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Services



NHAS help ex-offender with mental health issues and learning difficulties into emergency accommodation

A male client with learning difficulties and mental health problems, including paranoid schizophrenia, became street homeless after being released from prison when his halfway house accommodation came to an end.

[Read more](#)



Need support with a difficult debt case?

Call the Specialist Debt Advice Service helpline on 03300 580 404 or [submit an enquiry online](#).



Need help dealing with housing & welfare benefit enquiries?

Call us on 0300 330 0517 or [speak to an adviser via webchat](#).

Join us on social media



Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) or join our [Facebook group](#) where we post housing and homelessness news, details of one-off learning events, training opportunities and more.

Training Update

April webinars

NHAS offer a large programme of awareness and introductory level webinars, covering a range of housing law, homelessness, benefits and professional skills topics.

A large number of April sessions are available to book through our [training portal](#) now, with more to follow in the next few days.

[View the latest webinar schedule](#)

Bitesize e-learning

Our recently refreshed e-learning sessions can be completed, at a time to suit you, in around 30-60 minutes.

[View the 15 housing topics available](#)

NHAS training email updates

We send regular email updates to people registered on our [training portal](#).

If you don't yet have a login, send an email titled 'training portal login request', stating your full name, department/team, organisation name and full (usual office) address including postcode to nhastraining@shelter.org.uk.

Housing Matters



Monthly round-up

A look at what's been happening over the last month, including the further extension of the eviction ban, update on the EEA nationals and pre-settled status case, assisting homeless clients to register with a GP, and data on emergency accommodation during the pandemic.

[Read full article](#)

Factsheets

New and updated factsheets can be found under the following sections of the website.

Possession and eviction

New: Advice and representation at court

Updated: Section 21: notice periods

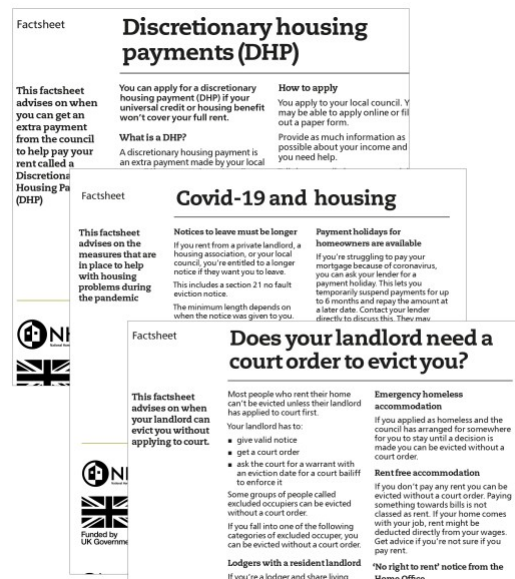
Updated: Does your landlord need a court order to evict you?

Covid-19

Updated: Covid-19 and housing

Rent, benefits and money

Updated: Discretionary housing payments



[View all factsheets](#)

[View all Housing Matters news and articles](#)



Focus on: mortgage arrears and repossessions

In March 2020 the Financial Conduct Authority issued initial guidance for mortgage lenders and

borrowers in relation to coronavirus. From this date, borrowers could ask for a payment deferral lasting up to six months. The deadline for deferral applications is 31 March 2021.

Current [guidance](#) states **all** payment deferrals should be completed by 31 July 2021, which means that deferrals agreed now can only last for four months.

Repossessions

From 1 April 2021, according to the current FCA guidance, repossessions – meaning enforcement of a possession order by issuing a warrant – can re-start. Currently this can only happen with the consent of the borrower. Any extensions to the repossession ban will be announced on the [FCA news](#) website.

Government issued regulations preventing the execution of a warrant or delivery of a notice of eviction before 31 May 2021 appear to be broad enough to apply to lenders and borrowers, with no exceptions for significant arrears. Get specialist advice if a mortgage lender applies for a warrant whilst the eviction ban is in force.

Arrears

According to data from [UK Finance](#), the number of borrowers in arrears has not increased significantly. In February 2021, 77,410 borrowers were in arrears by 2.5% or more of the balance of their loan. However, this figure does not include the 2.75 million payment deferrals, which the FCA has stated should not be treated as arrears.

The FCA has published tailored support guidance for borrowers who either:

- have had the full six months payment holiday
- did not qualify for a payment holiday
- did not want to apply for a payment holiday

The tailored support can take the form of:

- a payment break (which may be reported on a credit file)
- making reduced payments for a temporary period
- changing the mortgage term to make payments affordable

FCA mortgage guidance is to be read and implemented in accordance with the Mortgage Conduct of Business Rules [part 13](#) and [Principle 6](#) to pay due regard to the interests of their customers and treat them fairly.



COVID-19 round up

Housing

Protection for renters further extended to 31 May

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announce the ban on most evictions and the need to provide 6-month notice periods will be extended to 31 May.

Councils can house street homeless people with 'No Recourse to Public Funds'

High Court clarifies council powers to accommodate street homeless people who are ineligible for homelessness assistance due to a 'no recourse to public funds' condition.

Covid-19: Notices, health and safety and repairs guidance for landlords and tenants

Government guidance, updated 26 February, for private and social rented sectors on notices seeking possession and health and safety obligations, repairs and inspections.

Covid-19: Enforcing standards guidance for local authorities

Government guidance, updated 26 February, advises local authorities on enforcing standards in rented properties and supporting landlords and tenants during the pandemic.

Covid-19: Possession process guidance for private landlords

Government guide, updated 12 March, focusing on private landlords' rights and responsibilities when using the courts to take possession of their property.

Covid-19: Government housing support measures

Published 16 February, a House of Commons Library briefing on what action Government has taken to protect tenants and support landlords.

Health

Helping homeless clients access the Covid-19 vaccination

Information and resources from Groundswell on assisting homeless clients, who may otherwise be excluded from the vaccination rollout plan, to register with a GP.

JCVI advice on vaccinating homeless people

JCVI advice on offering the Covid-19 vaccination to homeless people and rough sleepers alongside delivery to priority group 6, where appropriate.

Homelessness and health during the pandemic

Healthy London Partnership collection of information and resources for managing the health needs and minimising transmission of Covid-19 within the homeless population.

Funding

Next Steps Accommodation Programme updated guidance and LA funding allocations

Overview provides details of what will be funded and how the fund will work and includes information on the allocations received by local authorities through NSAP.

News & updates

Housing

Rough sleeping and emergency accommodation September 2020 to January 2021

Data by local authority area on people sleeping rough and those placed in emergency and move on accommodation as part of the 'get everyone in' campaign.

Homelessness and rough sleeping data

Published 25 February, MHCLG collection of statistics on statutory homelessness and rough sleeping includes the rough sleeping snapshot in England for autumn 2020.

Ground-breaking approach to tackling homelessness in Oxfordshire

Homelessness charity Crisis to work with Oxfordshire councils, aiming to get homeless people housed as quickly as possible and support them to maintain their tenancies.

Mortgage and landlord possession: latest statistics

Ministry of Justice figures for mortgage and landlord possession action in the county courts of

England and Wales, covering October to December 2020.

Free housing possession mediation pilot scheme

The Society of Mediators are running a six-month pilot mediation scheme for landlords and tenants, aiming to resolve tenancy disputes and possession claims.

Empowering social housing residents

Government 'Make Things Right' campaign to help residents raise complaints about their landlord and resolve problems. Includes advice on using the Housing Ombudsman.

New laws added to Domestic Abuse Bill

Government announce a number of new amendments to the Domestic Abuse Bill, including providing greater protections for some victims post separation.

Hundreds of letting agents in London face fines of up to £30,000

Letting agents failing to comply with the law on protecting tenants' and landlords' money are being issued with fines of up to £30,000 by council trading standards officers.

Landlord ordered to pay back nearly three quarters of a million pounds

London landlord must pay back £739,263.58 made by illegally renting out overcrowded properties in Willesden.

Council left elderly woman without heating or hot water for nearly three years

Woking Council criticised by Ombudsman for capping the gas supply for nearly three years after 83-year-old refused workers access to her home.

Health

Housing, care and support for older people

Social Care Institute for Excellence report on the links between housing, care and support. Gives an overview of the key issues and explores some future options.

Funding

£125 million allocated to councils to support domestic abuse victims

Funding for new duty within the Domestic Abuse Bill will help ensure access to therapy, advocacy and counselling in safe accommodation, including refuges.

Free online events

Webinar: Covid-19 and students renting a room they can't use

Landmark Chambers recorded webinar covering the legal issues around rented accommodation in halls of residence and private tenancies.

Research, analysis & review

Housing

Crisis Homelessness Monitor now published

The ninth annual Homelessness Monitor provides an independent analysis of the homelessness impacts of recent economic and policy developments in the UK.

450,000 additional families fall behind on their housing payments

Resolution Foundation research examines the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on how families have managed their housing costs.

Housing First strategy: providing access to permanent housing

House of Commons Library briefing looking at the Housing First homelessness intervention strategy aimed at people with multiple and complex needs, particularly rough sleepers.

Housing First toolkit

MHCLG toolkit providing information and examples of good practice for those looking to implement Housing First locally or regionally.

Social housing stock summary

Latest summary of social housing stock in England owned and managed by all registered providers.

Social housing sales data

Collection of information on sales of social housing stock by local authorities and housing associations. Includes data on Right to Buy and Right to Acquire.

Voluntary Right to Buy for housing association tenants: background and progress

House of Commons Library briefing exploring the 'Right to Buy' for housing association tenants, including evaluation of the various pilots and the current situation.

Housing Ombudsman Insight on data and individual cases

Looks at cases across three northern regions in England, covering issues around repairs, complaint handling and tenant behaviour – as well as a range of outcomes.

Health

Supporting homeless families facing digital poverty

Health Visitors discuss supporting families living in temporary accommodation where Wi-Fi internet connection, and therefore access to necessary online services, is limited.

Five tips for effective joint working to support homeless people

The King's Fund shares some key lessons and practical tips on joint working across a range of services to support people who are homeless.

Shelter Legal

What's new on Shelter Legal

These changes affected Shelter Legal pages this month:

Covid-19

Covid-19: Protection for tenants

The period during which extended notices are required has been extended to 31 May 2021.

Covid-19: Protection for tenants

The High Court held that even where there are substantial rent arrears, the rent arrears exception to the eviction ban does not apply to a possession order made under s.21.

Covid-19: Homelessness

The High Court has held that during the coronavirus pandemic local authorities can lawfully accommodate people from abroad with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

Covid-19: Homelessness

Where the homeless applicant falls within the definition of a 'vulnerable person' in specified regulations the argument for priority need on the grounds of vulnerability is strengthened.

Homelessness

Accommodation during a review or appeal of a homelessness decision

Page updated with information on applicants who are ineligible for accommodation pending the outcome of a review or appeal of a homelessness decision.

Causal links in intentional homelessness

The Court of Appeal held that overcrowded accommodation could sometimes be considered settled and so could break the chain of causation.

When main housing duty is ended

Where a homeless applicant refused a final offer of accommodation, the LA could not end its duty unless it was satisfied that the actual property offered was available and suitable.

Local connection decisions in homelessness applications

The High Court held that a homeless applicant who had remained in interim accommodation after their licence to occupy had been terminated, had not acquired a local connection.

Support for rough sleepers

Rough sleepers must have demonstrated specific behaviours before the discretionary ground for refusal or cancellation of permission to stay in the UK can be used.

Benefits

Housing benefit calculation rates 2021 to 2022

Housing benefit calculation rates for 2021/22. The new figures come into effect in April. HB Circular A1/2021 provides further guidance.

Eligibility for universal credit

SSWP granted permission to appeal by the Supreme Court in Fratila & Anor v SSWP & Anor. The stay on implementing the Court of Appeal decision has been extended.

How universal credit is calculated

New Regulations provide for the payment of the transitional severe disability premium element for new claimants.

Support for mortgage interest

New regulations provide for the transfer of the Support for Mortgage Interest loan to another property and entitlement to SMI for some people fleeing domestic violence.

Miscellaneous

Restrictions on community care help for people from abroad

Adult EEA nationals are no longer excluded from social services support under the Care Act 2014 and Children Act 1989 on the grounds of nationality, though other grounds may apply.

Reactivation of possession proceedings from 20 September 2020

Page updated to include information about the pilot housing possession mediation service available from 1 February 2021 for landlords and tenants.

Banned tenant fees and penalties for landlords

Page renamed and updated following user feedback. It now includes information about enforcement, penalties and sanctions for charging banned tenant fees.

Local authority allocation schemes

The High Court held that a Council had acted in breach of its own allocations policy when considering bids for adapted properties.

Evidence in civil claims and housing cases

Page updated to include more information about evidence in civil court cases, including the formal requirements for presenting witness evidence to the court.



For the latest updates online, see [Shelter Legal's What's New](#)

Thank you for reading,
The team at NHAS

Who we are?

We provide free expert advice, training and support to professionals working in local authorities, voluntary advice agencies and public authorities in England.



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