

LIVING and WORKING
In the
NORTH EAST of SCOTLAND

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the North East of Scotland. We hope you enjoy working and living here.

It is not realistic to expect information to be available on every situation you are likely to encounter. However, in addition to providing advice, it is considered to be important to you that links to other websites are provided which may prove useful.

Where English is not your first language, some agencies will have access to “Language Line” or have access to interpretation services.

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1. Banks and Building Societies

It is important to open a bank/building society account as most employers will pay your wages into your account.

To open an account you must provide the following information:

- proof of identity (passport, national identity card or national driving licence) and
- proof of address (tenancy agreement or letter from your employer)

Building Societies/Banks will issue cards with PIN (Personal Identification Number) which will be delivered to the address which you give. These are sent by post. If you change your address, you must tell your Building Society/Bank.

Keep your PIN safe and DO NOT give the number to anyone else.

You can also bank at Post Offices. To find out more information, please telephone 08457 223344 or text phone 08457 223355 or visit www.postoffice.co.uk.

2. Credit Unions

Credit Unions are owned and run by their members who pool their savings and access low cost loans when they need to borrow.

Members' savings are underwritten by a government compensation scheme and members also get non-contributory death benefits. Anyone who lives or works in the Grampian area can join North East Scotland Credit Union Ltd. (NESCU) or Grampian Credit Union (GCU). For further information visit www.nescu.co.uk or www.grampiancreditunion.co.uk

3. Discrimination

Within UK law there are identified groups of people who have protection against discrimination in the workplace or in the provision of goods and services. These groups are what are termed as the "seven strands" of equality, e.g. Race, Gender, Disability, Religion and Belief, Sexual Orientation, Transgender and Age. For details please visit www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/

In this part of Scotland, assistance can be found at www.grec.co.uk <http://www.multiethnic.co.uk/> or www.nesen.org.uk.

4. Driving

Persons from E.U. visiting the UK

If you hold a valid European Union Community driving licence and are visiting the UK, you can drive any vehicle, which your licence entitles you to drive. The vehicles you are entitled to drive must be shown on your licence. All drivers must comply with UK minimum age requirements. These are 17 years for cars and motorcycles, 18 years for medium sized vehicles and 21 years for large lorries and buses.

Persons from E.U. resident in UK

If you have a valid European Union Community driving licence, this will authorise you to drive in the UK for the periods below. Alternatively, you can exchange your licence for a UK one at any time. Provided your licence remains valid, you may drive a car or motorcycle (ordinary licence) in the UK until the age of 70, or for three years after becoming resident, whichever is the longer period. In order to continue driving after these periods, you must get a UK driving licence.

If you drive without a valid licence, your vehicle will be seized; legal penalties include a fine, penalty points on your licence and disqualification from driving.

Visitor or Resident (including a student) and non EU Licence Holders

If you are the holder of an ordinary driving licence or international driving permit (car, moped, motorcycle entitlement) and provided your licence or permit remains valid, you can drive any category of small vehicle shown on your licence for up to 12 months from the time you became resident. To ensure continuous driving entitlement, a provisional UK licence must have been obtained and a driving test(s) passed before the 12 month period elapses. If you obtain a provisional licence during this period, you are not subject to provisional licence conditions, .e.g. displaying "L" plates or being supervised by a qualified driver or being precluded from motorways.

For information on licences, visit:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/DrivingInGbOnAForeignLicence/DG_4022556

Or

www.dvla.gov.uk

The DVLA information leaflets D100 and INV38 are also available from Post Offices and provide information regarding driving in the UK.

Buying and Selling Cars

It is recommended that before buying a used motor car, you carry out a data check which can identify if the vehicle has outstanding finance, is stolen, written off or clocked. For further information, see www.rac.co.uk www.theaa.com or www.hpicheck.com

Insurance

You must, by law, have motor insurance because if you injure someone or cause damage to someone's property while driving you must, by law, compensate the other person. The minimum type of insurance necessary is Third Party Only. Comprehensive policies also covers damage to your own car. *It is an offence to use a motor vehicle on a public road without the proper motor insurance.*

Anyone else who wants to drive your car must be named on your insurance policy and this will cost extra. For further information see www.rac.co.uk or www.theaa.com or local insurance organisations.

MOT

Cars over three years old must pass a Ministry of Transport (MOT) test every year. *It is an offence to use a vehicle over three years old on a public road without a current MOT test certificate.*

You must be able to produce to the Police on *demand*:

- Your driving licence
- A valid insurance certificate
- A valid MOT certificate (if your car is over three years old)

Road Tax

A vehicle licence (known as a tax disc) shows you have paid the correct vehicle tax. You must put this disc on the left-hand side of the vehicle's windscreen. You can buy a vehicle licence for 6 or 12 months from the Post Office. You will need to take the following documents with you:

- DVLA form (from Post Office or sent to you directly by post if your vehicle is already registered with the DVLA)
- A valid insurance certificate
- A valid MOT certificate (if your car is over three years old)

Information leaflets are available at a Post Office or visit www.dvla.gov.uk

Rules of the Road

All drivers should read the *Highway Code*. You can buy this from bookshops or visit www.highwaycode.gov.uk. It helps to prevent accidents by making sure everyone is using the same rules when driving. It contains rules such as:

- Drive on the left-hand side of the road
- Overtake on the right
- At roundabouts, give priority to traffic approaching from the right
- At junctions, obey the give way and stop signs. You may see either a red "STOP" sign or a triangular "GIVE WAY" sign or "GIVE WAY" markings (dotted white lines and a white triangle on the carriageway). These mean you must give way to traffic on the other road.

These rules are legal requirements and *if you disobey them you are committing an offence*. You may be fined, given penalty points on your licence or be disqualified from driving.

Speed Limits

Generally speed limits will be as follows but signs will indicate:

- 30 mph (48 kph) built up areas (e.g. towns and villages)
- 60 mph (96 kph) single carriageway (for cars)
- 70 mph (112 kph) dual carriageway/motorways (for cars)

Use of Mobile Phones

You *must not* use a mobile phone when driving. If you do, *you may be fined and receive penalty points on your driving licence*.

Seatbelts

Seatbelts *must be worn* by the driver and all passengers. *You can be fined for not wearing a seatbelt*. The driver must make sure that passengers under the age of 14 years wear the correct type of seatbelt. A child under 3 years old must use an approved child's car seat. Please see <http://www.childcarseats.org.uk/law/index.htm#lawtable> to find the law for older children being restrained in a motor car.

Motorcycles

The rider and passenger of a motorcycle, scooter or moped *must* wear crash helmets.

Drinking and Driving

Alcohol can seriously affect your ability to drive. *It is strongly recommended that you do not drive a vehicle after drinking alcohol*.

If the police stop you driving when you are over the alcohol limit it is likely that you will be arrested and kept in a police station overnight to appear in court the next day. Drugs and medication can also affect your ability to drive safely and could lead to prosecution. Convicted drivers are disqualified from driving for a minimum of 12 months and may be fined up to £5000 and 6 months in prison.

Accidents

If you are involved in an accident when driving you must *STOP*. If anyone is injured or damage is caused to something other than your vehicle, you must give your name, address and insurance details to anyone who has a reasonable reason to ask for them. You do not have to inform the police in the case of a minor accident but if any doubt call 0845 600 5 700 or if the accident is serious call the police using telephone 999 in an emergency.

5. Education

Schools

When do children go to school?

In Scotland, children must attend a primary school when they are 5 years old. Once they reach 12 years old they move to a secondary school and must stay there until they are 16 years old. After that, children can leave school or stay on at school for up to 2 years to study for more qualifications.

Where do children go to school?

Usually children attend their local primary or secondary school, but this usually depends on where you live. To find out which is your local school, you should contact your local Education Office, see <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/index.asp>. If you do not want your child to attend your local school, you must make a placing request. Application forms are available from schools and education offices.

How do parents enrol a child in school?

Usually the parent contacts the Head Teacher of their local school. If a parent needs an interpreter, it should be possible to provide one.

Children with additional needs

Some children may need extra help with their education. There are different sorts of help these children can receive depending on their needs.

Educational Psychology Service

Educational Psychologists work with children who are having difficulties in school. They also work with parents and teachers and can advise on ways of helping children.

Special Schools

There are special schools for children with severe learning difficulties. There are four in Aberdeenshire. Children only attend these schools once they have been seen by an Educational Psychologist.

English as an additional language

There are specialist teachers who work with schools which have children who do not use English at home. If this is what happens in your home, you should tell the Head Teacher when enrolling your child in school.

Sensory Support Service

There is a team of specialist teachers who work with children with a hearing impairment or visual impairment. Tell the Head Teacher when enrolling your child in school.

School Transport

If you live close to your local school, usually your child would walk to school. If your child attends primary school and you live more than 2 miles away, your child will be given free transport. For children attending secondary school, you must live more than 3 miles away from your local secondary school to be entitled to free transport. If your child does not attend your local school because you have made a placing request, then your child will not qualify for free transport.

School Meals

All primary and special schools provide lunches. For price and details, visit: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school_meals/primary.asp.

Clothing Grants

Clothing grants can be available to some parents. To find out more visit www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parentscarers/financial/clothing.asp

Further and Higher Education

There are many opportunities for you to access training in areas such as:

- English as a second language

- Recognised qualifications in subjects such as business studies, computing, engineering, etc
- Short courses in subjects such as health and safety , first aid, etc.
- General interest and hobbies such as history, sport and art.

Courses are delivered during the day, the evening and sometimes at the weekend. Banff and Buchan College and Aberdeen College are the local colleges for further education covering the Aberdeenshire area. There are also Universities and more education establishments in Aberdeen city. To find out more visit www.learndirect.com

Community Learning

To find out about community learning opportunities, visit www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/cld/index.asp

6. Emergency Services

The Emergency Services are:

- Police
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Ambulance
- Coastguard

In an emergency (such as a car accident or house fire) telephone 999. You will be asked which service you need. In the UK these services are usually *Free of Charge*.

Police

You may need to contact the police because:

- You have been the victim of a crime; or
- You have witnessed a crime
- You have been involved in a road accident; or
- You need information

Most towns have a police station. This may not be open 24 hours per day. If it is closed, call the Service Centre on 0845 600 5700 or www.grampian.police.uk.

Controlled Drugs

Possession of certain types of drugs is illegal. These include cannabis, amphetamine, heroin, ecstasy, cocaine, crack cocaine and a number of others.

Some drugs, although available on prescription from a doctor, are illegal to possess if not prescribed to you. If you are found with any of these drugs, you can be fined or imprisoned or both.

Weapons

Generally, you are not allowed to carry knives or guns. Only small, folding, pocket knives with a blade of less than 7.62 cm long can be carried in a public place and you may *not* carry a weapon for personal protection.

To possess a gun of any kind, unless it is an air weapon, you will require a firearm or shotgun certificated issued by police, email firearms.licensing@grampian.pnn.police.uk.

Smoking/Alcohol

You must be 18 years and over to purchase cigarettes and other product or purchase alcoholic drinks. Supplying cigarettes or alcohol to children under the age of 18 is illegal. In some areas byelaws forbid the drinking of alcohol outdoors – these areas will have signs indicating this. You must not take your own alcohol into pubs.

Sex

You must be 16 years of age and over to have a sexual relationship with another person, who must also be 16 years of age or over.

Hate Crime

A hate crime is any criminal offence that is motivated by hostility or prejudice based upon the victim's:

- disability
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender
- transgender

All hate crime is important. No hate crime is too minor to report to the police. Anyone can be the victim of a hate crime. We all have a racial identity, all have a sexual orientation, all have some sort of beliefs. Anyone of us could be targeted because of some aspect of our identity. Tackling hate crime supports each and every one of us.

To report a hate crime, telephone 0845 600 5700.

Fire Service

Grampian Fire and Rescue Service provide fire cover 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, across the North East of Scotland. They provide education and information to help reduce the risk of fire and improve safety in the home and workplace. The Fire Service also respond to road traffic collisions and work along with Grampian Police and others to promote road safety.

Most of these services are *free of charge* to everyone living or working in the area.

Your home may be more at risk from fire than you realise. In the North East of Scotland there are over 600 house fires every year. Have you looked at the risks in your home?

For free information on how to protect your home, visit www.grampianfrs.org.uk

Information is also available from the Scottish Government at www.dontgivefireahome.com

Fire safety information leaflets are also available in different languages through your local fire station.

Remember if fire strikes

- **GET OUT**
- **STAY OUT**
- **CALL THE FIRE SERVICE OUT**

In an emergency, dial 999 and ask for the Fire Service.

7. Employment

Worker Registration Scheme only applies if you are originally from the following countries:

- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Hungary
- Latvia
- Lithuania

- Malta
- Poland
- Slovakia
- Slovenia

Within one month of starting work *you* must register with the Home Office Worker Registration Scheme (www.workingintheuk.gov.uk) by submitting a completed *WRS Application Form*. This form can be printed from the www.workingintheuk.gov.uk website. *The form must be completed by both you and your employer.*

Workers coming for Bulgaria and Romania require a work permit before working in the UK. See www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/eea/wrs/whomustregister/

The following documents must also be enclosed with your application form:

- A letter from your employer confirming you are working
- 2 passport photos
- your passport/ID card
- a payment of £50 (postal order, cheque or credit card)

If you do not apply within one month of starting work your employment will be *illegal*.

On registration, you will receive:

- a registration card
- a registration certificate
- your passport or ID card will be returned.

You must repeat this process each time you change your employer.

Tax

If you are an employee, your employer will deduct Income Tax from your wages each time you are paid and send it to the Inland Revenue. This is known as Pay As You Earn (PAYE). You may be entitled to a tax rebate when/if you return to your home country.

National Insurance

If you are employed and are aged between 16 and 65, you must pay National Insurance contributions (NICs). Some statutory payments (e.g. statutory sick pay and statutory maternity pay), depend on the contributions you have paid.

If you do not already have a NI number, you *must* apply for one as soon as you start work. To apply for a number, contact a call centre for a face to face interview. The call centre number is 0845 600 643. You will need to take

proof of identify and evidence that you are working, for example a letter from your employer.

You must tell your employer your National Insurance number. This number is unique to you. It is used:

- as a reference number for the UK benefits system and
- to record your NI contributions.

Finding Work

You can find work by visiting a Job Centre Plus office, applying directly to companies or by contacting a private employment agency. Most large towns have a Job Centre Plus where staff will help and advise you. Information on Job Centre Plus can be found on www.dwp.gov.uk. Job vacancies will also be advertised in local newspapers and in the “Press and Journal” on Friday of each week.

Employment Rights

Employment law can be complicated. If you have a query or problem, you should ask your employer first or see www.direct.gov.uk

For advice on a specific problem you can contact a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) or visit the following websites:

www.worksmart.org.uk/rights/ or telephone 0800 917 2368 to obtain a copy of “Working in the UK – Know your Rights” which is available in several languages.

For more information on government benefits contact www.dwp.gov.uk/international/social-security-agreements/

Minimum Wage

Most workers including agency workers must be paid a minimum wage. To find the current minimum wage go to www.direct.gov.uk or telephone the Minimum Wage helpline 0845 600 678,

An employer can only make deductions if they are:

- required by law (eg, PAYE or NI deductions)
- allowed by the worker’s contract
- agreed to by the worker *in writing* before the deduction is made.

Working Time Regulations

The Working Time Regulations state that:

- the average weekly working time is no more than 48 hours (you can choose to work longer but this must be agreed in writing with your employer)
- night workers average daily working time is limited to 8 hours
- health assessments must be offered to night workers
- minimum daily (11 hours) and weekly (1 day) rest periods
- rest breaks at work (20 minutes every 6 hours)
- paid annual leave (4 weeks – pro rata).

Health and Safety Protection

Both you and your employer are responsible for health and safety in the workplace.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

Employees absent from work through illness for more than 4 days and who pay enough NI contributions may qualify for SSP. It is paid by the employer.

Agency workers paying NI contributions *may* be entitled to SSP depending on whether they are working at the time of illness.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

Pregnant employees/workers with 26 weeks continuous employment by the 15th week before childbirth have the right to SMP. If you do not qualify for SMP you may be able to claim maternity allowance from your local benefits office depending on your NI contributions.

Part-time Workers

Part-time workers must be treated the same as full-time workers in their terms and conditions.

8. Faith, Religions and Beliefs

All faiths and beliefs are supported in Aberdeenshire, visit <http://www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/4.html> for further details.

9. Health

National Health Service (NHS)

The National Health Service, known as the NHS, is a state run national service which provides free health care in the UK for UK nationals and citizens of other countries who also qualify for free health care in the UK. Staff at your local health centre or surgery will advise if you are eligible for free health care.

General Medical Practitioner (GP)

A GP is your local personal NHS doctor. If you are ill or worried about your health or the health of anyone in your family, you should go to see your local GP. The place where you go to see your GP is called either a surgery or a health centre. GPs often work together in a small group called a practice. Many practices have both male and female GPs. If your faith, religion or culture requires that you or a member of your family are treated by a GP of the same sex, please let the GP receptionist know this when you first go to register.

Most surgeries and health centres are accessible by wheelchair, have doors that open electronically and have toilet facilities designed to meet the needs of disabled patients.

Interpreters are available at all GP surgeries via the language line facility.

What Services do GPs provide?

GPs are usually the first medical point of contact with the NHS. They are responsible for the comprehensive and continuing care of patients registered with them. GPs provide advice and treatment. If further treatment or investigation of a problem is required, the GP will co-ordinate this and ensure that it is provided. Further treatment might be provided by your GP, or by a member of their team such as a practice nurse, midwife or health visitor, or if required, by referral to a specialist doctor called a consultant or to other specialist services.

Why should I register with a GP?

By asking to register with your local GP, you are simply asking your local GP to be responsible for your ongoing medical care. If you are accepted, the GP is confirming that he or she will accept this responsibility. You will then know where to go for local medical care.

Dental Services

Unlike GP Services, there is usually a charge made for NHS dental services. The charge depends on the type of treatment provided. NHS dental care is provided in two main ways, these are:

- Salaried dentists who are employed by the NHS and only undertake NHS work
- General dental practitioners who are independent contractors who often provide a mix of both NHS and private dental treatment and also accept private patients.

Pharmacy Services

A pharmacist will

- Dispense prescription drugs
- Sell non-prescription medicines
- Provide advice and answer any questions you may have about choosing and using the right medicines
- Provide advice on treating everyday ailments and will help you decide if you need to see a doctor.

10. Housing

Housing can be obtained in the following ways:

- From your employer
- Rented from a private landlord
- Bed and breakfast accommodation
- Hostel
- Rent from a Housing association
- Rent from the Local Authority (Council)
- Purchase a home - properties for sale are usually advertised by local solicitors

If you want to rent a home you have three choices:

- The Local Authority
- Housing Associations
- Registered Private Landlords.

To decide who to rent from, you need to know what each landlord offers and what the differences are.

There are two ways you can rent a house from the Council and Housing Associations:

- By applying for a house and being placed on a waiting list until a suitable house become available
- If you are homeless or facing homelessness, then you should approach your local Council Housing Office for advice
www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk, www.aberdeencity.gov.uk,
www.moray.gov.uk

Access to local authority housing will depend on the length of time you have been working in the UK. Demand for housing in most areas of Aberdeenshire is very high and properties are let based upon people's housing need. Depending upon your circumstances, you may have to wait some time before you are helped.

The quality of private rented housing varies and you should check that your landlord or letting agent is registered with a Council which is a legal requirement.

Before landlords are registered, the Council will check that he or she is a suitable person to rent out houses. Some rented properties may also require to be licensed by the Council. These are called Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and are houses or flats which are occupied by at least 3 people from different families. These houses are subject to a detailed inspection by the Council and Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, to ensure they are safe and fit to live in. If you have concerns about your landlord or about the house you live in, you should contact the Council Environmental Health Service, in Aberdeenshire you should telephone 01467 628153 or email the website www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk , in Moray www.moray.gov.uk and in Aberdeen City www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Further information can be obtained from the Scottish Executive website www.betterrentingscotland.com

11. Leisure

For information on leisure centres and swimming pools, visit www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/recreation/swimleisure/index.asp
www.moray.gov.uk/moray_section/section_2173.html
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/xazAtoZ.asp?idn=6296

12. Libraries

As well as lending books free of charge, public libraries also provide other services such as:

- Free computer access, including free access to the internet and other software is provided in all libraries through go@l, the People's Network in Aberdeenshire Libraries. Support and advice is available from library staff in using these facilities.
- Provision of books, talking books, videos, DVDs, CDs, local newspapers and other materials. A free request service is available to obtain items located at any branch
- An online catalogue, which you can use to search for items you wish to borrow, place reservations, renew books and check your borrower record

Further information on the library service in Aberdeenshire is available on www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/libraries/index.asp

13. Post Offices

The Post Office sells stamps for letters and parcels and provides information and forms for vehicle tax discs and TV Licences. Many other services are also available, such as sending money overseas. Visit www.royalmail.com and www.postoffice.co.uk

14. Social Work

Aberdeenshire Council provides a Community Care service to support people who are affected by a range of difficulties; physical and sensory disability, mental health problems, substance misuse. To find out if you qualify for a Community Care service you should enquire at your local Social Work office, visit www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

Child Care services can provide advice and information on matters for children and families such as how to register a birth, how get help with childcare, telephone 0800 2983330 or visit www.childcarelink.gov.uk/aberdeenshire

Aberdeenshire Childcare Information Service

This service can provide guidance and information on matters for children and families such as pre-school education and how to get help with finding and paying for childcare. The Service cannot recommend providers, but offers impartial and comprehensive details to help parents make an informed choice. The Service also offers a signposting service to help callers answer questions on matters concerning children or families which fall outside their remit.

Your employer may also be able to help you access Childcare Vouchers through a salary sacrifice scheme.

Please be aware that you will be breaking the law and you may even be prosecuted if you leave your children unsupervised on their own at home even for a very short period of time. Please ensure that you always have childcare arrangements in place.

Child Protection

Protecting children is the responsibility of every member of the community, not just child protection services.

Remember – if you suspect abuse, do not rely on someone else to notice.

If you would like to speak to someone, seek help or pass on information or concerns:

- **In the day**, you can phone your [local social work office](#) or health visitor or the police
- At other times, there is an [emergency out of hours social work service](#). This service is available through the **night** and **at weekends**. Their number is **0845 840 0070**
- You can also contact the Police at any time on:
0845 600 5 700

- There is also a [national child protection helpline](#) (24-hour freephone) on **0800 022 3222**

Domestic Abuse

There are many organisations which can help the victims of domestic abuse but you should visit

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/care/help/protection/domestic_abuse/index.asp

or telephone 01771 638200, 01358 725756 or 01330 824991 for advice, assistance and support.

15. Television

If you use a television (TV) you must have a TV licence. The cost of a licence varies depending on whether you have a colour or a black and white TV.

You can pay for a TV licence at the Post Office. If you rent a property and the landlord provides the TV, you must still get a TV licence. If you do not get a licence, then you may be charged a fine of £1,000. Visit

www.tvlicensing.co.uk

16. Travel

www.visitscotland.org