**If you are at risk of becoming homeless after leaving care**

**Duty to refer**

Something called a Duty to Refer (DTR) will need to be completed if you are Homeless or threatened with homelessness. This is to let the relevant district know you could be homeless within the next 56 days. Housing will then look to accommodate you in Emergency or Temporary accommodation (TA) if required and start a personal housing plan with you.

**Priority need**

If you are aged between 18 and 21yrs you have automatic priority need to be accommodated in temporary accommodation as a Care leaver. You will also have a local connection to all districts in Devon, except to Plymouth and Torbay as they are their own councils. For a homeless duty to be triggered the district council needs to assess is if you are homeless and priority need.

If you are aged 21-25yrs you do not have automatic priority need to be accommodated. This can be challenged as a result of being a care leaver or if you have other vulnerabilities. You also no longer have an automatic local connection to the whole of Devon, as the expectation is you will have built one up in an area by this age e.g. Lived there for the last 6 months out of the last 12, 3 years out of the last 5, you have education or employment there or you have immediate family you are in contact with there etc.

**Temporary Accommodation**

The TA offered will usually be a B&B style general needs accommodation or Hotel. The TA will not always be within the same district you have presented to as it depends on availability on the day e.g. you may present to Teignbridge, but if they do not have any vacancies, they will provide accommodation in another district such as a hotel in North Devon.

The rules of TA are quite strict. You are not allowed to have visitors or spend any nights away without requesting this from the district first and with a valid reason. There is likely to be a curfew to return at night. You are not allowed to smoke/vape or have any drug paraphernalia in the room or on the grounds. You can lose your accommodation on the day if these rules are broken. Losing your accommodation could lead to your housing duty coming to an end with that district

**Prevention Duty**

A prevention Duty is opened when you are in accommodation and the council may help you to keep it or find other accommodation before you are homeless. You cannot have a relief and/or prevention duty open in more than one district. Both will have to be closed if approaching a different council for accommodation.

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**Intentionality and Relief Duty**

When you have an open approach with a council you are in a Relief Duty, which lasts for 56 days. Within this time, the District Council approached has 56 days to decide whether you are Homeless, Eligible, priority need, have a local connection and are not intentionally homeless They also decide whether to and to provide/offer accommodation. If they decide you are homeless because of your previous actions in settled accommodation, they will end your relief duty and end the offer of accommodation. They will provide you with a ‘Minded To’ letter, letting you know they have found you intentionally homeless. At this point, you can provide information to appeal this decision and you should be given some time to find alternative accommodation. TA is not always needed, if you are aware you could be homeless within the next 56 days a DTR can be done in advance, and you can be put on a relief duty for the district to assess your homelessness without using TA.

**Main Duty**

If they believe you meet all the criteria and are not intentionally homeless, you will move to a Main duty. This duty will usually stay open until you have found accommodation. You can remain in TA until settled accommodation is found providing the rules are followed. If the council finds accommodation for you and you reject the accommodation offer for unsubstantiated reasons, they will end their duty as you are not working to relieve your homelessness. If you lose a main duty this will make you intentionally homeless when being assessed by further districts

**Plymouth and Torbay**

If you wish to reside in Plymouth or Torbay, you must have a local connection there. If this is the case, The DTR process and DHC processes are the same, but accessing some supported accommodation can be trickier. This is because you are a DCC care leaver and not a Torbay or Plymouth care leaver. You’ll still be allocated a housing Officer from Plymouth or Torbay council who will submit a HUB (or something similar) to their own housing panel on your behalf. They will then see what support accommodation is available/offered. Devon Council does not have much influence or access to supported accommodation in these areas. Plymouth Foyer will accept DCC Care leavers, Torbay Foyer will not.

**Supported Housing**

A planned move can be organised when you know you need to move on. In this case, a HUB form is completed (usually with yourself) and then sent to a homeless prevention panel. Supported accommodation providers attend the panel and decide if they could accept your Hub form. You may have interviews and visits with multiple providers to see which one you like the best, and/or which one will accept you/have availability.

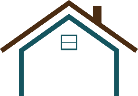
Supported accommodation has varying levels of support, and all help you towards gaining independence and managing a tenancy on your own. The support usually consists of you being allocated a key worker that will interact with you a couple times a week. You will have a weekly service charge or top up fee to pay towards your bills (somewhere between £7.50 - £31pw). If you are working full time, supported accommodation can be significantly more expensive than a house share. Speak to your PA about what is the best accommodation option for you. Supported accommodation will have rules but it is usually the safest and the quickest route to get a Band B on Devon Home choice (DHC). Most supported accommodations do not accept couples and do not accept pets. Some accommodations are male or female only and some will not house people over the age of 25yrs.

**Devon Home Choice (DHC)**

Devon Home Choice consists of all the social tenancies that are available across Devon. DHC properties are preferable as they are more affordable and are usually set to the Local Housing Authority (LHA) price rate. This means they are equivalent to the housing benefit entitlement for that area. This is key, as in Devon we are in a housing crisis and private rents are at an all-time high. A one bed house on DHC in Exeter would be around £568 per calendar month (pcm). Privately this would be Anywhere from £675 - £1200pcm. In some cases, DHC properties are half the price of private. Also, in a DHC property you are less likely to be evicted due to sale of the property and more likely to receive support with repairs. To rent privately you will usually have to be working full time and have a guarantor, which is not the case for a social tenancy. As a care leaver, if you do rent privately, you are automatically entitled to the 1 bed LHA rate instead of the shared room. You can use this increased Housing benefit rate if renting a shared room.

As a Care leaver who is not suitably accommodated you will usually be on a Band D with Devon home choice. If you are suitably accommodated (e.g. not being evicted/have somewhere to live) you may not be banded. There are 5 bands, The highest being Band A the lowest being Band E. The higher the Band the more likely you are to get a property. You will need to bid weekly, with properties being updated every Wednesday. In order to improve your banding, you need to show you can maintain a tenancy. This is best done by living in supported accommodation for a minimum of 6 months, then have ‘Move On’ paperwork completed by the staff there. Foster carers or stay put providers can complete move on paperwork, if you have adequately proven you can manage your own tenancy and will be able to manage a future one. Supported accommodation is the quickest and most successful route to improving your DHC banding. DHC will not consider you if you have rent arrears or any debts totalling more than £500. More information on DHC can be found - [How it works | Devon Home Choice](https://www.devonhomechoice.com/how-it-works)

**Private Rent**

There is a chronic shortage of social housing. There are around ****3,000 households on Devon Home Choice, the social housing register, who have applied for social housing in Exeter alone. This means that the private rented sector is the most likely solution for people who are homeless or facing homelessness.

If you wish to private rent, you need to decide what areas you would like to live in. The larger the area where you are prepared to look, the better the chance of finding the right home for you. The quickest way to find a property is online property search websites. You can search for the area you want and arrange viewings online. If it’s hard for you to look online, you can contact local estate agents. The best option is to ask friends and family and also checking local noticeboards and newspapers.

**Local Housing Authority Rates – Housing benefit:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| District | 1 bed rate per week |
| Exeter | £131.18 |
| East Devon | £103.56 |
| Mid Devon | £103.56 |
| South Hams | £103.56 |
| Plymouth | £103.56 |
| Torbay | £103.56 |
| North Devon | £97.81 |
| Torridge | £97.81 |
| West Devon | £97.81 |

**Supported Housing Provider Information Post 18:**

* Shared Lives
* Staying put
* Plan B **-** *Living with host family referred via HPP*
* Supported Housing:

Young Devon - Newton Abbot, Exeter, Ivybridge, Barnstable and Ilfracombe, host families

*Shared house/flats with support staff referred via HPP* [Young Devon | Changing the odds in favour of young people](https://www.youngdevon.org/)

Plymouth Foyer - [LiveWest - Plymouth Foyer - Homeless England | Homeless Link](https://homeless.org.uk/homeless-england/service/livewest-plymouth-foyer/)

Torbay Foyer - [LiveWest - Torbay YP Support & Accommodation Foyer - Homeless England | Homeless Link](https://homeless.org.uk/homeless-england/service/livewest-torbay-yp-support-accommodation-foyer/)

Leonard Stocks - *Hostel in Torbay*

Amber Foundation – *A supported dry house in Chawleigh, where you are not allowed to Drink Alcohol or consume any drugs.* [Amber – Transforming young lives (amberweb.org)](https://amberweb.org/)

Exeter Foyer - *Bedsits and 3 bed cluster flats as well as emergency accommodation* [Stonewater - Exeter Foyer - Homeless England | Homeless Link](https://homeless.org.uk/homeless-england/service/stonewater-exeter-foyer/)

Exeter YMCA - *Four stages of accommodation – hostel/shared house/shared flats/self-contained flat* [Home - YMCA Exeter](https://www.ymcaexeter.org.uk/)

Cullompton YMCA - [Our Services - YMCA Dulverton Group (ymca-dg.org)](https://www.ymca-dg.org/our-services/)

Westward Housing Supported housing

Bethany House - *Female only supported housing – rooms with ensuite* [Bethany House accommodation and support service for young women in Exeter | Westward (westwardhousing.org.uk)](https://www.westwardhousing.org.uk/bethany-house/)

Mortimer - [Mortimer House support project | Westward (westwardhousing.org.uk)](https://www.westwardhousing.org.uk/mortimer-house-support)

Julian House Trainer tenancies - *Shared two bed flats with low support* [Trainer Tenancies | Julian House | Homeless Charity | Exeter](https://www.julianhouse.org.uk/service/trainer-tenancies/)

Julian House Offenders project - *Support accommodation those on probation order* [Ex-offenders supported housing | Julian House](https://www.julianhouse.org.uk/ex-offenders-supported-housing/)

The Oakfields Project - *Referred via probation*

Howell Road - *Referred via A2A at risk of rough sleeping* [Howell Road - Homelessness services | Sanctuary Supported Living (sanctuary-supported-living.co.uk)](https://www.sanctuary-supported-living.co.uk/find-services/homelessness/devon/howell-road)

BCHA Morwenna

BCHA Gabriel House

Hostel in Exeter- [Bournemouth Churches HA - Gabriel House - Homeless England | Homeless Link](https://homeless.org.uk/homeless-england/service/bournemouth-churches-ha-gabriel-house/)

Esther Community - [Esther Community Exeter](http://www.esthercommunity.org.uk/)

ECCT - *Rooms in Shared houses around Exeter* [Welcome to Exeter City Community Trust Supported Housing - Exeter City Community Trust (exetercct.org)](https://exetercct.org/supported-housing/)

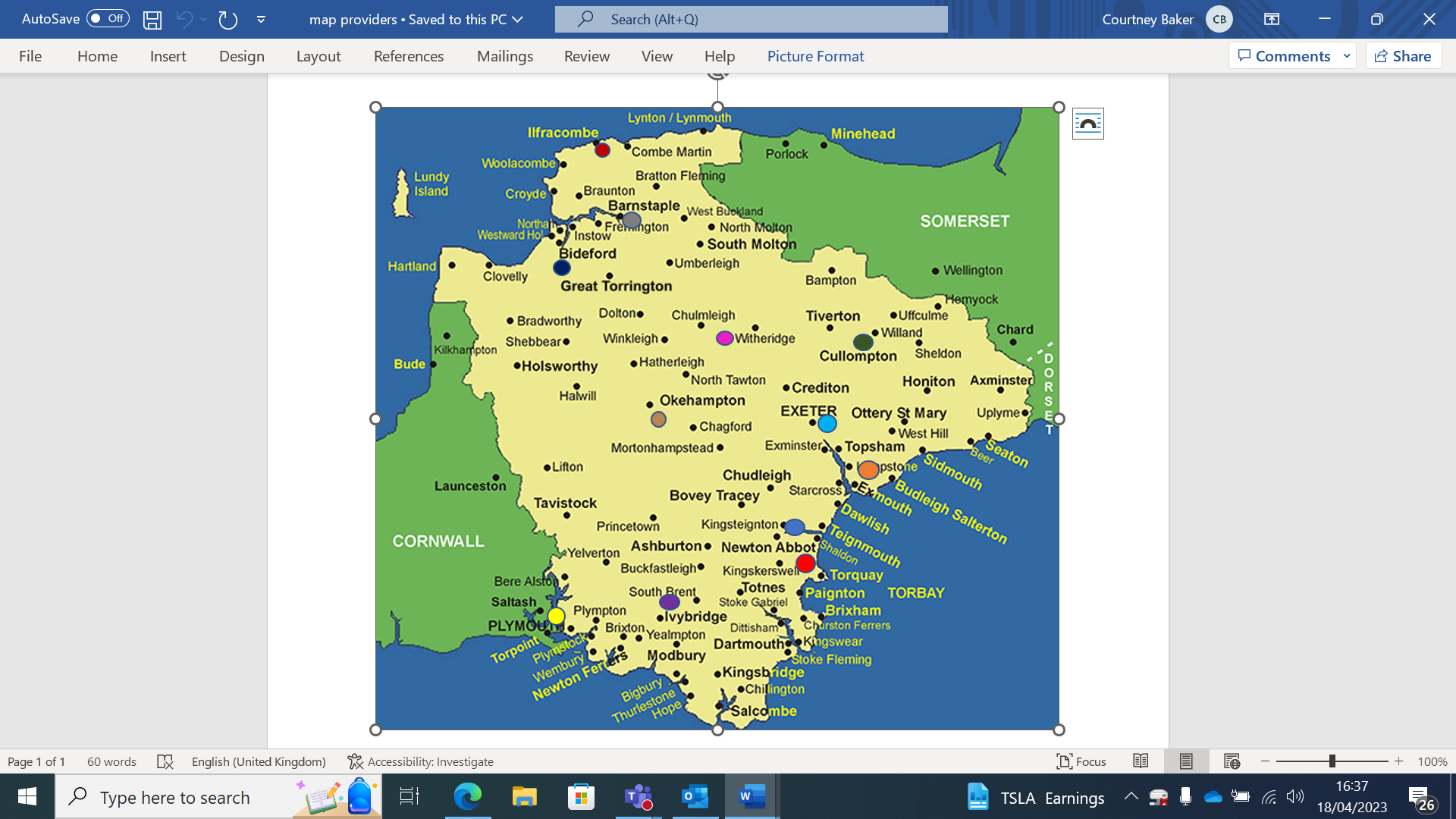
Encompass North Devon

[Encompass South West (bpag-encompass.org.uk)](https://www.bpag-encompass.org.uk/)

Pilot Project - *North Devon – for those that have exhausted options and need wrap around multi agency support*

**Service Charges**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Provider** | **Cost Per Week** | **What this Covers** |
| YMCA Exeter | £15 | Electricity Contribution £2.33 Heating including water heating £3.10. IT and Internet £2.83 Water £5.09 Management of personal service element £1.65 |
| YMCA Cullompton | £35 | Covers all utility bills and internet. |
| ECCT | £30.49 | covers all utility bills and the left over amount that housing benefit will not cover for the care and supervision. |
| Exeter Foyer | £9.08 |  |
| Esther | £7.50 | Covers all bills and rent |
| Young Devon | £10.50 - 16.50 | The service charge covers gas, electric, water, council tax, internet and general maintenance. |
| Bethany House | £12 | non-communal gas/electricity/water and the communal TV licence, internet and phone line charge. |
| Amber | £45 | Includes all bills and food |
| Alexander House Exmouth | £19 | Includes Rent and all bills |
| North Devon, Torridge and Mid Devon – TA. | £27.63 | Service charge, water and breakfast |
| Teignbridge and South Hams TA | £25.20 | intended to cover the cost of things like electricity, gas, water, etc that housing benefit doesn’t. |
| Exeter TA | £21 | Water, heating, Electricity. |
| Ebed – Foyer | £0 | YP is required to pay electric on a key meter and council tax. |
| Ebed - Esther | £0 |  |



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Exeter Foyer  Bethany House YMCA Exeter  Esther Community  Gabriel House  Exeter City Community Trust  Julian House Trainer Tenancies  Howell Road  Oakfields (via Probation)  Young Devon  Julian House Offenders Project (via Probation)    Gilead | Alexandra House      Young Devon    Leonard Stocks  Torbay Foyer  Stone Court    Live West  Charis  Encompass | Plymouth Foyer      Cullumpton YMCA  Amber Foundation    Charis  Encompass  Young Devon  Freedon Centre (via NDDC) |

**Private rent websites**

You can access the internet for free in most Libraries and some community centres. Popular websites that advertise properties are:

* [Rightmove](https://www.rightmove.co.uk/)
* [Zoopla](https://www.zoopla.co.uk/)
* [Property To Rent (loot.com)](https://www.loot.com/property/to-rent)
* [dssmove](http://www.dssmove.co.uk/)
* [Onthemarket](https://www.onthemarket.com/to-rent/property/devon/)
* [gumtree](https://www.gumtree.com/property-to-rent/devon)
* Social media – Facebook groups in your chosen area
* <https://www.openrent.co.uk/>
* [www.spare-room.co.uk](http://www.spare-room.co.uk)
* [www.facebook.com/marketplace](http://www.facebook.com/marketplace)
* www.airb&b.com

**LETTING AGENTS IN EXETER AND DEVON.**

* Northwood – [www.northwooduk.com/exeter-estate-agents - 01392339423](http://www.northwooduk.com/exeter-estate-agents%20-%2001392%20339423).
* Hunters - [www.hunters.com/about-us/offices/exeter -01392340130](http://www.hunters.com/about-us/offices/exeter%20-%2001392%20340130).
* Smart Estate Agent - [www.smartestateagent.co.uk](http://www.smartestateagent.co.uk) - 01392905907.
* Cardens - [www.cardensestateagents.co.uk](http://www.cardensestateagents.co.uk) – 01392433866.
* Palmer Collins - [www.palmer-collins.co.uk](http://www.palmer-collins.co.uk) – 01382496566.
* Dormans - [www.dormansestates.co.uk](http://www.dormansestates.co.uk) – 01392469333.
* Connells - [www.connells.co.uk/estate-agents/exeter - 01392426454](http://www.connells.co.uk/estate-agents/exeter%20-%2001392%20426454).
* Cooksleys - [www.cooksleys.co.uk](http://www.cooksleys.co.uk) – 01392202220.
* Whitton & Laing - [www.whittonandlaing.com](http://www.whittonandlaing.com) – 01392 285060.
* Bradleys Estate Agent - [www.bradleys-estate-agents.co.uk](http://www.bradleys-estate-agents.co.uk) – 01392 493300.
* East of Exe - [www.eastofexe.co.uk](http://www.eastofexe.co.uk) – 01392 345070.
* Fulfords - [www.fulfords.co.uk](http://www.fulfords.co.uk) – 01392 590342.
* Haart - [www.haart.co.uk](http://www.haart.co.uk) – 01392 258374.
* Naomi J Ryan Estate Agent - [www.naomijryan.co.uk](http://www.naomijryan.co.uk) - 01392 215283.
* Underhill - [www.underhillproperty.com](http://www.underhillproperty.com) - 01392 477775.
* Rosewood Property – [www.rosewood-property.co.uk](http://www.rosewood-property.co.uk) – 01392 247700.
* Martin & Co - [www.martinco.com](http://www.martinco.com) – 01392 01392 254488.
* Devon Rose - [www.devonrose.co.uk](http://www.devonrose.co.uk) - 01626 866693.

If you choose to rent directly from a private landlord, be clear who you are handing money over to, and why. **Never** pay any money without seeing the property first. Try to take someone with you when visiting properties. Feel free to ask lots of questions when you are viewing properties.

**MONEY AND LEGAL MATTERS**

**What checks do private landlords do?** Landlords typically ask for references from their tenants to make sure they can afford the property and will look after it properly. They can ask for income information, credit checks, credit references and rental history. Llandlords and agents will want to confirm your identity, [immigration status](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-rent-landlords-code-of-practice), credit history and possibly employment status.

**How much is the deposit?**  If the total annual rent is less than £50,000, the maximum deposit is five weeks’ rent. The deposit must be refundable at the end of the tenancy, usually subject to the rent being paid and the property being returned in good condition, and it must be ‘protected’ during the tenancy.

**How long do you want the tenancy for?** The landlord must allow you to stay in the property for a minimum of 6 months. Most landlords offer tenancies for a fixed term of 6 or 12 months.

**What can you afford?**  35% of your take-home pay is the most that many people can afford, but this depends on what your other outgoings are. In many cases a Landlord may require a guarantor who will be responsible for any rent shortfall.

**Are you are entitled to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit?** You may get help with all or part of your rent. You may receive up to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate to cover or help with the cost of rent. Contact Universal Credit on 0800 328 5644 or the [Universal Credit information](https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/contact-universal-credit) website.

**WHEN YOU ARE MOVING IN, CHECK THE PAPERWORK CAREFULLY.**

* Make sure you have a **written tenancy agreement** and read it carefully to understand your rights and responsibilities before you sign it.
* Agree an **inventory** (or check-in report) with your landlord before you move in and, as an extra safe-guard, make sure that you take photos. This will make things easier if there is a dispute about the deposit at the end of the tenancy
* **Meter readings.** Remember to take meter readings when you move in. Take a photo showing the meter reading and the date and time, if possible. This will help make sure you don’t pay for the previous tenant’s bills.

## Not sure what to say............

Hi, I’m ringing up about the room/flat to rent. I was just wondering if I could ask you a few questions about it?

## Where is the property? ................................................................................

## How much is the rent? ................................................................................

## What does the rent include? ................................................................................

## How much is council tax? ................................................................................

## Are the bills shared with others and what is the average cost?

## Water: .............................................................

## Electricity: ..............................................................

## Gas: ..............................................................

## Council Tax …………………………………………

## Other: ............................................................

## Other: ...........................................................

## How much is the rent in advance? ................................................................................

## How much is the Deposit? ................................................................................

## How long is the contract / tenancy for? ................................................................................

## Can I come and view the property? Date.........................................................................

Time.........................................................................

**Affordability**

