

Tips on temporary accommodation

This factsheet gives you some advice about what to do when you are offered temporary accommodation because you are homeless.

Any temporary accommodation (TA) you are offered must be 'suitable' for you and your family - see the factsheet *Suitable accommodation: what does it mean?*

Find out how long you might be there

Ask the council how long you might have to stay. This may affect whether the accommodation is suitable or not. You could be moved a few times before you get a final offer of settled accommodation.

Don't reject an offer without advice

Don't reject an offer before getting advice first. If you feel pressured to accept a place you don't like, ask for more time to decide. You can move in and ask the council to reconsider ('review') its offer. You will get somewhere else to live if you are successful. If you refuse an offer, the council might not have to find you anywhere else.

Check the agreement

Read your tenancy or licence agreement and ask the council about anything you do not understand. Keep your copy safe.

Find out what you'll have to pay

Claim housing benefit or universal credit to help pay your rent. Ask if there are any charges that you will be responsible for.

Find out if you need to pay council tax. If so, contact the council where your temporary accommodation is located and ask if you qualify for any reduction or discount.

If you are responsible for utility bills - such as gas or water - tell the utility companies the date you moved in so you don't get charged for what the previous occupant used.

Find someone to look after pets

Arrange for a friend or family member to look after your pets, or speak to the council if this is not possible.

Ask about help with furniture

Not all temporary accommodation is furnished, so ask the council if you need help with furniture. The council may be able to arrange for your own furniture to be stored temporarily, but you can be charged for this.

Get an emergency contact number

Find out who you can contact if problems arise, such as things that need fixing or antisocial behaviour from other tenants. This may be the landlord, managing agent, or a contact person in the council.

Get to know the area

Ask the council where local facilities such as shops and doctors are, and about local transport links. If you have school-age children, you will need to decide if they will stay at their existing school, or arrange for them to move to a new one.

Deal with problems promptly

- report anything that needs repairing in the property, or any other problems you are having in the accommodation to your landlord or the council
- find out where the emergency taps are for turning off gas and water
- get advice quickly if you have problems with the accommodation, including paying the rent. If you move out, the council's duty to you will probably end
- report any change in your circumstances (eg a child leaves home or changes to your income) to the council and also to the benefits office.

Observe the rules

Keep to any rules set by the council or the landlord. Don't redecorate, alter or attempt any repair at the property without getting permission first.

Moving on

Check with the council what you need to do to stay on the council's waiting list. Ask how long you might have to wait for an offer of permanent accommodation.

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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