

Leaving home



Leaving home is a great first step towards independence but lack of preparation can make it tiring and expensive. To help you organise yourself, have a look at the first few steps below.

First steps

- ❑ Write down and think about all the new responsibilities you'd have in your own place, don't forget things like:
 - paying the rent
 - sorting the bills out
 - washing
 - cooking
 - cleaning
 - turfing your friends out!
- ❑ Think about how you'd find somewhere to live, and where you'd look.
- ❑ Think about where and how you could get help and support if you needed it.

Can you afford it?

Moving out can be a bit of a shock to your finances, especially at first. To work out how much money you'll need, take a look at the ideas below.

- ❑ Write down an estimate of your monthly bills such as:
 - council tax
 - gas
 - electricity
 - phone
 - water rates
 - TV licence.
- ❑ Remember to think about extra expenses such as food, transport and socialising.
- ❑ Then think about how much rent you can afford, taking into account your income, and the expenses above.
- ❑ Before you move in anywhere, you will normally need to give the landlord one month's rent, plus a deposit. A deposit is usually the same amount as one month's rent.
- ❑ There are some council-run schemes and trusts that help with one-off payments such as deposits.
- ❑ Remember to find out about which benefits could help pay your rent and how to claim them.
- ❑ Have you thought about where you could go or what you might do if you ran out of money?

Leaving in a hurry?

You may be experiencing problems at home, and want to leave as soon as you can. If possible, talk to a friend or family member to help you think about your options. If you do have to leave in a hurry, don't forget:

- ❑ some identification (passport and national insurance number) – this is really important
- ❑ medication – or any personal stuff like glasses or inhalers
- ❑ money or cash cards
- ❑ a change of clothes, and a warm coat
- ❑ toiletries
- ❑ your address book and/or mobile phone.

Where do you want to live?

When you're thinking about the area you want to live in, a bit of research can go a long way.

- ❑ If there's an area you're considering, visit it first, to suss it out.
- ❑ Does it feel safe? Would you feel comfortable walking around on your own?
- ❑ What kind of work is available in the area?
- ❑ What's the public transport like – is it easy to get around without a car?
- ❑ Try and find out what the average rent is.
- ❑ Check out the nearby food shops and entertainment – life can be cheaper if there's lots on your doorstep!

Who do you want to live with?

It's a lot cheaper to live in a shared house than on your own, but make sure you choose your flatmates carefully.

- ❑ If you do want to live on your own, would there be people around that you could visit?
- ❑ If you want to share, is there anybody that springs to mind?
- ❑ If not, what would you ask a potential flatmate?
- ❑ How do you think you'd deal with issues like noise, mess or other people's friends being round all the time?