

Applying as homeless: local connection

You can apply to any council for help if you're homeless. If you don't have a local connection to the area, you could be referred to a different council for help.

What the council looks at when you ask for help

When you ask a council for help, it must accept a homeless application if it thinks you might be homeless or at risk of homelessness in the next 8 weeks.

If the council decides you are homeless and meet immigration and residence conditions, it can check if you have a connection to the local area.

What is a local connection?

You can have a local connection if you normally live in the area, have family there, work there, were in care in the area as a child, or for another special reason.

Living in the area: You have a local connection if you have lived in the area for 6 out of the last 12 months, or 3 out of the last 5 years. This includes if you rented or owned a home there, stayed with family or friends, lived in emergency housing or stayed in a refuge. It doesn't include if you were in prison or hospital in the area.

Family connections: You can have a local connection if you have a close family member who has lived in the area for at least 5 years. Close family normally means parents, children, brothers or sisters.

Work: If you work in the area this gives you a local connection. It can be full or part time work.

Time in care: You have a local connection if you're under 21 and were previously in care in the area for at least 2 years even if you were placed there by another council.

Other special reasons: The council could decide you have a local connection for a special reason. For example if you need to live there to get specialist health care.

Factsheet

If you don't have a local connection

If you don't have a local connection to the council you apply to, it can refer you to another area where you do have a connection. It can make a referral at an early or later stage of your homeless application.

The council can't refer you to an area where you or someone in your household would be at risk of violence or domestic abuse.

The first council must give you a letter to say it has referred you.. The other council decides whether to accept the referral.

If the first council thinks you might have a priority need, it must continue to give you emergency accommodation until the other council accepts the referral

If you disagree with a local connection referral

The council must give you a written decision if decides to refer you to another council's area. You might be able to challenge a referral, for example if you think you do have a connection to the area you applied to.

You have 21 days to ask for a review from when the council gives you the decision. Get help from a housing adviser.

You can get further advice from england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice, a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice.

If you have nowhere to sleep tonight, are at risk of harm or losing your home within the next 2 months, call Shelter Helpline on 0808 800 4444 for advice and information on your options. Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.

