



Preventing homelessness and improving housing through expert advice, training and support to those working at the frontline

Here to help local authorities and advice agencies on 0300 330 0517



[Consultancy Line](#)



[Housing Debt Casework](#)



[Training](#)

Training sessions for July onwards have been published and are now available on our website for you to view and book. This will soon include [training sessions for those working in 'statutory agencies/public authorities'](#) as defined by the Homelessness Reduction Act [code of guidance](#) (such as health teams, prison services, Job Centre plus and probation services). If you are unsure whether you fall under one of these groups and would like to access our training courses please email nhas@shelter.org.uk and we will explore what options are available to you. You can also pre-register interest in training using the same email address.

[Housing Matters June 2018](#)



This edition includes articles about:

- the change from Support for Mortgage Interest benefit to a loan, and the impact of this on dealing with clients in mortgage arrears
- the timing of various decisions relating to a homelessness application since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA)

The factsheet is an updated version of our 'Applying as homeless' factsheet, it's the first in a series of five looking at the homelessness 'tests'. **Other revised homelessness factsheets will be circulated separately as they become available**

NHAS Facebook group



"...finding this page a really useful resource!" Zoe T, Coventry Citizens Advice.

We have welcomed 51 new members to the NHAS closed Facebook group over the last month, where we share updates from the government, legislation changes, universal credit to name but a few. This platform also allows us to share last minute training places, seek views from members quickly and facilitates discussion on news and legislation changes. If you are on Facebook and would like to join, search for National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) on Facebook and click the link to join.

Innovative local practice

North Lincolnshire Council have introduced voluntary behaviour contracts as part of an optional pathway to avoid arbitrary behaviour contracts being imposed. To find out more about this piece of work, and read where they are now up to with their pre-possession panel process, log in to www.nhas.org.uk and click on the local practice icon.

Homelessness Reduction Act update

Homeless Reduction Act 2017 – duty to accommodate.

Since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) came into force on the 3rd April 2018 the council's duties on homeless prevention have increased. For homeless applicants the council have to intervene at an earlier stage, and draw up a personal housing plan. More information about this can be found in the links below. There is a long way to go before the council automatically have a duty to accommodate every homeless person that approaches them.

It is important that as housing advisers we are giving clear information to people who are homeless. The council should provide emergency accommodation to homeless people who are homeless, meet immigration and residence conditions and are in priority need. Please refer to applying as homeless factsheets <https://www.nhas.org.uk/factsheets> for full details.

Homeless applicants who fall outside this criterion should get support with homeless prevention but won't automatically be given emergency accommodation. Chapter three of the Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities: [Advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness](#), advises on homeless prevention duties in more detail.

Stats/Updates/etc

- [£30 million immediate support for rough sleepers](#) – James Brokenshire announces that 83 areas will share £30 million to boost the immediate support available to people living on the streets and help them into accommodation.
- [Homelessness \(End of Life Care\) Bill 2017-19](#) - due to have a 2nd reading, the Bill is to make provision about end of life care and support for homeless people with terminal illnesses, including through the provision of housing for such people; and for connected purposes.
- [Legal help: where to go and how to pay](#) - briefing paper provides information about where to seek legal help and advice.
- [Private rental market summary statistics](#) – April 2017 to March 2018
- [House prices \(UK\): Social Indicators page](#) - Trends in house prices and affordability in the UK
- [Average Earnings: Key Economic Indicators](#)
- [Unemployment - National: Key Economic Indicators](#)
- [People claiming unemployment benefits by constituency](#)

Recently published

- [Everybody In – How to end Homelessness in Great Britain, Crisis, June 2018](#)
- [Crisis 50th anniversary](#) - The Right Hon James Brokenshire MP gives the keynote speech at the Crisis Conference to mark the 50th year of the national charity for homeless people.
- [Mind the Gap: A Review of the Voluntary Sector Response to the Grenfell Tragedy](#) – published by Muslim Aid and other charities.
- [Funding for cladding removal on social housing](#) - MHCLG published a letter from the Secretary of State to local authority and housing association chief executives on the funding

for removal and replacement of ACM cladding systems on high-rise buildings in the social housing sector. The letter provides more detail on the Prime Minister's announcement on 16 May that government will fully fund the removal and replacement of dangerous cladding on buildings owned by councils and housing associations.

- [Home truths: housing for women in the criminal justice system](#) – Originally published in September 2016, updated version for June 2018.
- [Guidance notes for police officers on eviction and harassment](#) - produced by East Riding Council, available to view under Emergencies & Out of Hours section.

Welfare Benefits

- [Universal Credit roll-out: 2018-19](#)
- [Universal Credit: Written statement - HCWS745](#) made by Esther McVey (The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions). Some points of interest include changes to transitional arrangements and dates for transferring people from current benefits.
- **UC Claimants Costs for Temporary Accommodation will be covered by Housing Benefit not Housing Element of Universal Credit from 11 April 2018** - See regulation 3(12)(a) [Universal Credit \(Miscellaneous Amendments, Savings and Transitional Provision\) Regulations 2018](#) Universal credit claimants who are already in temporary accommodation will continue to get housing costs met through the housing element until their rent goes up or they no longer qualify for the housing element.
- **Govt has still not laid regulations to allow 18-21 year olds to claim UC housing costs** -the exclusion of 18-21s from UC housing costs **remains in place** until the regulations are laid. [Until then, some 18-21s can use these exemptions](#). No date for laying the regulations is available from the DWP.
- **Govt decides the '2 child' rule for UC/Child Tax Credit will not apply where parents are 'kinship carers** - The High Court ruled in a judicial review brought by CPAG ([SC v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions](#) 2018) that the 2 child rule was lawful. Following the judgment the Government decided to exempt who would otherwise be likely to be in local authority care, including children who are adopted or looked after by non-parental carers, also known as 'kinship' carers. [See written statement HCWS653](#).

Case Law

- [R on the application of McDonagh v London Borough of Enfield \[2018\] EWHC 1287 \(Admin\)](#)

Shelter Legal is now FREE. It is an essential online law resource for housing professionals. [Shelter Legal](#) guides you through housing law in clear, easy to understand language, explaining how legislation and case law work in practice. Fully referenced, Shelter Legal is the only free, comprehensive and up-to-date housing law resource available.

NHAS updates

The **HDC 2nd tier service** is here to support you when giving advice to the public on housing related debt. Call the NHAS consultancy line on 0300 330 0517, Monday to Friday 9-6.

NHAS training

[Log in](#) to view the latest webinar topics and dates including our **Introduction to the Homelessness Reduction Act webinar**.



Webchat Facility

Access to housing consultancy via Webchat is a popular way for members to get free advice. Webchat is accessed by going to www.nhas.org.uk and clicking on the 'live chat' button.

In April 2018...



219

people were trained on the Homelessness Reduction Act, vulnerability, relationship breakdown, domestic violence and homelessness prevention.



272

of all calls received by the consultancy line were from local citizens advice staff. 51 of these were for ongoing case support.



85%

of second tier advice given by the housing debt casework team was on the subject of welfare benefits.

If you'd like to be added to or removed from our distribution list, or have problems accessing any of the materials in the bulletin, please email nhas@shelter.org.uk.

Regards,
The NHAS Team
www.nhas.org.uk

NHAS is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. We support the prevention of homelessness by enabling frontline providers to deliver good quality housing and homelessness advice.