

# A Guide to Finding Rented Accommodation



**Scarborough Borough Council**  
*"All together better"*



*A great place to live, work & play*

# Contents



Where to look	1
Bond scheme	1
One-to-one help to find accommodation	2
Dealing with estate agents/landlords/landladies	2
Practicalities	2
At the interview	3
Questions they may ask you	3
Questions you should ask	4
Things to check when visiting a property	4
Decoration	4
Repairs	4
Safety	5
Private tenant's rights	5
Responsibility for repairs	5
Notice to Quit	5
Housing Benefit	6
Pre-Tenancy Determination	6
Council tax	6
Contact details	7
Estate Agents / Letting Agents	8 - 10
Anchor Trust	11
Hanover Housing Association	11
Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust	11
Broadacres Housing Association Limited	11
Ryedale Housing Association (a subsidiary of Yorkshire Community Housing Ltd)	12
Chevin Housing Association	12
Leeds and Yorkshire Housing Association	12

## Where to look

The demand for social housing far outweighs the availability of property. Yorkshire Coast Homes (YCH) must give priority to those with the greatest housing need for accommodation as reflected by the points scheme for housing register applicants. Unfortunately, we are not able to offer a home to everybody who applies to us for housing.

This leaflet has been designed to give you some basic information to try and help you find and rent accommodation in the private sector. However, it also contains information about how you can be considered for properties owned or managed by other housing associations. There are many opportunities to rent accommodation from private landlords and letting agents within the Borough.

If you are homeless or facing homelessness however, you should come directly to YCH as there are specific procedures in place to assist people in these circumstances.

### Where to look

Estate agents – at the back of this booklet you will find a list of estate agents you can contact about available private accommodation to rent.

Other housing associations in the area – Information about housing associations other than YCH who accept direct applications from the public are at the back of this booklet. To be considered for properties owned by other housing associations you might need to fill in their waiting list application form or phone up. We have nomination rights on behalf of the Council to many properties owned by other housing associations - nominations will be made from our waiting list.

Local advertisements of places to let can often be found in local newspapers, shop windows and in supermarket notice boards. The Scarborough Evening News is published Monday to Saturday. Properties may appear any day but there is a special property section on Monday. The Whitby Gazette is published on Tuesday and Friday. Friday is the best day for property. The Yorkshire Post also advertises properties to rent.

Ask your friends and workmates if they know of any available properties to rent in the area

### Bond scheme

Most landlords will expect you to pay a deposit, usually equivalent to a months rent. they may also require a month's rent in advance at the time you start renting the property. You may also have to pay legal fees for the estate agent to draw up a tenancy agreement.

YCH runs a bond scheme on behalf of Scarborough Borough Council for those people who are homeless and classed in priority need who are unable to provide the necessary bond to enable them to move into a privately rented property.

For further details please contact an Allocations officer at your local YCH office.

# One-to-one help to find accommodation

## One-to-one help to find accommodation

Scarborough Borough Council has staff available to assist you with your search for accommodation. We can talk to potential landlords on your behalf and even accompany you to viewings. Please contact the Homeless Prevention Service on 01723 383541 or 232528. You may have to leave a message and we will call you back.

## Dealing with estate agents/landlords/landladies

### Making an appointment

- Once you have found a property that you are interested in, telephone and make an appointment to visit the property.
- During the telephone conversation, remember to:
- Explain where you saw the advertisement
- Give your name
- Ask how much the rent is (if not given in the advert)
- Ask when the property will be available and for how long
- Make an appointment to see the property
- If necessary, ask for directions to the property
- When speaking to the landlord/ agent emphasise your positive points, think about your phone manner- "Do you take people on benefit?" is not the way to introduce yourself
- If you are working, emphasise this

### Practicalities

- Do not view flats/ houses by yourself- be safe and take along a friend
- Flats are usually available immediately or in a very short space of time, so be prepared to take it if it is offered- there is no point looking for a flat to move in weeks ahead. At the same time bear in mind the advice in this leaflet about finding out whether you will be able to afford the property.
- make the time- start early every day and go immediately to view the property
- do not part with any money without getting a receipt



## At the interview

At the appointment, make sure you are:

- On time
- Clean, smart and tidy
- Polite and respectful
- Prepared to answer any questions

Strike up a rapport with the landlord/agent; there is a possibility that they may trust you enough once they meet you to let to you even if you are on benefit

have your references ready to show the landlord or agent; he will probably want to follow them up but it may stand you in good stead- if you do not have references from previous landlords it may help to have a character reference from your college, your employer or ex-employer or someone of good standing

be clear about what is being offered; take notes, ask questions and clarify everything- wherever possible get agreements confirmed in writing

you may want to take money or a cheque for a holding deposit but do not hand over money if you have any doubts that the person you are dealing with is the landlord or agent for the property and that they are entitled to let the property

If you are likely to need Housing Benefit, speed up the processing of your Housing Benefit claim by taking an application form for a pre-tenancy determination (see below) and for Housing Benefit (both available from SBC) with you to the viewing. If you like the property and you are accepted as a tenant, you can get the forms completed there and then. Don't be afraid to get help with your forms from SBC Housing Benefit section or CAB. Consider having the Housing Benefit paid direct to your landlord- you can opt for this when you fill in the form.

## Questions they may ask you

- Where have you previously been living? Why have you left? Can you get a reference from your previous landlord?
- What are your financial circumstances? Have you got a job? Do you receive Housing Benefit?
- How old are you?
- How long do you plan to stay in the property? (Usually you will be offered a 6 or 12 month assured shorthold tenancy, but landlords generally prefer tenants who want to stay for longer if possible).

# Things to check when visiting a property

## Questions you should ask

- How much is the rent? What does it include e.g. bills?
- Is rent required in advance? If so, how much?
- Who's responsible for water rates and Council Tax?
- Are they going to give you a written agreement?
- Is a bond required? If so, how much?
- Is the property furnished?

## Things to check when visiting a property

### General

- Does anyone else live in the property? If, so try and find out about them.
- Does the landlord live in the property?
- Are there any rules e.g. smoking, pets, visitors?
- What facilities are there? Are they shared?
- Is there an up-to-date gas safety certificate for the property?
- Do the gas/electric fires work?
- Are there any pre-payment meters e.g. water, gas or electricity? (These can be expensive so ask for an indication of the costs for these services.)
- Is the heating in the property adequate?

### Decoration

- Does anything need decorating?
- Will the landlord agree to carry out or pay for any of it? (Make sure any agreement is in writing.)

### Repairs

- Is the property in a good state of repair?
- Does the roof look sound?
- Are the drains blocked?
- Is there any dampness/condensation in the property?
- If any repairs need doing, will the landlord agree to do these or pay for them? (Make sure any agreement is in writing.)
- What repairs, if any, are you responsible for?

# Responsibility for repairs

## Safety

- Are there smoke detectors fitted? Do they work?
- Are there fire extinguishers/fire blankets?

## Private tenant's rights

As a private tenant you have the right to the following:-

- To know the terms of the tenancy
- To know the name and address of the landlord
- To a decent standard of repair
- To proper notice if the landlord wants the tenant to leave
- To "quiet enjoyment" while staying in the property

However, as a tenant you also have a responsibility to ensure that the rent is paid on time and to ensure the property is kept in the same condition it was in when it was first let to you.

## Responsibility for repairs

The tenancy agreement should say who is responsible for the decoration and repair of the accommodation. In general, tenants are responsible for ensuring fixtures, fittings, furniture and other contents are not damaged by negligence.

In general, landlords are responsible for keeping the following in good repair and working order:-

- The structure and exterior of the property, including drains and gutters
- Water, gas pipes and electrical wiring (including taps and sockets, for example)
- Basins, sinks, baths and toilets
- Fixed heaters, gas fires and water heaters
- Repairs to common parts of the building such as stairs

Landlords must also carry out annual checks on gas installations and electrical appliances

## Notice to Quit

If you are a tenant and you have received a written or verbal notice to quit from your landlord, you should seek help from an experienced adviser before the notice expires.

You should not move out without consulting an advice service such as Citizens Advice.

# Housing benefit

## Housing Benefit

People on low incomes may be entitled to receive Housing Benefit to help pay the rent. However, it is important to remember that there is no automatic entitlement to Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit will only be paid to someone who has gone through the application process properly and satisfies the requirements for payment. It is also important to realise that when renting from a private landlord the level of Housing Benefit awarded may not cover the full cost of the rent (even if you are on Income Support) and, therefore, you would have to pay the difference out of your money. It is vital that you seek help from someone who can advise you how much you are likely to have to pay before you accept a tenancy. You should contact the Housing Benefit section of Scarborough Borough Council, a Citizens Advice Bureau or Scarborough Borough Council's Homeless Prevention Officer for more information.

If you are under 25, single and in receipt of state benefits, you will probably be eligible for enough housing benefit to cover a room in a shared house. However, if anything is included in the rent e.g. electricity, gas or water rates, then this is always deducted from the housing benefit payment.

## Pre-Tenancy Determination

If you are thinking of renting accommodation from a private landlord and you are likely to need help from Housing Benefit to pay your rent, you may want to apply for a Pre-Tenancy Determination (PTD). A Pre-Tenancy Determination is a rental valuation by the Independent Rent Service. The rental valuation represents the Rent Service's opinion about how much rent it would be reasonable to pay for the property. They normally give you a decision within seven days. This valuation gives you the rent figure which will be used by the Housing Benefit office to work out your Housing Benefit. The PTD does not guarantee that you will get Housing Benefit or tell you the amount you will get. This is because the amount of Housing Benefit you get is affected by other things like your family income and the size of your family. The PTD is not an application for Housing Benefit- you will still need to apply once you have taken up the tenancy. PTD forms can be obtained from the Housing Benefit Section of Scarborough Borough Council.

## Council tax

Council Tax is a charge made by the Council to help cover the cost of the services and facilities it provides. In most cases the tenant is responsible for paying the Council Tax due on the property. If you are on a low income you may be entitled to claim Council Tax Benefit. If you are living alone you may be eligible for a discount on the amount of Council Tax you pay. If you live in a "house in multiple occupation" (H.M.O.) the landlord is responsible for paying the Council Tax. Your house is in multiple occupation if you and other tenants each live in only part of it, pay rent for your own part and you and the other tenants are not part of the same household. If you are a tenant in an HMO, your lease or another agreement may allow your landlord to include your share of the Council Tax in the rent.

# Contact Details

## Contact details

### **Yorkshire Coast Homes**

Londesborough Lodge  
The Crescent  
Scarborough  
YO11 2PW  
Tel: **0845 065 5656**  
Fax: **01723 507825**

Opening hours: 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

### **Northern Area Office**

The Coliseum  
Victoria Place  
Whitby  
Tel: **0845 065 5757**  
Fax: **01947 604101**

Opening hours: 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

### **Eastfield Area Office**

Eastfield  
Scarborough  
Tel: **01723 585036**  
Fax: **01723 586256**  
Website: [www.ych.org.uk](http://www.ych.org.uk) [www.ych.org.uk](http://www.ych.org.uk)  
Email: [info@ych.org.uk](mailto:info@ych.org.uk) [info@ych.org.uk](mailto:info@ych.org.uk)

### **Scarborough and District Citizen's Advice Bureau**

62 Roscoe Street  
Scarborough  
YO12 7BY  
Tel: **01723 368710**

## Estate Agents / Letting Agents

### Scarborough:

#### **Andrew Cowen**

32 St Nicholas Street  
Scarborough  
YO11 2HF  
Tel: **01723 377707**

#### **Burkinshaw & Woodcock & Nicholsons Yorkshire Coast**

4 Valley Bridge Parade  
Scarborough  
YO11 2PF  
Tel: **01723 362401** (Must be in full-time employment)

#### **Capitol Property Services**

6 Albemarle Crescent  
Scarborough  
YO11 1XT  
Tel: **01723 373456**

#### **Central Estates**

56 North Street  
Scarborough  
YO11 1DE  
Tel: **01723 372671**

#### **Central Property Lettings**

Central Chamber  
77 Westborough  
Scarborough  
YO11 1TP  
Tel: **01723 500057**

#### **CPH Property Services**

19 St Thomas Street  
Scarborough  
YO11 1DY  
Tel: **01723 352235**

#### **Colin Ellis Management & Lettings**

25 Alma Square  
Scarborough  
YO11 1JR  
Tel: **01723 350077**

## **Nicholsons Yorkshire Coast Estate Agents**

7 Northway  
Scarborough  
YO11 1JH  
Tel: **01723 506021**

## **Reeds Rains Estate Agents**

16 Aberdeen Walk  
Scarborough  
YO11 1XP  
Tel: **01723 365335** (need a guarantor if on benefits)

## **Tower Estates Ltd**

4 West Parade  
Scarborough  
YO12 5ED (working people only)

## **Filey:**

### **CPH Property Services**

13 West Avenue  
Filey  
YO14 9AA  
Tel: **01723 513204**

### **GR Property Services**

Room 9, Evron Centre  
John Street,  
Filey  
YO14 9DW  
Tel: **01723 518010**  
Main office Bridlington: **01262 605010** (also have lets in Scarborough)

### **Lamberts Estate Agents**

35 Bridlington Street  
Hunmanby  
Filey  
YO14 0JP  
**01723 891288** (most properties in Bridlington)

### **Nicholsons Yorkshire Coast Estate Agents**

25 Bellevue Street  
Filey  
YO14 9HU  
Tel: **01723 512968**

## Estate Agents / Letting Agents

### Whitby:

#### **Edward G Astin & Associates**

47 Flowergate  
Whitby  
YO21 3BB  
Tel: **01947 821122** (prefer over 25s)

#### **Reeds Rains Estate Agents**

7 Flowergate  
Whitby  
YO21 3BA  
Tel: **01947 820066**

#### **Sandyhomes.co.uk (online service)**

28 Falcon Terrace  
Whitby  
YO21 1EH  
Tel: **01947 821521**

#### **Richardson and Smith**

Victoria Place  
Whitby  
Tel: **01947 602298**

Housing Associations operating within the Borough that accept direct applications from the public (excluding Associations with less than ten properties and those whose waiting lists are closed)

### Anchor Trust

Provides specialist sheltered housing for over 55s  
Each scheme keeps a waiting list  
Apply by phone only **08457 758595**

### Hanover Housing Association

Mainly properties for the elderly, some for younger people  
Keeps a waiting list with allocations based on the date of application  
There is no points scheme  
Apply in writing or by phone to

#### **Hanover Housing Association**

Thomas Duggan House  
Manor Lane  
ShIPLEY  
BD18 3RB  
Tel: **01274 599686**

### Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust

Provides general needs family housing  
Housing is allocated according to need, based on a points system  
Keeps a waiting list for rented property and shared ownership property  
Apply to the address/ telephone number below

#### **The Garth**

White Rose Avenue  
New Earswick  
YORK  
YO32 3QX  
Tel: **01904 735000**

### Broadacres Housing Association Limited

Provides general needs housing and over 50s schemes  
Also has shared ownership schemes  
Keeps a waiting list, with properties allocated by a points system according to need  
Not everyone is eligible to go on the list, (it depends mainly on your financial situation and your current housing situation), you can find out if you are eligible by contacting the customer service centre in writing or by phone:

York Vale House  
East Road  
Northallerton  
DL6 1RP  
Tel: **01609 767900**

## Estate agents/letting agents

### Ryedale Housing Association (a subsidiary of Yorkshire Community Housing Ltd)

Keeps a waiting list, with properties allocated by a points system according to need.

Applications can be obtained from:

Leat House  
Welham Road  
Norton  
Malton  
North Yorkshire  
YO17 9DS  
Tel: **01653 600300**

### Chevin Housing Association

Has a small number of general needs flats in Scarborough for which there is an open waiting list.

Please apply via the Customer Services Centre Tel: **0845 2701088**

The waiting list for their other properties, (mainly for over 55s), in the Borough is currently closed to new applicants due to high demand and low turnover.

### Leeds and Yorkshire Housing Association

General needs units and sheltered flats in Whitby and a very small number of general needs units in Scarborough. There is an open waiting list for several of the schemes with allocations based on a points system.

Please apply via their Whitby office **01947 604901** or their Leeds office **0113 2783335**

Copies of this leaflet can be made available in large print, Braille or on audio cassette as well as in other languages on request.

We cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information in this leaflet, which was correct at the time of going to press.