

# Homelessness: young people 18+

**This factsheet looks at the help you might get from your local council if you're a homeless young person aged between 18 and 25.**

The council's homelessness department only has to find you somewhere to stay if you are:

- homeless
- eligible for assistance, and
- in priority need.

See the series of factsheets: *Applying as homeless* for details about these 'tests'. If the council decides you don't meet these tests, it must put its decision in writing. You have the right to challenge a negative decision.

## Are you homeless?

You are homeless if you have nowhere to live, or if it is not reasonable to stay where you are - maybe because you are at risk of violence. If the council thinks it is your own fault that you are homeless (it will say it believes you are 'intentionally homeless') this will reduce the help it must give you. Get advice if you are told this applies to you.

## Are you eligible for help?

This depends on your nationality and immigration status. Most British nationals are eligible. See the factsheet *Applying as homeless: people from abroad*. Get advice if the council says you are not eligible.

## Are you in priority need?

If you are a young person aged 18 or over, you are in priority need if you are:

- under 21 and were accommodated by social services for at least one day when aged 16 or 17
- pregnant
- responsible for a child
- homeless because your home has been damaged by a disaster like a fire or flood.

Also, you *might* be in priority need if you are 'vulnerable' because for example you:

- are 21 or over and were in care
- have a mental or physical illness or disability
- have any other problem, such as being at risk of abuse or prostitution.

Being 'vulnerable' broadly means that your problems are especially severe.

## Evidence that you are 'vulnerable'

Many factors can contribute to being vulnerable, including having no family to help you. The council should make proper inquiries to decide if you are 'vulnerable'. Get evidence about the effect being homeless is having on you from your doctor, psychiatrist, probation officer, or anyone else who knows you well. Get advice if the council doesn't accept that you are vulnerable.

## Care leavers

If social services have arranged your accommodation (this includes being with foster carers) for at least 13 weeks between your 14th and 18th birthday, including at least one day since you turned 16, they must help you after you leave care. Support, including help finding somewhere to live, should continue until your 21st birthday, or until any education or training that social services has agreed to help you with ends.

## Which council?

You can go to any council for help if you are homeless. It's unlawful for a council to turn you away, but unless you have a 'connection' with it (eg you live, work or study there) you could later be referred back to your local council as long as it is safe to do so.

Even if the council decides it does not have to find you somewhere to live, it must still give you advice and information to help you.

## Finding the right support

The following organisations that specialise in helping young people may be able to help you:

**Centrepunkt:** 0808 800 0661

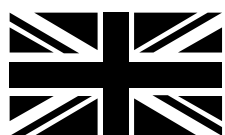
**Coram Voice:** 0808 800 5792

**Depaul Nightstop UK:** 0207 939 1235

## 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](http://shelter.org.uk/advice) or [adviceguide.org.uk](http://adviceguide.org.uk)

\*Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.



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# Shelter

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Registered charity number 279057.

**Note**  
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