

Applying as homeless

This factsheet looks at how you apply as homeless and the legal definition of homelessness.

To make a homeless application, go to the council's housing department and tell them you want to apply as homeless. You can make an application if you will be homeless within the next 28 days. You can apply to any council (see the sixth factsheet in this series).

If the office is closed there should be an emergency number you can ring. See the factsheet *Out-of-hours emergencies*.

You may have to wait for a long time before you are seen. If the council decides that it does not have to help you, it must put this in writing, giving reasons for its decision. Get legal advice if the council tries to turn you away without making proper inquiries into your situation.

Documents to take with you

The council will ask for identification. They will also want to see evidence relating to your situation. This could include:

- birth certificate(s) or passport(s) for everyone in your household
- details of your child benefit
- proof of pregnancy
- tenancy agreement
- eviction notice served by your landlord
- court possession papers
- a letter from anyone who has asked you to move out (eg your parents).
- letter from a medical professional about your physical or mental health.

Who can be treated as homeless

You may be legally homeless if you are:

- about to be evicted
- temporarily staying with friends or family
- in 'crisis accommodation' such as a nightshelter or women's refuge
- at risk of violence in your home
- living somewhere where you have no legal right to stay (eg a squat)
- living somewhere that you cannot afford to pay for without depriving yourself of basic essentials such as food or clothing
- forced to live apart from your family
- unable to park your mobile home or moor your houseboat
- sleeping rough

You could also be homeless if you are living in very overcrowded conditions, or in housing that affects your health, but the council is less likely to accept you as homeless in these circumstances.

Temporary accommodation

The council must provide you with emergency temporary accommodation straight away if it has reason to believe that you are or might be all of the following:

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

If the council agrees that it must provide emergency accommodation it will make further inquiries into your case while you are housed. The council will have a duty to provide you with longer term housing if its inquiries find that you are also:

- not intentionally homeless (fifth factsheet)
- a person with a local connection (sixth factsheet).

The council does not have to provide accommodation for everyone who is homeless, but they should give you advice on your housing options.

Reviewing the decision

You have the right to request a review of a decision that you are not homeless. Your request must be made within 21 days of being notified of the council's decision.

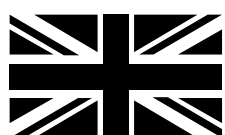
If your review does not succeed, get advice about whether you can appeal to the court.

If you are offered accommodation that you don't think is suitable, get advice on whether you can challenge it. For more information, see the factsheet: *Suitable accommodation: what does it mean?*

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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