

Applying as homeless

How to apply for homeless help from a local council.

Making a homeless application

You can apply for help from a local council if you are homeless. This is called a homeless application.

What help you get depends on your circumstances. The council must give some help to anyone who is homeless or at risk of homeless and meets immigration and residence conditions.

How to apply

You can apply in person, by phone or email. Keep trying if you can't get through as council homeless teams are often busy.

Go to the council office in person if you have nowhere to stay tonight. You don't need an appointment. Get there as early as you can. There should be an emergency number to call if the council office is closed.

Who can apply

You can apply if you are homeless or facing homelessness in the next eight weeks. This includes if you:

- have nowhere to stay tonight
- are sofa surfing with family or friends
- have been given notice to leave by your landlord
- are at risk of domestic abuse

You might be legally homeless if you cannot afford to pay your rent or your home is unsafe to live in.

Get advice if the council turns you away before you can explain your situation.

Factsheet

What to take with you

It can help if you bring documents such as:

- proof of ID, for example your passport
- an eviction notice or letter saying you have to leave
- a letter from your doctor about any health conditions
- a letter confirming you are pregnant

What the council must do

The council must assess your housing needs and draw up a personal housing plan. This plan sets out the steps that you and the council should take to help you keep your home or find a new one.

The council must arrange emergency housing immediately it thinks you might be homeless, meet immigration and residence conditions and have a priority need. Priority need includes if you have children, are pregnant, or are vulnerable, for example because of a disability.

If the council won't help

You can ask the council to review its decision if it says it doesn't have a duty to help you. Get advice from a housing adviser or solicitor.

You can get further advice from 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.

