

(i) Are you eligible for assistance?

Most people are eligible for assistance. However, some people from abroad are not eligible. You are probably not eligible for assistance if:

- you are an asylum seeker. Most asylum seekers get temporary housing arranged by the UK Border Agency, a part of the Home Office;
- you are from abroad and have limited rights to remain in the UK, or you have stayed longer than the time you were allowed;
- you are from abroad and you are not entitled to claim 'public funds';
- you are in the UK illegally (the council can investigate your immigration status and inform the Home Office if it thinks you came to the UK illegally).

If you are unsure of your immigration status, you may need to get help from an immigration adviser.

(ii) Are you legally homeless?

The legal definition of 'homelessness' covers more than being out on the streets. You will be considered homeless if:

- you have nowhere to live in the UK or anywhere else in the world;
- you cannot stay in your home because of violence or threats of violence;
- you have nowhere you can live together with your family or anyone else who lives or could reasonably be expected to live with you, for example your children, partner or carer;
- you do not have permission to stay where you are, for example if you are a squatter;
- you have been locked out of your home and are not allowed back;
- your home is a boat, mobile home or caravan and there is nowhere you are allowed to put it;
- you have somewhere to live but it is not reasonable for you to stay there. This may be due to serious overcrowding, very bad conditions affecting your health, or because you cannot afford your housing costs.

You can also apply to the council if you are likely to become homeless within 28 days. This includes circumstances where:

- you have been taken to court by your landlord and the court has said you must leave within 28 days;

- you have been living with friends or relatives and they've asked you to leave within 28 days.

(iii) Are you in priority need?

You are in priority need if you:

- or someone you live with, is pregnant;
- are responsible for dependent children;
- are homeless as a result of flood, fire or other disaster;
- are a 'vulnerable' person;
- are aged 16 or 17, unless social services has a responsibility for you;
- are aged 18–20 and were 'looked after' by social services (even for one day) when you were aged 16 or 17 (unless you are a student in full-time higher or further education whose accommodation is not available during the holidays, in which case social services has to help you until you are 24).

(iv) Are you intentionally homeless?

The council will look into why you became homeless. If we find that becoming homeless was your fault, it can decide you made yourself intentionally homeless.

We may decide this if we believe that:

- you chose to leave a home you could have stayed in;
- you did not pay the rent or mortgage when you could have afforded to;
- you arranged to be made homeless to take advantage of the system.

(v) Have you a local connection?

Generally speaking most people will apply for help from the local council in the area they live if they become homeless. However, you can apply to any council you wish. It is unlawful for a council to turn you away or tell you to apply to another council because you do not have a local connection with their area.

If the council decides you are homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless, it can then check to see if you have a local connection in the area.