

Unit 2

Getting started

- Where have you lived in the UK?
- What's your experience of living in the UK?
- What's good and bad about living in the UK?

Skills

- What does DIY mean? What DIY or home-making skills do you have?
- How do you search for accommodation?

The local area

- What are the good and bad things about living here?
- What can you do about the bad things?

Around the UK

- Do you feel "at home" in the UK? Why / why not?
- Is it more common to rent or buy homes in the UK? Why?

Around the world

- How are homes different across the world?
- What are the similarities?

Staying safe

- What do you have in your home to help you stay safe?
- What do you do in your home to help you stay safe?

Home



Useful apps and websites

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/make-your-home-safe-from-fire
- www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/
- www.gov.uk/private-renting

Taking the topic further

- Go on a walk around the local area together.
- Say hello to some neighbours.
- Teach the group a DIY or home-making skill.

Social / Community

- What advice would you give to someone new to the area about finding a home?
- Is it easy to chat to your neighbours? Why / why not?

Our rights and responsibilities

- Have you ever followed up a problem with your landlord? What was the problem and what happened?
- What rights do tenants have?

Personal view

- What does home mean to you?
- Where is home?
- Where would your ideal home be, what would it be like and who would live there?

Introduction to the topic

This topic can be used to cover general themes relating to **Home** as well as specific areas which may be relevant to participants, e.g. flat hunting. Each strand can be adapted or extended according to individual/group interests. Participants can share local knowledge of accommodation and housing.



Session ideas at a glance

Welcome	If required, participants sign in or you record attendance on a register.
Opening chat/ circle time	Introductions for anyone new. General chatting. Anything to follow up or report back on from the previous session? Any news from anyone?
Getting started	<p>Remind/tell participants what the topic of the session is: Home.</p> <p>Choose one or more warm up activities linked to the topic. See next page for ideas on: Places I've lived in.</p> <p>Ask some questions to get the conversation started and find out which aspects of the topic Home participants are most interested in talking about. (See mind map and next page for ideas).</p>
Conversations	<p>Plan to have 2 or 3 main conversations linked to this topic, possibly with supporting activities. See next page for ideas for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local area: House/flat hunting – what's important for you? • Personal view: Housing - Yes, but.... No, but...! • Staying safe: Common problems and repairs <p>If you have a large group, and participants divide into small groups or pairs for each activity/conversation, finish each of these with the whole group reporting back and maybe discussing their ideas further together.</p>
Closing chat/ circle time	<p>Feedback about today's topic and conversations.</p> <p>Discuss any ideas for any follow up action or research for taking the topic further, e.g. discussing this topic more, visiting a DIY store together, inviting a speaker from Citizen's Advice or housing support.</p> <p>Share ideas and agree the main topic for the next session.</p> <p>Any reminders or important dates/events coming up?</p>

Level of English: The activities included in this unit can be adapted or extended for use with different levels.

Things to consider: Home can be a very difficult and emotional subject for many participants and needs to be covered sensitively. If participants are new to the UK, or new to the area, they may welcome discussions around:

- strategies and support for finding accommodation
- costs associated with renting, e.g. service charge, council tax, utilities, etc.
- suggestions about where to find cheap furniture, e.g. charity shops, charities which support asylum seekers and refugees, recycling and upcycling projects, Sunday markets, etc.

Speaking practice supporting participants to be able to report problems in the home and ask for repairs can be very useful. Role play can be useful for focusing on specific issues participants want to address.

Getting started: Warm up activity – Places I've lived in

- Ask participants to silently count how many different houses or flats they have lived in throughout their lives. Then ask the group to get into a line, starting with the smallest number. Participants can tell each other a bit more about some of their different homes, if they wish to.
- Ask some questions (see mind map) to get the conversation started and find out which aspects of the topic participants are most interested in talking about.

The local area: House/flat hunting - what's important for you?

Resources and preparation: Project the questions or print a question sheet for each pair/small group. For beginners, you can cut the options into strips and discuss one at a time or just use a few.

- Ask the participants in their pairs/small groups to discuss each choice, choose one option and give their reasons to each other. Participants could then be asked to prioritise. For example: *Which three are most important for you? Why?*
- Come back together as whole group to discuss further, e.g. *Do you have similar or very different choices? Do you have any suggestions for tips for house/flat hunting in this area? What do you know about the local council's waiting list or choice-based letting (bidding) scheme? What is the bidding process? What questions do you have? How can you find out more?*

Personal view: Housing - Yes, but No, but...!

Resources and preparation: Make two A4 signs, one with **YES**, one with **NO** and put them at each end of the room. Clear a space in the room between the two signs. Alternatively, you can project the questions or print a set for each pair/small group to discuss. Adjust the number of questions according to the level of the group or write your own to reflect the housing circumstances and interests of the group. This activity works well for large groups.

- Ask everyone to stand in the space between the **YES/NO** signs and point to the signs. Explain you are going to ask some questions and they need to choose where to stand based on their view, e.g. if they agree strongly, stand by the **YES** sign, if they disagree strongly, stand by the **NO** sign, and if their answer is in between, they should stand somewhere to best reflect their view.
- It's a good idea to demonstrate with one question, e.g. *Do you love your home?* Ask participants to move to a position based on their view. Invite anyone who would like to, to explain why they chose their position. Continue with the rest of the questions.

Alternatively:

- Divide participants into pairs or small groups and project/give out the questions. Encourage participants to discuss their answers and ask each other follow up questions, e.g. *Why?*
- Come back as whole group to discuss main points and possible follow up action based on participants' responses and any issues raised, e.g. signposting for advice and support.

Staying safe: Common problems and repairs

Resources and preparation: Print and cut up the images and word cards, one set for each pair/small group.

- Hand out the images first and ask participants to talk about what they are. Then hand out the word cards for participants to match to the images. Follow up with a discussion about the kind of problems they have had with any of these issues, any other common problems or repairs they have had in their homes and best action to take.
- Higher level participants can discuss the issues further, e.g. *Who is responsible for the problem or repair? What action can you take? Where can you get help, support or advice?*
- This is a good opportunity to talk about **Rights and responsibilities**. The group can build a list of questions for further research and consider inviting a housing adviser to discuss these further.

The local area:

House/flat hunting – what's important for you?

good public
transport**OR**car parking/
safe bicycle storage

garden

OR

balcony

modern/
smaller rooms**OR**

old/larger rooms

house

OR

flat

gas cooker

OR

electric cooker

kitchen in the
living area**OR**

separate kitchen

quiet local area

ORbusy area near
shops, etc.

cheaper rent

ORnear to friends
or family

Personal view: *Yes, but.... No, but...!*

Do you like your home?

Do you like your street?

Do you have friendly neighbours?

Do you have noisy neighbours?

Do you have any problems in your home?

Is your home warm / easy to heat?

Does your home have lots of natural light?

Is your home big enough?

Do you want to move?

Do you feel at home in the local area?

Does your local area have good shops?

Does your local area have good services?

Staying safe: Common problems and repairs



damp



broken boiler



noisy neighbours



mice



dripping tap



broken radiator

Images 5 and 6: Unsplash.com