uk

If you require a guarantor, you can contact Rent Guarantor via: rentguarantor.com



Local Housing Allowance

If you require Universal Credit (Benefits) to help pay for your living costs towards your rent, Universal Credit will pay up to a certain amount, depending on how much you are earning if you are working and your financial circumstances.

Local Housing Allowance rates: St Albans District

Shared room rate - 35 years old and under: **£416.49 a month**



35 years old and over:

1 Bedroom Need: **£800.00pcm**

2 Bedroom Need: **£1000.01pcm**

3 Bedroom Need: **£1300.01pcm**

4 Bedroom Need: **£1699.99pcm**

(pcm means Per Calendar Month)

Average cost of a 1 - bedroom flat in St Albans District is £900 - £1,300.

The amount that Universal Credit will pay towards rent varies from area to area in England. To check the Local Housing Allowance Rates for other areas please visit: lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/

If you need to apply for Universal Credit please apply via: www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim