

Interim and Temporary Accommodation

Introduction

If you apply to the council as homeless the type of help you will get depends on your circumstances.

If you are threatened with homelessness within 56 days the council will have a “prevention duty” to you.

The council must assess your housing and support needs and it will then draw up a personalised housing plan. This plan sets out the reasonable steps that you and the council should take to prevent you from becoming homeless or to help you to try to find alternative accommodation.

If you are already homeless, or become homeless despite any actions taken during the prevention stage, the council will then owe you a “relief duty”. The reasonable steps will then be focused on trying to help you to find alternative accommodation.

Council will be working with you to help resolve your housing problem and we will explore the options that are appropriate to you and your household. However due to the severe shortage of social housing you will most likely be offered help to find private rented accommodation rather than be offered social housing. Please do not expect that a homeless application will lead to an offer of temporary or social housing. The council is able to end its homeless duty to you with an offer of private rented accommodation and if you refuse or do not cooperate with looking for private rented accommodation the help the council will offer can be limited.

Interim emergency accommodation

At the relief stage if the council has reason to believe you are an eligible applicant who is homeless and has a priority need we may have a duty to provide you with interim emergency accommodation.

If we have a duty to provide interim emergency accommodation this will be provided when there are no other suitable options available. We will then still be working with you to find private rented accommodation.

We will also be carrying out enquiries and assessing your homelessness application to see what duty, if any, may be owed to you under the homelessness legislation.

At the relief stage if you do not have a local connection with us, and it is safe to do so, we will now refer you to a Council where you do have a connection.

Suitability of accommodation

Any accommodation offered must be suitable for you and anyone who normally lives with you. Suitability is outlined in the homeless legislation and before you are offered accommodation we will carry out a suitability assessment.

What you might be offered

We will match you up with the interim emergency accommodation that is available at the time you are homeless that best suits your needs.

This is most likely to be nightly paid emergency accommodation, which is located out of borough in areas such as Thornton Heath, Croydon, Wandsworth or Horley. Nightly paid emergency accommodation could be a room in a hotel, a room in shared accommodation or a self-contained unit.

If you're pregnant or have children, the council must not house you in bed and breakfast (B&B) or hotel accommodation with shared facilities for longer than six weeks. If this applies to you and you are still likely to be in interim emergency accommodation after six weeks, we would look to move you to other interim emergency accommodation which has self-contained facilities.

We normally provide nightly paid emergency accommodation out of the borough because we have no vacancies in any of the interim or temporary accommodation within borough.

How long will I stay there

Initially you can stay while we make our enquiries, provided you pay your rent and comply with the licence agreement.

It is difficult to predict how long you may remain in this type of accommodation. It will depend on whether we can help you find other accommodation and the decision reached on your homelessness application.

If you are not owed the main duty, either because you are not eligible, not in a priority need category or because you became homeless intentionally, you will be required to leave. We will give you reasonable notice and advice and assistance to secure other accommodation of your own.

If your application is accepted, you can continue to stay in the emergency accommodation either until a private rented property is found or alternative temporary or supportive accommodation is available. If you refuse an offer of suitable alternative accommodation (including private rented) then the council will discharge its duty to you and you will be asked to leave.

It is likely that you will be in emergency accommodation for a significant number of weeks or months before being offered other accommodation.

The more you can do to find your own private rented accommodation the quicker you will get house and the more choice you will have over the area, size and type of accommodation offered.

Temporary Accommodation

If the council accepts a main homeless duty to you, the council must provide longer term temporary accommodation while you wait for an offer of more settled housing.

Temporary Accommodation could be one of a range of things. We could:

- continue to provide emergency nightly paid accommodation
- assist you to find private rented accommodation and in some cases we may also be able to help with a rent deposit or bond
- nominate you to a housing association for temporary accommodation
- refer you to supported accommodation
- arrange short term accommodation in a refuge

Any temporary accommodation offered may be a room in a hostel, a studio flat or self-contained accommodation. However, it is likely to be a bedroom size smaller than you would normally be entitled to. For example if you have a 2 bedroom need you may be offered a studio or a 1 bed flat.

You are likely to be in temporary accommodation for many years before being made an offer of settled accommodation. Even while you are in temporary accommodation we would be trying to help you find private rented accommodation.

Settled accommodation

The main homeless duty usually ends because the council makes you an offer of settled housing.

Settled housing does not mean an offer of social housing. It is most likely to be a 12 month fixed term assured shorthold tenancy with a private landlord or a housing association tenancy. Please do not expect that a homeless application will lead to an offer of social housing.

The duty can also end if you refuse a suitable offer of accommodation (including private rented) or if you get evicted, or if you stop being eligible.

If you refuse a suitable offer of accommodation you will be served notice to leave your interim or temporary accommodation.