

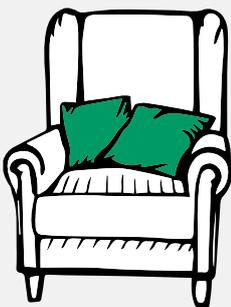
# Making a house a home



*When you live independently you will save money if you know where you can get stuff on the cheap, and how to do little maintenance jobs. And if you want to settle in well when you move you will need to know how to find out about local services. Getting on with your neighbours and landlord is important too.*

## **By the end of this module you will have learned about:**

- how to furnish and maintain your home
- when to ask the landlord for help with maintenance
- how to find out about services and activities in the new area
- how to deal with neighbours and conflict



## **Finding furniture**

Properties can be furnished, part-furnished or not furnished at all. **Make sure you ask the landlord how the home you want will be furnished before you move in.** This will help you understand what you will need to buy.

If you don't have very much money think about the furniture that you will really need and where you might get it.

## Where to look

### Second-hand shops

There are probably plenty of second hand shops in your area that sell cheap furniture. If you find something you want, try to bargain to see if you can get a lower price. Some shop owners want to sell their stock quickly so they may offer you a discount. Don't forget – if you don't ask, you don't get!



Be careful when you buy second-hand electrical goods. **Only buy those with a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) label.** This test is done to make sure that used appliances are as safe as possible for consumer use. The label will be very easy to see on appliances that have been tested. Soft furnishings such as beds and couches should have a fire safety certificate. Don't buy them unless they have one.

### Buy now, pay later

Some furniture stores offer 'buy now, pay later' schemes or loans. These deals can seem appealing. You can buy everything you want and pay the cost off month by month. **BUT you need to be very careful.** Lots of these loans/credit agreements charge high interest rates and you can end up paying hugely over the odds for your goods, so you could find that you are still paying in five year's time.



**Remember to CHECK and ask for advice before you sign up to any schemes like this.**

### Furniture projects

Furniture projects are projects that offer free or cheap furniture to low income households. To get help from one you are likely to need a referral from an agency. Sometimes you need to complete an application form. You may need to make an appointment to go and see the furniture and there may be a delivery charge. Ask support agencies you are working with or the local council.

### On the street

You can also look out for unwanted items left on the street. But be careful of picking up soft furnishings like cushions and mattresses for your new home. They can have bed bugs which can bite, cause rashes and be very difficult to get rid of.

Electrical appliances left on the street may have faults that could cause electrocution and fires.