

Guidelines for recognised refugees seeking housing

You must start looking for a stay once your residence permit has been extended.

1. Housing search and subsidised housing entitlement certificate

Searching for a stay

Recognised refugees must search for their own home on the free housing market independently or with a housing advisor. Anyone receiving social welfare benefits must take into account the reference rent amounts stipulated by the State Capital Dresden. Applications may be lodged for the job centre to bear bonds/co-operative shares.

Current reference values are available online:
www.dresden.de/media/pdf/sozialamt/Merkblatt_KdU.pdf

Housing search through the Social Security Office (Sozialamt)

A **subsidised housing entitlement certificate** (SHEC) enables even recognised refugees to receive support from the **Social Security Office** when looking for their own home. The SHEC must be requested from the Social Security Office, Housing Welfare Division (3rd floor, waiting area outside rooms 309-315).

The following documents must be presented in addition to the (blue) SHEC application form:

- Either a residence permit extension, electronic residence permit (eAT) or passport
- Benefits notice for “Arbeitslosengeld II” unemployment benefits (ALG II)/social welfare benefits (SGB XII) or work income *and*
- The Dresden Pass (or EUR 7.50, the fee for the subsidised housing entitlement certificate).

The contact details of a volunteer housing advisor may be provided on the SHEC application form.

The SHEC must be collected within two weeks of the application being submitted to the Social Security Office. A housing placement application will be issued the same day. This application must be signed in person, and is kept at the Social Security Office.

Recognised refugees are then posted out a concrete housing offer (a “placement proposal”). This housing offer is, *however*, sent to several people simultaneously. This letter explains all the important information regarding how to arrange an inspection and the next steps thereafter.

2. Reserving homes, and lease agreements

Once a home has been inspected, it must be reserved. This is done either on site during the inspection, in person with the landlord (e.g. VONOVIA customer centre) or by telephone.

The landlord then sends the prospective tenant(s) the lease agreement.

3. Home suitability and the need for relocation

The concrete housing offer/unsigned lease agreement must be presented to the job centre, which will assess the offer/contract, and must then certify that the home is not too expensive and that the relocation is necessary. If this is the case, the job centre will, upon request, bear the costs of the bond/co-operative shares (equal to the amount of the bond).

The application must also mention the reason for the relocation. Stating that the asylum application has been recognised and the transitional accommodation must therefore be vacated will suffice as justification.

This requires the following documents:

- The relocation application form with justification (issued by the job centre)
- The housing offer/unsigned lease agreement *and*
- The notice terminating use of the communal accommodation (issued by the Social Security Office)

4. Lease agreement and landlord's confirmation

If the recognised refugee has

- A residence permit extension/electronic residence permit
- A suitability certification/certification for the need to relocate *and*
- If applicable, a rent-arrears clearance certificate (available from the Social Security Office, Accommodation Department),

these must be sent to the landlord with the signed lease agreement.

The landlord then returns the signed lease agreement to the recognised refugee.

A landlord confirmation is also issued. If this has not yet been signed, it may be signed by a caretaker during the handover of keys. The landlord's confirmation is required when registering the home with the registration authorities.

5. Covering of bond/co-operative share costs and initial fit-out

Once the lease agreement has been signed, an application must promptly be lodged with the job centre regarding the coverage of bond/co-operative share costs, relocation costs and the initial fit-out for the home.

The following documents are required for this:

- The signed lease agreement
- The application form for coverage of bond costs
- The certificate of suitability and relocation need
- The application form for coverage of relocation costs
- The application for initial home fit-out (details list of the furniture required)
- Appendix VM – Assets, including bank statements from the last three months (if available)
- Appendix VÄM – Notification of changes *and*
- Appendix KDU – Accommodation costs

6. Furniture/Initial fit-out

Once the initial fit-out has been approved, monetary payments and aid in kind will be issued.

All receipts for purchases must be kept (they may be requested by the job centre at a later date).

Aid in kind may be requested within four weeks from the Social Furniture Service [SUFW, Senftenberger Strasse 38, Tel.: (03 51) 2 72 72 24, Monday to Friday 9am-6pm]. Bulky objects may be delivered. If the necessary items are not in stock during this period, additional monetary payments may be requested from the job centre instead, upon presentation of confirmation from the SUFW.

Once the initial fit-out has been granted, the double rent payments (transitional accommodation and own home) generally stop being paid at the start of the following month. Costs for the transitional accommodation must then be paid independently by the refugee.

7. Key handover and home-handover report

The date for key handover is arranged individually between the tenant and landlord. A home-handover report must be compiled for this, recording the home's current condition, and listing any damage or defects. The meter readings for heating, water and electricity are also noted. If the letterbox and/or bell does not yet have a correct label, the landlord should be advised of this during the key handover, so that this can be arranged as quickly as possible.

8. What to do after the move?

The new place of residence must be registered with the registration authorities within two weeks of the lease agreement commencing. This may be done at any of the city's Citizens' Service Centres.

The following documents must be presented for the registration:

- The landlord's confirmation *and*
- The residence permit extension/residence permit

After registration, the recognised refugee receives a confirmation of registration, which must be used to update the address on the residence permit extension at the Bureau for Foreigners. The job centre also receives a copy each of the registration certificate and landlord's confirmation.

After the move, it is a good idea to issue the post office with a **change of address order** (fee borne by the job centre as part of the relocation costs). While the change of address order is in progress, authorities, the bank (Sparkasse) and health insurance fund (AOK) should be informed of the relocation. This generally requires presenting the registration confirmation.

Recipients of "Arbeitslosengeld II" unemployment benefits may request exemption from the **TV licensing fee**. This requires sending the application form for exemption from the mandatory TV licensing fee, as well as the job centre's confirmation of fee exemption, to the "ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio Beitragsservice".

Electricity must be connected as soon as possible after moving into the new home. The power supplier may be chosen at the tenant's discretion. This will require providing the meter number and meter reading from the home-handover report.

What happens if recognised refugees have not found their own home after three months?

In this case, they may request an extension for the transitional accommodation from the Social Security Office, Accommodation Department. This requires presenting the letter terminating usage of the transitional accommodation.

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