



Housing

There may be certain issues – such as the availability of specialist housing and support services or the need to make adaptations to your home which, as a carer, you would benefit from knowing more about.

Specialist housing

Adapted properties can sometimes be bought or privately rented. However, most accommodation of this type is only available from 'social housing' providers such as local authorities and housing associations. A similar situation exists in respect of sheltered or retirement housing which is designed to meet the needs of older (usually 60+) people.

Sheltered housing schemes come in many different shapes and sizes. Ordinary sheltered housing is suitable for people with a fairly high level of independence. Those with more substantial care needs may require 'very sheltered' or 'extra care' accommodation. **Wigan and Leigh Housing** – the company responsible for managing and maintaining all of the council's 23,000 properties – has a dedicated helpline for anyone requiring information about sheltered housing and also publishes a basic guide.

For those in need of specialist housing, or perhaps just somewhere more suitable to live, a council home is often the best option. A small number of purpose built or specially adapted properties are let directly to individual applicants but the remainder are publically advertised and allocated mainly on the basis of need. Under the current system, people are placed in one of four 'priority bands'. Anyone can 'express an interest' in a property, but preference will be given to the applicant in the highest band who has been on the register the longest. If there is a specific health reason for someone wanting to move, they can apply for a 'medical or welfare' award which may increase their housing priority.

Wigan and Leigh Housing The Contact Centre, The Court House, Chapel Street, Leigh WN7 2PQ ☎ 01942 705040 📧 enquiries@walh.co.uk web link: www.walh.co.uk

Many of the properties available to people on the council waiting list are owned and managed by local housing associations. This is because Wigan and Leigh Housing works closely with groups like Adactus, Arena and English Churches Housing and has 'nomination' rights over a certain amount of their empty housing

stock. It is often possible to apply directly to individual housing associations but each association has its own registration and allocation procedures so you will need to check what these are first.

Housing Associations

Adactus Housing Group Ltd Turner House, 56 King Street, Leigh, Lancs

☎ 01942 608715 ✉ info@adactushousing.co.uk web link:

www.adactushousing.co.uk

Arena Housing Group 14 Columbus Quay, Riverside Drive, Liverpool L3 4DB

☎ 01744 670 221 ✉ arena@arena-housing.com web link: [www.arena-](http://www.arena-housing.com)

[housing.com](http://www.arena-housing.com)

English Churches Housing Group 2 Estuary Boulevard, Estuary Commerce Park, Liverpool L24 8RF ☎ 0845 155 9002 ✉ enquiries@echg.org.uk web link:

www.echg.org.uk

Housing 21 Housing 21 Head Office, The Triangle, Baring Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2NA ☎ 0370 192 4000 ✉ enquiries@housing21.co.uk web link:

www.housing21.co.uk

Adaptations

Rather than moving house, many people prefer to look at ways of having their existing property adapted.

The first step is usually to contact the council's Occupational Therapy Team and request an assessment. If the person you are caring for is eligible for services, an occupational therapist will visit and may recommend suitable adaptations.

Occupational Therapy Service Disability Resource Centre, Hamilton Square, Wigan WN5 9RX ☎ 01942 700889 ✉ ssdrc@wigan.gov.uk web link: www.wigan.gov.uk

Adaptations costing less than £1,000 (grab rails, for example) are usually provided free of charge but more substantial works – such as a ramp, stairlift, level access shower or ground floor extension are only free if the person needing them lives in a home rented from Wigan and Leigh Housing.

For owner occupiers (and private tenants) there is a grant – called a 'Disabled Facilities Grant' – which can help towards the cost of 'major' adaptations. However, it is important to bear in mind that:

- Only the home owner (or landlord, in the case of a privately rented property) can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant.
- The person requiring the adaptations must intend to occupy the property for at least five years from the completion of the works.
- The grant is usually means tested, which may mean that the applicant has to pay a contribution towards the cost. There is no means test where the adaptations are for a child under the age of 19.
- The maximum amount of the grant is £30,000. Any additional cost will normally have to be met by the applicant, using either their own resources or funds secured from elsewhere.

Older and disabled homeowners can get independent advice about repairs and adaptations from **Anchor Staying Put**. This is a not-for-profit agency able to put people in touch with reliable contractors, suggest funding options and ensure that all work is completed to a satisfactory standard. Details of reputable trades people can also be obtained by contacting Age Concern's 'Starting Point' service.

Starting Point Age Concern, Pennyhurst Mill, Haig Street, Wigan WN3 4AZ ☎ 01942 826079 ✉ enquiries@acwiganborough.org.uk web link: www.ageconcernwiganborough.org.uk

In view of the high cost of property adaptations, it is worth bearing in mind that some work of this kind, when carried out to a disabled persons home, may qualify for VAT relief. For more information, consult the HM Revenue and Customs website or call their charities helpline on: 0845 302 02 03.

Supporting people

Supporting People is a national program of housing related support designed to allow vulnerable people live more independent lives. The range of services available locally includes everything from setting up and maintaining a home to managing personal finances. It specifically **excludes** all those services that the local authority or health service has a duty to provide.

The various agencies involved in delivering the Supporting People programme work closely with people whose age, disability or life situation make it difficult for them to live independently. Often, these are people with mental health problems, learning difficulties or physical or sensory impairments. Some services are provided onsite – for example within sheltered housing or supported accommodation schemes – but support workers also visit individuals in their own home, offering what is usually referred to as ‘floating’ support.

Supporting People services can be short term (up to a maximum of two years) or long term. Short term services are normally free but long term services will be charged for, unless the person receiving them gets housing benefit or has been financially assessed and is eligible for assistance from the Supporting People Grant.

There is a free information booklet and a directory of support services which you can obtain from the Supporting People Team or download from the council website.

Supporting People Wigan Council, Civic Centre, Millgate, Wigan WN1 1AZ 📞
01942 827181 📧 supportingpeople@wigan.gov.uk web link: www.wigan.gov.uk

Finding help

Whatever type of housing you live in, issues can sometimes arise, for example about the amount of rent you pay or the responsibility to carry out repairs. Housing law is complex but there are a number of organisations – including Shelter and the Citizens Advice Service – where you can go for free, expert help and advice.

Shelter 88 Old Street, London EC1V 9HU ☎ 0808 800 4444 (Housing Advice Helpline) web link: www.shelter.org.uk

If you live in private retirement or sheltered housing you can also contact Age Concern's Advice, Information and Mediation Service (AIMS).

AIMS Age Concern England, Astral House, 1268 London Road, SW16 4ER ☎ 020 8765 7465 (Lo-Call Helpline: 0845 600 2001) ✉ aims@ace.org.uk web link: www.ageconcern.org.uk

Useful contacts:

The Accessible Property Register ☎ 0774 9119385 web link: www.accessible-property.org.uk

A website listing accessible and adapted property for sale and rent.

Anchor Staying Put

17-24 Canal Street
Wigan
WN6 7NQ

Telephone: **01942 825849** (09:00 to 16:00 Mon – Fri)

Email: stayingput.wigan@anchor.org.uk

Web: www.stayingput.org.uk

Who is the service for: **Older / vulnerable / disabled home owners, private tenants.**

Service details: Anchor Staying Put Wigan is a locally based and locally funded not-for-profit Home Improvement Agency run by Anchor Trust. We help older, vulnerable and disabled home owners, private tenants, working in partnership with Wigan Council.

Contact us if you need repairs, improvements or adaptations to your property, that will help you to 'stay put' – in the community in comfort and safety. We offer confidential advice, support and assistance.

From small repairs to major improvements and adaptations, we are here to help you. Our work is varied and includes:

**Adaptations – bathrooms / kitchens
Damp proofing
Electrical re-wiring
Replacement Windows
Roofing
Structural repairs
Stair lifts**

Charges / membership fees: The advisory service is free, with a fee of 5% chargeable on private work undertaken, individually priced with no obligation. The team also advise on grants, loans and charitable funding to pay for the work, based on eligibility criteria.

Referral method: All referrals are taken, self, relatives, friends or professionals.

Home visiting service

Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC)

3rd Floor
89 Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7TP

Advice Line: **020 7820 1343** (09:00 to 17:00 Mon – Fri)

Email: enquiries@eac.org.uk

Web: www.housingcare.org

Who is the service for: **Older people.**

Service details: **Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC) is a national charity founded in 1985. We maintain nationwide databases of accommodation specifically for older people – sheltered, retirement housing to buy and to rent, extra care schemes and close care housing (sheltered accommodation where there is a care home on site), and care homes, both for personal care and for nursing. Through our free, independent Advice Line, staff also give guidance, advice and detailed information to help older people choose and fund the support or accommodation options most suited to their needs and wishes. Contact the Advice Line: 020 7820 1343, Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm, visit www.housingcare.org or e-mail enquiries@eac.org.uk**

Sheltered Housing, Wigan and Leigh Housing

**Wigan and Leigh Housing Co Ltd
Unity House
Westwood Park Drive
Wigan
WN3 4HE**

Telephone: **01942 486549** (09:00 to 17:00 Mon – Fri)

Email: sheltered@walh.co.uk

Web: www.walh.co.uk

Who is the service for: **The service is aimed at people aged 60 plus who want to live independently but with additional services to increase their security and offer support.**

People who are under 60 but with disabilities who would benefit from support offered by sheltered housing will be considered.

Service details: Sheltered Housing Schemes are groups of apartments or bungalows with additional services to offer extra security and support. Residents have their own property and their own front door and can come and go as they please.

All schemes have a 24 hour emergency call system and residents are also contacted once a day in the morning to ensure they are ok. A Scheme Manager will be on duty in the week and their hours will be displayed on the scheme. The Scheme Manger is there to offer support and advice to residents but they cannot lift someone who has fallen, dispense medicines, do cleaning, washing or help someone to dress

Referral method: **Any – self-referral most common.**