Living in municipal accommodation

The town of Bocholt follows a clear approach to the accommodation and integration of refugees. This approach is divided into three stages, designed to help you gradually build an independent life:

Stage 1 - Supported initial accommodation: Upon your arrival in Bocholt, you will first move into a larger initial accommodation facility (e.g. at Takenkamp). Here, you will receive intensive support as you settle in. Social support services will help you with the very first administrative and practical steps in the town.

Stage 2 - Supported off-site accommodation: In the second phase, you will leave the large initial accommodation. You will move into a flat or a shared flat (WG) that has been let by the City of Bocholt for this purpose. Here, too, the social support team will continue to assist you with any queries.

Stage 3 - Independent living: In the final stage, you will search for and rent a private flat on the open housing market independently. You will sign your own tenancy agreement and live completely independently. From this point onwards, the social support service will no longer be responsible for you. If you have any questions about life in the neighbourhood, you can contact the local neighbourhood offices. Further information is available at bocholt.de/quartiere.

Important: The accommodation in stages 1 and 2 is emergency accommodation provided by the City of Bocholt. These properties have everything you need for day-to-day life. Use of this accommodation is not free of charge; fees apply.

Note on the asylum procedure: Whilst your asylum procedure is still ongoing, you will usually have to live in municipal accommodation (Step 1 or 2). Would you still like to rent a private flat yourself? Please **make sure** you speak to the Immigration Authority and the Social Services Department **beforehand**!

Facilities



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In the municipal accommodation (Levels 1 and 2), the City of Bocholt provides you with a basic set of essentials. If you are travelling alone, your room will include:

- A bed with a mattress
- A wardrobe
- A table and a chair

You will share the kitchen, bathroom and toilets with the other residents on your floor or in your flat. A washing machine is also available for use.

Rules regarding furnishings: All furniture provided is the property of the City of Bocholt. You are not permitted to bring your own large items of furniture into the accommodation or to dispose of the existing furniture. When you move out, all furniture must remain in the accommodation, complete and undamaged. Families or shared flats will be provided with a correspondingly larger range of furnishings, tailored to their needs.

If you move out of the council accommodation (e.g. into your own flat), you must follow these steps:

1. Clean your room and the communal areas you have used thoroughly (swept and clean).
2. Take all your personal belongings with you.
3. Hand over all keys you have been given in full to the accommodation management or social services.

Important for your finances: Only once the room has been properly handed over can the accommodation management or social services officially deregister or re-register you with the City of Bocholt. Until this official deregistration or change of address has taken place, the accommodation fees will continue to accrue and must be paid by you!

Rules for living together (house rules)

Compulsory attendance

The accommodation is your designated place of residence. You are required to be present there every day and to spend the night there. If you need to be absent for several days for valid reasons (e.g. business travel or family emergencies), please inform your designated contact person at Bocholt Town Council or the accommodation management **in advance**.

Visitors and night-time quiet hours

Visiting hours: Guests and visitors are very welcome, but must leave the accommodation by **10.00 pm** at the latest. Overnight stays by guests are prohibited in the accommodation for safety and space reasons.

Statutory quiet hours: In Germany, statutory quiet hours apply from **10.00 pm**. From this time onwards, all noise must be kept to **a reasonable level**. Music, the television and conversations must not be audible in neighbouring rooms or outside the flat. Please be considerate of people who work and families with young children.

Cleanliness, waste sorting and ventilation

Proper ventilation (preventing mould): To prevent damp and dangerous mould**from** forming on the walls, you must ventilate your room regularly. To do this, open the windows fully for 10 minutes each in the morning and evening (**thorough ventilation**). Simply leaving the windows tilted open all the time is not enough and wastes energy.

Cleaning responsibilities: You are personally responsible for thoroughly cleaning the kitchen, bathroom and toilets that you use on a regular basis. Please also keep the corridors and communal areas clean.

Waste disposal: Rubbish must never be left in the corridors, outside your room door or on the balcony (risk of pests and odours). Take your rubbish

straight to the designated bins outside. Please follow the rules for waste separation.

Use of the washing machines

Please use only the washing machine allocated to you. Before each wash, check the pockets of your clothes and empty them completely (coins, lighters or tissues can damage the machine). Use washing powder sparingly and clean the machine's lint filter regularly.

Safety, fire safety and prohibitions

Smoking and drugs ban: Smoking cigarettes, e-cigarettes and water pipes (shishas), as well as the consumption of illegal drugs and alcohol, is prohibited throughout the accommodation (including in your own rooms)! Lighting shisha charcoal on the kitchen hobs poses a significant fire hazard and is prohibited.

Smoke detectors: The white smoke detectors on the ceilings are there for your safety and can save lives in the event of a fire. It is strictly forbidden to remove, damage or cover the smoke detectors, or to remove their batteries.

Pets: Pets (e.g. dogs, cats or small animals) are not permitted in the municipal accommodation.

Saving energy and reducing heating costs

Please use resources responsibly. Switch off the lights and all electrical appliances when you leave your room. In winter, turn the heating down a notch if you are going to be out of the room for a long time. When the heating is on, windows must remain closed to prevent expensive heat from escaping outside.

Parental duty of care & liability for damage

Keeping an eye on children: Parents have a legal duty of care towards their children. They must ensure that their children also comply with the house rules.

Liability for damage to property: If you or your children accidentally or deliberately damage items or parts of the building in the accommodation, you must cover the costs of repair or replacement. We strongly advise you to take out personal **liability insurance**. This insurance costs just a few euros a month, but protects you and your family from high costs should you accidentally cause damage in your day-to-day life.

Consequences of breaching the rules

Compliance with the house rules is mandatory. If you repeatedly breach the rules or seriously disturb the peace in the accommodation, this will have legal consequences.

Social care in Bocholt

The staff at the Social Services department work on behalf of the City of Bocholt. They are on hand to help you with any day-to-day queries, problems or administrative matters.

You can simply drop in during the weekly consultation hours **without needing to book an appointment in advance** (open consultation hours).

Address of the social services department: EWIBO GmbH; Theodor-Heuss-Ring 23, 46395 Bocholt

Please refer to the notice displayed at Theodor-Heuss-Ring 23, 46395 Bocholt for the consultation hours (no appointment required).

Cleaning, Hygiene & Outdoor Areas



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Who is responsible for cleaning what in the accommodation?

- **Your own room:** You are solely responsible for the cleanliness and hygiene of your own room. You must sweep, mop and keep it clean on a regular basis.
- **Communal areas:** As the kitchen, bathrooms and toilets are shared by several people, **cleaning rota charts** are displayed there. This means that the cleaning of these areas is shared on a rota basis amongst the residents. Please stick strictly to your allocated cleaning days.
- **Corridors and basement areas:** You will find the rota for the communal areas on the noticeboard at the accommodation. This specifies who is responsible for cleaning the hallway, the stairwell, the bicycle storage room or the laundry room, and when.

Outdoor tasks

Residents must also take turns carrying out tasks around the building to ensure it looks tidy and remains safe:

- The pavements, access paths and courtyard areas in front of the building must be swept regularly and kept free of weeds.
- **Winter maintenance:** When it snows in winter or the paths become icy, the pavements must be cleared and, if necessary, gritted so that passers-by and residents do not slip and injure themselves.
- **Garden maintenance:** If your accommodation includes a garden, this must be maintained collectively. The necessary gardening tools will be provided for this purpose. Tasks include, for example, weeding, raking up leaves and sweeping the garden paths.

Important note regarding drainage pipes: Never pour food scraps, cooking oil or used fat down the sink, into the shower or down the toilet! Fat hardens in the pipes and very quickly leads to stubborn blockages. This can cause serious water damage and flooding in the flat. Please dispose of all food scraps and fats exclusively in the normal household waste (residual waste).

Good Neighbourliness

Living peacefully and respectfully with your neighbours - both in your accommodation and in the wider neighbourhood - is the foundation for settling in well within the community. Please note the following:

- **Follow the house rules:** Always adhere to the agreed rules. If anything is unclear or you encounter any problems, the social support team will be happy to mediate on your behalf.
- **Avoid noise:** Avoid making loud noises in your flat. Pay particular attention to the statutory quiet hours (on weekdays from 10.00 pm to 6.00 am, and all day on Sundays and public holidays).
- **Give notice of parties:** If you are planning a private party that might get a bit noisy, it is good practice to inform your neighbours in a friendly manner a few days in advance.
- **Keep escape routes in the stairwell clear:** The stairwell and corridors serve as escape routes in an emergency (e.g. in the event of a fire). It is therefore not permitted to leave personal items such as bicycles, pushchairs, shoe racks or large numbers of shoes there on a permanent basis. These routes must be completely clear and accessible to everyone at all times.

Address problems directly and calmly: Should a misunderstanding or dispute with a neighbour ever arise, seek a calm and polite conversation with the person concerned. A friendly discussion usually resolves most situations quickly. If no agreement can be reached, ask your social support team for assistance.

Renting private accommodation

Once you hold an official residence permit (following a successful outcome to your asylum application), you have the right to look for and rent your own private flat on the open housing market.

Strict procedure to follow if the Jobcentre is paying the rent: If you are receiving financial support (basic income support) and the Jobcentre is to cover the costs of your new flat, you must strictly follow the procedure below. Never sign a tenancy agreement prematurely!

1. **Looking for a flat:** Look for a suitable flat that meets the Jobcentre's guidelines (reasonable size and rent).
2. **Submit a tenancy offer:** Ask the landlord for a written tenancy offer (or a draft tenancy agreement) and submit this to the Jobcentre **in advance** for review.
3. **Wait for approval:** The Jobcentre will check whether the costs for the flat are permissible and issue you with written confirmation (approval).
4. **Sign the tenancy agreement:** You may only sign the tenancy agreement in a legally valid manner once you have received the Jobcentre's written "approval"!

If you sign the tenancy agreement before receiving official approval, in most cases you will have to pay the rent and the deposit in full yourself, which can lead to significant debt.

Guide to Living in Bocholt: Information and Guidance

Are you looking for a flat or have you just moved house? The 'Wohnen' guide provides information on finding accommodation, tenancy agreements, registering with the local authorities, waste separation, the neighbourhood and important advisory services in Bocholt. The leaflet is aimed particularly at people in Bocholt who wish to find out more and get their bearings.

The tenancy deposit

Before you move in, the landlord usually requires a so-called security deposit. This serves as financial security for the landlord (usually equivalent to 2 to 3 months' basic rent). If you move out later and hand over the flat clean and undamaged, you will be refunded this money in full, including interest.

If you are receiving basic income support, the Jobcentre may, upon application, cover the security deposit as a loan. The money will then be deducted from your benefits in small monthly instalments.

Pets in the flat

If you wish to keep a dog or a cat in your private flat, you must obtain **the landlord's written consent in advance**. Keeping small pets (such as hamsters or birds) is generally permitted without permission, provided there are not too many of them.

Tips for finding a flat

You can find property listings in newspapers, directly from housing associations, or online on these major websites:

- Kleinanzeigen.de
- Immobilienscout24.de
- Immowelt.de

There are also plenty of listings on social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram. You can also post a message there yourself to let people know you're looking for a flat (a 'Gesuch'). Make sure you write the message in good German. If you're unsure, ask someone who speaks German very well for help.

How do I reply to an advert? You can ring the landlord, send an email or use the online form. Your chances of success will increase significantly if you prepare an **application pack** (including your CV, a copy of your ID and documents from the local authority). You can bring this pack with you to the viewing. If you are still living in council accommodation, your social worker will help you put this pack together.

Support after moving house: The neighbourhood offices

Once you have moved into your own private flat and signed the tenancy agreement, EWIBO GmbH's official responsibility for your social support will come to an end.

However, you will not be left to your own devices! There are so-called **neighbourhood offices** in the various districts of Bocholt. The local staff are there for you, to assist you with any questions about the neighbourhood, help you understand letters and promote social interaction within the district. Your social support team will let you know before you move which neighbourhood office is responsible for your new address. Further information can be found at bocholt.de/quartiere

Rules and obligations when moving house

A distinction is made between two types of relocation, each of which is subject to important legal rules:

Moving to another council-provided accommodation

For organisational reasons, the City of Bocholt may relocate you to another shared accommodation facility. In this case, you will receive written notification from the City or your social services team.

- **Important obligation following this:** You must go in person to **the Citizens' Office** in the town hall within **14 days** of the move to have your new address officially recorded on your identity documents (statutory obligation to register).

Moving into your own private flat

If you have found a flat yourself, please inform your social services team immediately so that the next administrative steps can be taken. If you are receiving financial assistance, the following also applies here: do not sign the tenancy agreement until the relevant authority has approved the costs in writing.

Checklist for moving day:

- **Thorough cleaning:** Leave your old room in the council accommodation completely clean and tidy.
- **Handover inspection:** A member of staff from EWIBO GmbH will inspect the room with you for any damage and draw up a handover report.
- **Returning keys:** Hand back all the keys you received for your old accommodation.
- **Changing your address at the town hall:** Within two weeks, visit the Citizens' Office (Residents' Registration Office) at the town hall to officially register your new address. Please bring the **landlord's confirmation** (landlord's certificate), signed by your landlord. Please book a personal appointment online in advance at bocholt.de/buergerbuero to change your registration.

Important - Make sure you actively notify others of your new address! After you move out, the social services department will forward your post to your new private address for a maximum of **four weeks**. After that, letters marked

"address unknown" will be returned to the senders. You are legally obliged to notify all relevant authorities of your new address **immediately and on your own initiative**:

- **Public authorities and offices:** Citizens' Advice Bureau (Residents' Registration Office), Jobcentre, Social Services Department (Social Welfare Office), Immigration Office, Jobcentre, Tax Office, Family Benefits Office (child benefit) and, where applicable, the Vehicle Registration Office (if you own a car).
- **For your asylum proceedings:** The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Please send your change of address by post to: *BAMF, Alleestr. 165, 44793 Bochum*, or by email to: *service(at)bamf.bund(dot)de*.
- **Children and family:** Your children's schools, nurseries and sports clubs.
- **Work:** Your employer (HR department).
- **Day-to-day life and contracts:** Your health insurance provider, your bank or savings bank, your GP and specialist doctors, insurance companies, mobile phone and internet providers, and the **broadcasting licence fee** (GEZ).



Changing your registered address and new contracts (detailed guide)

Moving into a private flat requires you to sort out your contracts yourself. As the terminology used in the German registration system is often complex, you'll find the most important steps clearly summarised here:

Step 1: The Citizens' Advice Bureau and the landlord's confirmation

You must re-register at the Residents' Registration Office within 14 days of actually moving in. To do this, you must have what is known as a **'landlord's confirmation'**. This is an official document that must be signed by your new landlord. You can download the document from bocholt.de/serviceverzeichnis/bescheinigung-wohnungsgeber. It confirms to the registration authority that you have actually moved into this address. Without this document, the Residents' Registration Office cannot register your new address in the system. It is best to book an appointment online in advance for your visit to the Citizens' Office at bocholt.de/buergerbuero.

Step 2: Nameplate on the letterbox

On the day you move in, attach a clearly legible nameplate bearing your surname to your new letterbox and doorbell. In Germany, postmen will only deliver letters if the name on the letterbox matches the address on the envelope exactly. If your name is missing, important post from government departments, courts or health insurance companies will be returned to the sender immediately, which could have significant legal consequences for you.

Step 3: Registering for electricity and gas yourself

In Germany, the costs for personal electricity consumption and often also for gas (heating/hot water) are **usually not** included in the service charges for your rent. This means that, immediately after moving in, you must register with an energy supplier (e.g. stadtwerker GmbH or another provider) yourself.

- On the day you collect the keys, check the current electricity and gas meter **readings** together with your landlord and make a note of the meter numbers.
- Using this information, you can take out your own supply contract. You will then pay a fixed monthly instalment to the energy company. At the end of the year, you will receive a final bill: if you have used less, you will receive a refund; if you have used more, you will need to pay the difference.

- *Tip: Compare energy prices and contract terms online to save money.*



Damage to the accommodation

Has something broken in your flat? Please follow these guidelines:

Minor damage (during office hours): Please report the damage to Social Services. You can do this from **Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 16:30**. The main telephone number is **02871 21765-0**.

Important: Please take a photo of the damage. Send the photo along with your message to Social Services.

What can you do yourself? You can and must repair or clean minor issues yourself. For example: replacing a burnt-out light bulb with a new one or cleaning the filter (lint trap) in the washing machine.

Who carries out major repairs? For all other repairs, the caretakers or companies sent by **EWIBO GmbH** are responsible. Do not pay any external companies yourself!

Emergencies outside office hours (at night and at weekends): In the event of a genuine emergency (such as a major burst water pipe or a heating failure in winter), call the caretakers' emergency number: 0152/32175081

Saving energy: Heating and ventilation

By using your heating and ventilation systems responsibly, you can help protect the environment and save a lot of money on your utility bills. The Consumer Advice Centre provides detailed information leaflets on this topic in many different languages at verbraucherzentrale.de/fluechtlingshilfe.

Heating Properly

The ideal room temperature: Try to keep living areas at a constant temperature of between 19 and 21 degrees Celsius. In the bedroom or kitchen, 16 to 18 degrees is usually sufficient for a comfortable environment.

Do not block radiators: Do not place large pieces of furniture (such as sofas or cupboards) directly in front of radiators, and do not hang long, heavy curtains over them. The warm air must be able to circulate freely throughout the room; otherwise, the heating system will use much more energy.

Adjust the heating when you're away: If you're leaving your home for several hours or days, turn the thermostats down to a lower setting (e.g. setting 1 or 2). **Never switch the heating off completely in winter!** If rooms cool down completely, it takes an enormous amount of energy to heat them up again. Furthermore, in severe frost, there is a risk that the water pipes in the walls will freeze and burst.

Proper Ventilation

Open windows fully: Open the windows fully two or three times a day for about 10 minutes at a time (**thorough airing**). The most effective method is what is known as 'cross-ventilation', whereby windows on opposite sides of the room are opened simultaneously to allow for a rapid exchange of air.

Avoid leaving windows permanently tilted: It is energy-inefficient to leave windows permanently in the tilt position during winter. This results in hardly any air exchange, but the walls around the window cool down significantly. This leads to high energy loss and promotes the growth of mould.

Ventilating in severe frost: When outside temperatures are below 0 degrees Celsius, a thorough 5-minute burst of ventilation is entirely sufficient.

Washing and drying laundry

If you dry your washing on a drying rack in your flat or room, you need to be particularly careful. As the washing dries, large amounts of water evaporate into the air. If this damp air is not vented out, it condenses on the cold external walls, leading to the growth of mould, which is harmful to your health. **Ventilate much more frequently and thoroughly whilst your washing is drying!** Make sure no water drips onto the floor to avoid damaging laminate or PVC flooring.

Waste sorting and waste disposal

In Germany, everyone is legally obliged to sort their waste carefully. Sorting waste correctly protects the environment and enables the recycling of raw materials.

Important: If bin bins are filled incorrectly (e.g. plastic in the paper bin), the refuse collection service will refuse to empty the bin. You will then have to laboriously sort the rubbish by hand.

What goes in which bin?

The blue bin (paper/cardboard): For clean paper waste.

- **Yes:** Newspapers, magazines, leaflets, books, exercise books, clean paper bags and cardboard boxes (please fold them flat before putting them in to save space).
- **No:** Soiled paper (e.g. used pizza boxes), tissues, nappies or plastic film.

The brown bin (organic waste / compost): For all organic, biodegradable waste.

- **Yes:** Kitchen waste (including leftover cooked meat and fish), fruit and vegetable peelings, coffee grounds (including filter paper), tea bags, cut flowers and garden waste.
- *Tip: Wrap damp kitchen waste in some old newspaper to prevent odours and it freezing solid in winter, and to keep vermin away in summer. Do not use plastic bags for organic waste!*

The yellow bin (recyclables / packaging): For empty packaging that is not made of paper or glass.

- **Yes:** Plastic bottles (without a deposit), yoghurt pots, plastic film, milk and juice cartons (Tetrapaks), aluminium foil, tin tins and metal lids.
- *Tip: The packaging must be completely empty. There's no need to rinse it with water before recycling.*

The black bin (residual waste): For all waste that cannot be recycled and does not contain any hazardous substances.

- **Yes:** Nappies, sanitary towels, tampons, used tissues, vacuum cleaner bags, broken crockery (ceramic/porcelain), leftover wallpaper, cooled-down ashes and cigarette ends.

Note: You can access waste sorting guides in various languages at egw.de/mehrsprachige-sortierhilfen/.

When is the rubbish collected?

The **Bocholt Waste Management and Services Company (ESB)** collects the various bins on fixed days of the week.

Please always place the relevant bin in a clearly visible position at the kerb on **the evening before the collection day**.

Once the bin has been emptied, please return it to its usual place on your property on the same day.

Tip - The ESB Waste App: We strongly recommend that you install the free "ESB Waste App" on your smartphone. The app automatically sends you a reminder via message about the collection dates for your street and includes a comprehensive waste glossary (Waste ABC), where you can look up any term. Further information and links to download the "ESB Waste App" can be found at bocholt.de/abfall-navi.

Contact details for enquiries about waste: Telephone: 02871 / 953-3434 | Email: info(at)esb.bocholt(dot)de

Where can I dispose of glass and old clothes?

Used glass (glass recycling bins): Empty bottles and jars (e.g. from jam or juice) must be sorted by colour (white glass, amber glass, green glass) and placed in the large public glass recycling bins located throughout the city. Blue or red glass belongs in the green glass bin. Metal lids may remain on the bottles.

Used clothing & shoes (clothing bins): You can place clean, well-preserved clothing, bed linen and shoes (please tie pairs together) into the public clothing collection bins. Please pack the items in sturdy, sealed bags before placing them in the container. Heavily soiled, damaged or wet clothing that can no longer be recycled should be disposed of as residual waste. You can find collection points and further information at bocholt.de/rathaus-und-buergerservice/fachbereiche-und-dienstleistungen/entsorgungs-und-servicebetrieb/altkleider.

What can I take to the recycling centre?

Large items, broken electrical appliances and hazardous waste (pollutants) must not be disposed of with household waste. They must be

taken to the central recycling centre.

Address: Bocholt Recycling Centre, Schaffeldstraße 74, 46395 Bocholt

Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday: 09:00 - 18:00 | Saturday: 09:00 - 13:00 *(closed on Mondays)*.

What is accepted here? Discarded furniture, mattresses, broken televisions, fridges, computers, batteries, energy-saving light bulbs, old paint, varnish, scrap metal and scrap wood. Most household quantities can be dropped off free of charge; however, charges apply for certain types of waste (e.g. construction rubble). You must organise transport to the recycling centre yourself.

How does the bulky waste collection service work?

Large household items that do not fit into a standard general waste bin even after being broken down (e.g. wardrobes, beds, mattresses, sofas, tables or large suitcases) are classified as **bulky waste**. Every household in Bocholt can arrange a **free** bulky waste **collection** twice per calendar year. Further information can be found at bocholt.de/sperrmuell.

You must book a collection date in advance online with ESB at bocholt.de/sperrmuell-anmelden. You will then be notified of a fixed collection date.

Please do not place your bulky waste on the pavement outside your house until the evening before the scheduled collection date.

The following are NOT considered bulky waste: car parts, tyres, ordinary household waste in bin bags, and building components (such as doors, windows, fences or washbasins). These items will be left behind by the refuse collection service.

Email for enquiries about bulky waste: sperrmuell(at)esb.bocholt(dot)de

Contact person

Frau Breumann

Soziale Leistungen und Wohnen

Soziales

Send e-mail

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