

Applying as homeless: local connection

This factsheet looks at the reasons why you might have a local connection with a council's area.

Most people apply for help from the council in the area where they live if they become homeless, but you can apply to any council you wish.

Reasons why you might want to apply to another council could be that you would get more support from family if you moved near them, or because you are likely to experience violence if you stay in your own area.

What the council looks at first

It is unlawful for a council to turn you away or tell you to apply to another council because you do not have a 'local connection' with its area. Get advice if this happens.

The council must only consider if you have a local connection with it after first deciding whether you are:

- homeless (second factsheet)
- eligible for assistance (third factsheet)
- in priority need (fourth factsheet)
- intentionally homeless (fifth factsheet).

What is a local connection?

To decide if you have a local connection, the council has to look at whether you (or anyone in your household) have:

Lived in the area

This means you have lived in the area for six out of the last 12 months, or three out of the last five years.

You must have chosen to live in the area to have a local connection, so things like being in prison or in hospital in an area will not count. However, it does count if you lived in the area after being posted there when you were in the armed forces.

Family in the area

This means your close family has lived in the area for at least five years, and you want to live near them. Close family is normally limited to parents, children, brothers or sisters.

Work in the area

Full- or part-time work (paid or unpaid) both count, but casual work does not.

Special reason to be in the area

A special reason could include if you need to live in the area to receive specialist health care, or because you had lived there for a long time in the past.

Duty owed by the council

If you are homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need, not intentionally homeless, and have a local connection with the council you have applied to, that council owes you the full housing duty. It must usually continue to house you until it finds you settled accommodation. For more information see the factsheet *Full duty: temporary accommodation*.

If you are homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need, not intentionally homeless, but do not have a local connection, the council must accommodate you until another council is ready to do it.

Even if you don't have a local connection with the council you have applied to, that council cannot refer you to another council if either:

- 1) you are at risk of violence in the area of a council where you do have a local connection, or
- 2) you do not have a local connection anywhere else.

Reviewing the decision

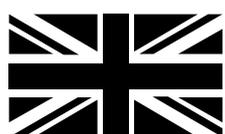
You have the right to request a review of any decision that goes against you or if you think you should not be referred to a different council.

You must make your request within 21 days of being notified of the decision. If your review does not succeed, get advice about whether you can appeal to the court.

Further advice

You can get further advice from Shelter's free* housing advice helpline (0808 800 4444), a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice office, or by visiting [shelter.org.uk/advice](https://www.shelter.org.uk/advice) or [adviceguide.org.uk](https://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

*Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.



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Note
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