

Supporting the delivery of quality housing and homelessness advice





Who are we?

The National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) is well-established, with an impressive track record in providing free expert consultancy, training, and up-to-date information to Local Citizens Advice [LCAs], 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. 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. 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
- specialist housing debt casework service providing advice on housing cost arrears, welfare benefits and certain rent arrears cases
- comprehensive and up-to-date online information about housing and homelessness





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 6pm.

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 within 3 days

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

'The service was excellent - I was given invaluable advice and information which will significantly assist me in supporting my client, and I would not have been able to get the same information elsewhere.'

LA Adviser



NHAS Housing Debt Casework service

Helping you to help people in housing debt

Our specialist team supports local authorities, Local Citizens Advice and voluntary advice agency members to help people having difficulty paying their mortgage or rent, or facing possession proceedings. We can offer 2nd tier advice on cases or take a referral and work directly with the client. We are able to:

'We're really pleased with the service NHAS provides. Referrals are handled efficiently, giving our clients access to specialist caseworkers. We know how much of a difference this extra help can make in difficult cases.'

Voluntary Agency member

- advise on mortgage or rent arrears and related priority debts
- provide welfare benefits advice to maximise income and support housing affordability
- negotiate with lenders and landlords
- provide submissions to court and supporting representation where required
- confirm advice in writing for both 2nd tier enquiries and direct client cases



Training you

Training from housing and homelessness experts

Our programme of introductory/refresher level training courses is designed in response to the latest developments in housing and homelessness, and aimed at frontline housing options staff. Our team of professional trainers have a wealth of expertise and experience to help advisers gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to tackle housing issues and give quality housing advice. We provide face to face courses, webinars, briefings and bitesize as part of a blended approach to training.

'Client was homeless and had nowhere to stay for themselves and 2 year old. The council said they didn't have a duty as client not in genuine and effective employment. NHAS gave me case law to dispute this and where to find a template letter and the result was that the council provided interim accommodation.'

LCA Adviser

'I thought it was one of the most useful courses I have been on. The trainer had lots of relevant case law and I have come away with a really useful set of notes. (I) am really looking forward to the other courses in the series. Essential learning for any new adviser. Can't wait for a homeless client to come in – I am ready.'

Local Citizens Advice

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 on line webinars and bitesize products)
- 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 monthly electronic 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
 - Innovation & local practice pages providing solutions from NHAS members to help prevent homelessness
 - Access to Improving Outcomes for Young People content. This is for any professionals working with young homeless people

In addition, there are resources which you can pay for. These include:

- The '**Adviser**', another useful bi-monthly publication from Citizens Advice that covers housing, benefits, employment, consumer and money advice issues.
- **Shelter Legal** is an online law resource for people working in housing and homelessness



Making partnerships work effectively

Sharing best practice across the country

We work closely with the DCLG and other organisations 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. You will find the guides and toolkits in the members' area of the site when you log in.

We also run events throughout the year to update you on current case law and best practice to support NHAS members & opportunities to network. Look out for events on the NHAS website.

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

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