



Welcome to

Greyfriars House

A Guide for Residents



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Welcome to Greyfriar's House



Introduction

Temporary accommodation is a service provided by Perth and Kinross Council to give people who are homeless a place to live.

This isn't a permanent place to stay. You may move in here for one of two reasons:

- We are considering your application under homeless legislation.
- We have accepted that you are homeless and we are trying to find you a permanent home in Perth and Kinross.

We have offered you a room in Greyfriars House, which provides accommodation to people who are homeless and do not have anywhere else to stay. Greyfriars is a mixed sex hostel with 30 bedrooms for people age 16 and over. Shared bathroom and kitchen facilities are located on each landing and the residents' laundry and lounge are located on the ground floor.

Within Greyfriars, there is a Hostel Co-ordinator and a Senior Accommodation Assistant who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the house. There are also two Support Officers and a team of 8 Accommodation Assistants and a Handyperson.

Staying in Greyfriars

We understand that it can seem a bit daunting when you first come into a new place. We have designed this handbook to answer some of the questions you might have, and give you some information about how Greyfriars is run and what you can expect from us while you're here:

- There will be a staff member on duty at all times to offer advice and assistance.
- As a new resident you will complete papers as part of the booking in process and be given a tour of the building.
- As a new resident you will be given a welcome pack, including cutlery, plates and cups, new bedding, food, towel and toiletries.
- You will be allocated a Support Officer within one day of moving in to help you with any issues you may have.
- You will be contacted by your allocated Support Officer within two days of moving in.
- You will be fully involved in developing your personal action plan, and in reviewing that plan.
- You will be given advice and assistance to help you move to more suitable accommodation.
- We'll listen to your feedback (we have a feedback form you can use to tell us about your stay, monthly residents meetings, a suggestion box and staff are available for you to contact at any time)
- We will deal with all complaints under the complaints procedure and respond to them within 10 days.

Greyfriars staff will keep in regular contact with Housing Officers and staff to check on the outcome of your homeless application.



All About Confidentiality

All of the staff at Greyfriars House are professional and work according to policies and procedures.

You can be reassured and confident that any information you give us will only be used to provide the best support/service to you. It will be treated as confidential to Greyfriars and only shared amongst the team giving you support on a 'need to know' basis.

If as part of your action plan we agree that you need support from another agency, your support worker may need to share some information about you with that agency. If that is the case your support worker will explain to you what information they will share and why.

You will be asked to sign a consent form before we can do anything. You have the right to withhold your consent.

Exceptions to confidentiality

There are times where we have to break confidentiality for your safety and that of other residents/members of the public. The decision to disclose confidential information is not taken lightly. We will make every effort to discuss the situation with you unless we feel that someone's safety might be compromised by doing so. Your Support Officer will discuss the situation with the line manager before breaking confidentiality, and any decision will be recorded in writing. If you feel that your right to confidentiality has not been respected, you have the right to use the complaints procedure to investigate and address this.

Confidentiality may be broken when:

- there is a concern that a resident is putting someone at risk, or where there is reason to believe a child is, or is at risk of being abused, neglected or harmed;
- a court has ordered the worker to do so;
- there is a legal duty to disclose information, eg to the Serious Fraud Office, or in relation to drug trafficking offences, or for the prevention of terrorism;
- it's a medical emergency and information could help ambulance or hospital staff to treat you;
- a resident's behaviour has meant that the police have been called;
- information relates to a serious crime which has been committed or planned;
- a resident has threatened to or seems likely to do serious harm to themselves.



Your Room

Your room will be furnished, including a fridge. We will also provide brand new duvets, pillows and sheets to use while you are staying there. It's your responsibility to keep your room clean. Room inspections are carried out weekly. Cleaning materials, such as mops and brushes are available at reception if you wish to use them.

The only place smoking is allowed in Greyfriars is in your own room or in the courtyard outside. Please ensure when smoking in your room not to smoke in bed, that cigarettes and matches are put out properly before going in the bin or ashtray, and that your window is open. Candles and tea lights are not permitted in the building due to their fire risk.

Who has a key to my room?

You have a key to your room, and a master copy is kept securely by staff. Please remember to lock your door and hand in your key to reception every time you leave the building. There is a charge for a new key if you lose yours.



Is there anything to do in Greyfriars?

All residents are welcome to use the communal lounge where there is a television, books you can borrow, pool table and comfortable chairs and sofas to relax. The lounge is open all day, but closes at midnight.

We also arrange a variety of different activities which you are welcome to take part in as a resident, including movie nights in the communal lounge. We're always looking for new ideas about activities we can offer to residents, so please let staff know if you have any ideas.

Wi-Fi is also available for you:

Username: **PKC Guest** Password: **mobility**

How late can I come back to Greyfriars at night?

There is no curfew at Greyfriars House. You can come and go as you please. Be aware that the cut off time for having a night out is 3am. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are back by 3am, otherwise you will be counted as out and it will be added to your 4 nights out of the hostel.

Can I spend a night at a friend/relative's house without losing my place at Greyfriars?

When you are first booked into Greyfriars House you must stay your first 7 nights and are not permitted to have any overnight stays. You can go out but it is your responsibility to make sure you are back in the building by 3am otherwise you will lose your room.

After the first week, every resident can have up to 4 nights out per month.

Under special circumstances, such as caring responsibilities and working, an overnight pass can be authorised beforehand by your Support Officer, the Hostel Co-ordinator or the Senior Accommodation Assistant.

If you frequently stay out of the hostel overnight we will withdraw your room.

What bathroom facilities are there?

There are shared bathrooms attached to each corridor. Please be considerate of other residents and keep the bathrooms clean.

How can I comment on what's happening at Greyfriars?

You can speak to a member of staff at any time about any concerns/queries you have. You are also welcome to attend the monthly residents' meetings as well as the monthly Breakfast Club. These occasions give you the chance to voice any issues that you think are important to life at Greyfriars House. Your views and input as a resident are important, so please come along and get involved. Dates and times of upcoming meetings are posted on the notice boards. There is also a newsletter produced and a suggestion box for residents' comments and suggestions.



Cooking and Cleaning

What about cooking?

There is a communal kitchen on each corridor. Cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery are issued to individual residents when they first arrive.

Please be considerate of other kitchen users and clear up after yourself and do not remove utensils from the kitchens.

Are there laundry facilities?

There are two washing machines and tumble dryers in the laundry room on the ground floor. Access to these is 9am - 9pm every day and must be booked at reception before use.

We supply washing powder so if you need some you can ask at reception. You can also borrow an iron and ironing board from reception.

Please remember to remove your washing from the machines once the cycle is finished. We cannot take responsibility for clothes damaged during the use and emptying of the machines.

Keeping in Touch

Can friends and family come to visit me?

Unfortunately, we are unable to allow visitors into Greyfriars House, as this is private and confidential service. We would ask you to arrange to meet friends and family outside the house.

Can friends and family call me?

Unfortunately, due to Greyfriars House being a private and confidential service. We cannot pass over any information to callers, unless you give us written permission to do so.

Can I get my mail delivered to Greyfriars?

You can use Greyfriars House as your 'care of' address while you are staying here. Mail is delivered to reception and you can collect it at any time. You will be asked to sign in for your mail, and staff will need to see written permission before allowing you to collect anyone else's mail for them. If you have received mail, staff will put a symbol of an envelope on your key peg in reception.

Paying Your Rent and Service Charge

Everyone who is provided with temporary accommodation by the Council has to pay for it.

The accommodation charge (rent) is paid for either by yourself as you are working or if you claim any state benefit, most or all of the accommodation charge (rent) will be covered by Housing Benefit.

The service charge covers electricity, gas, water and use of facilities such as television, washing machine, cooker etc.

You should pay your rent and service charge weekly at Greyfriars House reception in cash.

How much will I have to pay?

The Accommodation Assistant or the Support Officer will confirm the amount you need to pay as part of your admission to Greyfriars House and at your weekly support session. They will also let you know how and where you can pay.



What happens if I don't pay?

It is important that you pay your rent and service charges regularly so that you don't get into arrears. Being in rent arrears may affect your access to future housing. If you are having difficulties paying the charges, please speak to a member of staff about it as soon as possible. We will look at any problems you are having and try to help you.

How do I know if I am entitled to Housing Benefit?

You may be entitled to Housing Benefit if you receive other state benefit or if your wages are below a certain level. It is very important that you complete a Housing Benefit form with a staff member as soon as you can as, if there's a delay your application won't be fully considered and you may end up getting behind with your rent. We can help you to make a claim, although we will need you to give us forms of ID and some other information. This may include copies of bank statements or any investments/bonds, copies of payslips covering the past three months, proof of other income such as benefits or maintenance payments, and proof of income for any other people living with you.

Your Homeless Application

How long will it take for you to consider my homeless application?

We aim to consider your homeless application within 28 days of the date of your homeless interview. However, this may be delayed if you don't provide us with all the information we need to make a decision. We will keep you informed of progress with your application.

What happens if I'm not accepted as homeless?

If after considering your application we decide that you are not homeless under terms of the legislation, or you are homeless but found to be intentionally homeless, it means that we do not have a duty to offer you a permanent home.

What happens if I am considered to be homeless?

If we accept that you are homeless, not as a result of your own actions, we will make a reasonable offer of permanent accommodation. In the meantime you will be entitled to stay in your temporary accommodation. The amount of time you spend in temporary accommodation will depend on the number of vacancies of properties of the size and type you need. We will consider vacancies in both Council Houses, local Housing Association properties as well as PKC Lets, the Council run private rented scheme, for you.

What happens to my furniture?

We can make arrangements for your furniture to be stored until you move into a temporary accommodation flat with enough room for your furniture, or on to a secure tenancy. A financial assessment will be completed with you to establish how much you will contribute to the cost of storing your belongings. You will also need to arrange insurance for your personal belongings while they are in storage.

Moving On

What happens if I find somewhere else to live?

If you find somewhere to live on your own you may no longer be considered to be homeless. However, you should let us know whether the place you've found to stay is on a permanent or temporary basis, and whether you still wish to be included on the allocations list for a Council or Housing Association property. We will then reassess your homeless application.

What happens if I decide to leave?

All residents in temporary accommodation should provide at least seven days' notice of when they intend to leave. If you leave belongings at Greyfriars House, we will keep them for 28 days. If you don't make contact within or on the 28th day, your belongings will be disposed of.

I haven't had a house before, who can help me?

You will have access to advice and guidance from the Support Officer based at Greyfriars. When you leave Greyfriars House you will be offered help from the Support Team to support you in your new tenancy. Help can include assistance to get furniture for your new home if you need it.

Getting Support

We understand that the answer to your homelessness probably isn't as simple as just giving you the keys to new house. You may never have had your own home before, or you may have had difficulties meeting your responsibilities as a tenant in the past.

During the time you spent at Greyfriars, and when you move on to your new home, you will be offered help in lots of different ways to support you to keep your tenancy.

At all stages we can provide a private interview room to help you discuss your support needs in confidence. Please let us know if you have any communication support needs, as we can arrange for translation and interpretation services, provide written information in other formats, and give you help to fill in forms.

Personal Safety and Security

You will be offered advice on how to keep your room secure while staying in Greyfriars. CCTV and 24-hour staff are in place at the house to maintain the security of the building, and increase your personal safety. If you have concerns about your personal safety, please speak to a member of staff as soon as possible.

Managing Money

Paying your rent and service charge is one of your main responsibilities as a tenant, but if you have had difficulties with managing money or your household budget in the past (or no experience of it at all) then we can help you access services to help you do this. Remember that unmanaged debt, in other words debt you haven't made arrangements to pay back, may affect your housing application as some landlords will not take on tenants who have existing rent arrears. As well as helping you to complete your Housing Benefit application, we can also put you in touch with the Council's Welfare Rights Team, who can look at whether you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.

Life Skills

If you have never been a tenant before, or maintaining a previous tenancy caused you problems, then you may need some help with more general life skills. These could include:

- shopping and preparing food;
- cleaning;
- making and keeping appointments;
- how to write letters/fill in forms;
- how to use domestic appliances, eg washing machine;
- using the telephone;
- being considerate of neighbours and managing problems.

During your stay in Greyfriars we can help you to learn or improve skills in any of these areas, so when you are offered your own home you'll be better prepared to meet your responsibilities as a tenant.

Social/Befriending

Moving into a new home can be a scary thought, especially if you're moving away from the place you grew up, or where all your friends and family live. We can help you to get confidence to meet new people, as well as keep in contact with your family and the friends you already have.



More Support

Staff at Greyfriars House work closely with a range of other voluntary and specialist agencies that may be able to help you. We can put you in touch with:

- health, social work, drug and alcohol agencies etc;
- training;
- employment;
- voluntary work;
- leisure and sport.

Your Own Home

When you are moving into your own home, you will be offered help from a Support Officer to give advice and help on:

- arranging repairs;
- special adaptations to the house if you need it;
- accessing utilities (gas, electricity, telephone etc);
- getting furniture;
- settling in to your new home.

Useful Contacts

Support

Housing Options and Support Team, Pullar House -
01738 476000

Welfare Rights, Pullar House - **01738 476900**

Citizen Advice Bureau, 7 Atholl Crescent - **01738 450580**

Perthshire Women's Aid, Merlin House, Necessity Brae -
01738 635404

Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline - **0141 331 4180**

RASAC (Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Perth and Kinross -
01738 626290

Victim Support Perth, The Gateway Centre - **01738 567171**

Samaritans Helpline - **116 123**

ChildLine Helpline - **0800 11 11**

Shelter Scotland - **0808 800 4444**

Health Care

Drumhar Health Centre
Yellow Practice - **01738 621726**
Lade Practice - **01738 622421**

Whitefriars Surgery
Green Practice - **01738 627912**
Red Practice - **01738 625842**

Victoria Practice, Glover Street Medical Centre -
01738 639748

Kings Practice, Glover Street Medical Centre -
01738 621844

NHS24 - **111**

Dentist

Broxden Dental Centre - **01738 450550**

Caledonian Dental Care - **01738 441159**

Substance Misuse

Drug and Alcohol Team, Drumhar Health Centre -
01738 564261

Alcoholics Anonymous Helpline - **0800 917 7650**

Local Wellbeing Organisations

Andy's Man Club Perth -
www.facebook.com/andysmanclubperth/



Women's Wellbeing Club Perth -
07394 522110



The Lighthouse for Perth - **0800 121 4820**



The Neuk - **01738 718070**



Food Support

Perth and Kinross Foodbank - **01738 626799 or 07876 382568**

Letham4All - **Community Fridge4All at 119 Rannoch Road, Letham, Perth**

Useful Financial Numbers

Name	Number
New Claims DWP - JSA, ESA, Incapacity Benefits	0800 169 0190
Existing Claims DWP - JSA, ESA, Incapacity Benefits	0800 169 0310
DWP - Short-term benefit advance	0800 169 0310
DWP - Maternity Allowance	0800 169 0283
DWP - Bereavement	0800 731 0139
DWP - Social Fund	0800 169 0140
DWP - Universal Credits	0800 328 9344
Citizens Advice Bureau, 7 Atholl Crescent	01738 450580

Homeless Service Standards

We will:

- Give you free advice, information and assistance to find somewhere to live;
- Treat you with consideration and respect the confidentiality of your situation;
- Offer an emergency service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- Offer you temporary accommodation if you have nowhere to stay tonight;
- Offer you a same day appointment with a Support Officer if you contact us during office hours to say you are homeless;
- Offer you an appointment within three working days if you are threatened with homelessness;
- Hold homeless interviews in a private room;
- Explain that you can choose to be accompanied by a friend, relative or representative in your homeless advice interview;
- Arrange a translation service for you if English is not your first language;
- Arrange assistance if you have hearing, sight, speech or other communication difficulties;
- Not discriminate against you because of your race, ethnicity, religion, social background, marital status, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- Aim to reach a decision on your application within 28 calendar days of your homeless interview;
- Keep you informed of progress on your application;
- Advise you of your right to request a review of our decision;
- Aim to respond to any requests within 14 calendar days of receiving them. If at any time you feel that we are not meeting these standards, or you are not happy with the service that we provide, please speak to the Housing Options & Support Team Leader.

You can also make a complaint under the Council's complaints procedure at any time by contacting the Governance and Scrutiny Officer, Corporate and Democratic Services, Perth and Kinross Council, 2 High Street, Perth, PH1 5PH, or by telephoning 01738 475538. A copy of the Council complaints procedure is available at any Council office or online at www.pkc.gov.uk

You can also ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to look into the situation for you if you're not happy about the service we've provided. You can contact the Ombudsman's office at any time for advice, but they won't normally investigate a case until you've been through the Council's complaints procedure.

Contact The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman at 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NHS, by telephone on freephone 0800 377 7330, or by email at ask@spsso.org.uk You can also find out more about the role of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman by visiting the website www.spsso.org.uk

Notes



If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

BSL users can contact us via Contact Scotland BSL, the online British Sign Language video relay interpreting service. Find out more on the Contact Scotland BSL website <https://contactscotland-bsl.org>