

Supporting the delivery of quality housing and homelessness advice



Supported by



Working with
Citizens Advice Bureaux **Independent advice agencies** **Local housing authorities**
to help prevent homelessness through the provision of timely, quality housing advice.'



'The DCLG Specialist Adviser team recognises the value of good quality housing advice provided by both voluntary and statutory agencies – NHAS provides a high quality approach to consultancy, training, information offering practical help and support to front line advisers across the sector.'

**Tracy Hendren,
Specialist Adviser
Team Leader**



Who are we?

The National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) is now well-established, with an impressive track record in providing free expert consultancy, training, and up-to-date information to Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx), voluntary advice agencies and local authority housing services in England. Our expertise is second to none, drawn from the housing and advice specialisms of partner organisations Shelter and Citizens Advice, and the service is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

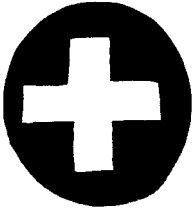
The NHAS is a catalyst for change, encouraging local authorities and agencies to work effectively together in partnership, and the professional resources and specialist support we offer will enable you to provide the most appropriate, accurate, and timely housing advice that helps to prevent people becoming homeless.

What can we do for you?

We are here to support you in your day-to-day work, providing access to the latest knowledge and information on housing policy and homelessness law. Our free advice and resources gives you the support required to help people in housing need as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The NHAS provides:

- telephone consultancy to give on the spot support when providing housing advice
- free high quality, flexible training on a range of housing and homelessness issues
- comprehensive and up-to-date information about housing and homelessness
- practical resources that promote best practice.



Consultancy and housing advice

Here to help you in your day-to-day work

Our team of experienced housing specialists are only a phone call away. However complicated or simple a case, we support you to deal with any housing enquiry or problem.

Our consultancy is free to all NHAS members and our lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Details of the Consultancy Line numbers can be found on the NHAS website.

Please note: CABx advisers also have online access to specialist housing support.

Five good reasons to call NHAS

- You get instant diagnosis of any housing problem over the phone.
- You can be sure our legal advice is accurate and up to date.
- We'll support you to explore all practical options open to your client.
- The advice you give your clients will be based on latest information, case law and policy.
- You'll receive written confirmation of the advice we provide.

We deal with any housing-related query, but most frequently with:

- homelessness applications and prevention
- possession proceedings
- housing in relation to persons from abroad
- landlord and tenant issues
- rent and mortgage arrears
- security of tenure
- relationship breakdown
- disrepair.

'I find the service immensely useful for clarifying housing points or for advising in a complicated case. It is reassuring to have access to the consultancy.'

CAB adviser, Citizens Advice Bureau, 2011

'The adviser was extremely helpful, he understood my query and gave me clear and detailed information, the emailed confirmation of advice was an excellent and unexpected bonus. I will recommend NHAS to all my colleagues.'

Local authority housing adviser, local authority, 2011



Helping you to help people in mortgage debt

NHAS Mortgage Debt Advice for local authorities

Our Mortgage Debt Advice service supports local authorities and registered providers to help homeowners in mortgage difficulty. Specialist advisers are on hand to:

- provide a full money advice and welfare benefits check
- explore 'hardship' options that the lender may offer
- negotiate with the lender to stop or delay possession action
- make an application to suspend and/or vary a court order
- look at other options open to a homeowner, including:
 - Mortgage Rescue Scheme (MRS)
 - Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI)
 - Assisted Voluntary Sales (AVS), and
 - securing alternative accommodation.

We can support you to work through your client's mortgage debt case, or you can refer the case to us and we will work directly with the household (with their agreement).

Supported Money Advice Scheme for CABx

This is a complementary project, designed to support CABx advisers working with homeowners in mortgage difficulty up to, and including, Mortgage Rescue. The scheme's provision includes money advice and income maximisation, negotiation with lenders, and advising on the range of options available to homeowners in order to try to prevent repossession. People needing this assistance can be referred to their local Citizens Advice Bureau.



Training you

Training from housing and homelessness experts

Our free training covers a range of housing issues and topics, designed to meet the needs of frontline advisers – from general advice, to more specialist level advice providers. Our programme of courses employs a blended learning approach, designed and developed in response to the latest developments in housing and homelessness.

'The extensive knowledge and passion of the trainer for his subject matter permeated the course, generated an excellent atmosphere for discussion whilst keeping it friendly enough to ask all levels of questions. There was excellent illustration of points using case law and examples, and questions were answered fully.'

Trainee on Housing Foundation course, 2011

'Excellent course, the complex subject matter was well-presented; the most informative course I have been on in my training.'

Trainee on Housing Foundation course, 2011

Five good reasons to attend NHAS training

- Our team of professional trainers have a wealth of knowledge and experience in housing and homelessness.
- You will gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to tackle housing issues and give quality housing advice.
- You get the opportunity to network with other advisers, learn of current best-practice initiatives, and keep up to date with legislation and policy.
- Your training package can be designed in a way that best suits your needs (ie face-to-face and/or e-learning courses).
- Like all NHAS services, our training is free.



Resources at your finger tips

For in-depth and up-to-date information

We are committed to keeping you up-to-date on housing and homelessness law and policy.

As an NHAS member:

- you receive regular email updates on NHAS services, housing and homelessness news, policy and case law
- you get our bi-monthly publication 'Housing matters' – a dedicated bulletin providing current housing and homelessness news, articles written by experienced housing practitioners, and information on key legal issues.
- you have access to online information and free downloads when visiting **nhas.org.uk**, including
 - a range of up-to-date factsheets on housing issues that will be useful in informing your clients
 - good practice guides and toolkits for housing and homelessness services
- you can also subscribe to the 'Adviser', another useful bi-monthly publication from Citizens Advice that covers housing, benefits, employment, consumer and money advice issues.



Making partnerships work effectively

Sharing best practice across the country

We work closely with DCLG and a wider team of specialist homelessness advisers to disseminate and support best practice in homelessness prevention, including the delivery of 'housing options' services.

NHAS has produced a range of toolkits and guides to help make partnership working clearer. In a climate where greater value for money and efficiencies are paramount in service delivery, we are using our expertise to support frontline agencies working more productively and efficiently with housing services to achieve the most effective outcomes for clients.

Contact us

If you have any questions about working with the NHAS, or for more information about our service, visit our website nhas.org.uk

NHAS is a Shelter and Citizens Advice service supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government.



Registered charity number 279057



Shelter

Registered charity number 263710