

Homelessness: young people 18+

This factsheet looks at the help you can get from your local council if you're homeless or at risk of homelessness and aged between 18 and 25.

You can apply to the council for help if you're:

- homeless
- likely to be homeless in the next 8 weeks.

How much help you will get depends on your circumstances.

The council must assess your housing and support needs and draw up a 'personal housing plan' to help keep your home or to find somewhere to live. It must help you for at least 8 weeks.

The council must find you emergency accommodation immediately if you are also in 'priority need'. You can stay there while you follow the steps in your plan.

But if you don't meet immigration and residence conditions, the council only has to provide general advice and information.

Are you homeless?

You are homeless if you have nowhere to live, or if where you are staying is unsafe/unsuitable, or if you have no legal right to stay there. You could be homeless if you're sofa surfing at friends, maybe because you are at risk of violence in your own home.

Who is in priority need

You are in priority need if you are:

- under 21 and were accommodated by social services for at least one day when you were 16 or 17
- pregnant
- responsible for a child who normally lives with you
- homeless because your home has been damaged by a fire or flood.

You might also be in priority need if you are 'vulnerable'. Being vulnerable broadly means you would be at significant risk of harm if you are homeless. This could be because, for example, you:

- are 21 or over and were in care
- have a mental or physical illness or disability
- are at particular risk of abuse or prostitution.

Many factors can contribute to being vulnerable, including having no family support. Get evidence about the effect being homeless will have on you from your doctor, psychiatrist, probation officer, or anyone else who knows you well. Get advice if the council doesn't accept that you are vulnerable.

Care leavers

Social services must help you after you leave care if they arranged your accommodation for at least 13 weeks between your 14th and 18th birthdays, including at least one day since you turned 16.

You can get support from social services, including help finding somewhere to live, until your 25th birthday or until your education or training ends if that is later.

Which council?

You can ask any council for help if you are homeless. It's unlawful for a council to turn you away, but if you don't have a 'local connection' you could be referred to your local council if it is safe to do so.

Examples of when you have a local connection with a council's area are if you:

- live, work or study there
- are under 21 and were in care there in the past

Negative decisions

You have the right to challenge a decision that goes against you. For example, if the council says you are not in priority need.

If you are on a low income you may qualify for [legal aid](#).

You will usually only have 21 days from when the council makes its decision to ask for a 'review' of that decision.

Further advice

You can get further advice from england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice, 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.



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Note
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