

# **Applying as homeless: priority need**

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The council might have a duty to house you if you are homeless and have a priority need.

## **Why priority need matters**

When you apply as homeless, the council must provide emergency housing if it thinks you might be homeless, meet immigration and residence conditions and have a priority need.

The council only has a long term duty to house you if it carries out inquiries and decides you have a priority need and are not homeless intentionally.

Some people automatically have a priority need. Other people have a priority need if the council decides they are vulnerable.

## **Who automatically has a priority need**

You automatically have a priority need if you:

- are pregnant or live with a pregnant woman
- have a dependent child who normally lives with you
- are homeless because of domestic abuse
- are aged 18, 19 or 20 and spent time in care when 16 or 17
- are homeless because of a fire, flooding or another emergency

16 and 17 year olds automatically have a priority need if they apply as homeless. Social services are normally responsible for someone under 18 who is homeless.

## **Who has a priority need because they are vulnerable**

You might have a priority need if the council decides you are vulnerable. Vulnerable means something about you makes you more at risk of harm if you were homeless than an ordinary person.

## Factsheet

You might have a priority need if you or someone you live with is vulnerable because of:

- old age
- a mental health condition
- being a disabled person

You might also be vulnerable because you:

- were in the armed forces
- spent time in care as a child
- have been in prison
- are fleeing violence

The council can consider if you or someone in the household are vulnerable for some other reason. For example, if you are a victim of human trafficking.

### **If the council decides you don't have a priority need**

The council must give you a written decision if it decides you don't have a priority need. You have 21 days to ask for a review. Get help from a housing adviser.

The council still needs to assess your housing needs and draw up a plan to help you keep your home or find a new one.

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You can get further advice from [england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice), a 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.

