

Homeless?

Get Your Foot in the Door...



- **Are you homeless?**
- **Are you 16 or 17 years old?**

If you can answer **YES** to both questions, then your local Council **MUST** provide temporary housing and assess your housing needs. If they don't, they may be breaking the law.

They also **HAVE** to help you if you left care after your 16th birthday, and you are still under 21 years old.

Get advice – know your rights – take action!

Know your rights

You don't have to be sleeping rough to be homeless.

The council must help all 16 or 17 year olds who are homeless, and anyone who left care after their 16th birthday and is still under 21 years old.

Your local Council **MUST** assess your need for housing and they **MUST** give you a decision in writing.

You should be entitled to **temporary housing** while the Council deals with your application. If the Council won't help, make them give you a written decision explaining why they won't help.

Did you leave care after your 16th birthday, and are you under 18 years old, or studying full time and under 24 years old? Then Social Services has a duty to help you and provide housing if needed.

FACT!!



Sam, 17

What's your problem?

"I've left home, and there's no way I'd go back now. My Dad was always yelling at me, but then he started hitting me and I couldn't take it any more. I know if I go back, sooner or later he'll start hitting me again and it will just get worse. I stayed with friends, sleeping on their floors, but then I ran out of people I could stay with. I spoke to the Council, but they told me they can't do anything because I'm not in priority need."

"Priority need"

If you are in "priority need" the council must provide housing for you. Nearly all homeless 16 to 17 year olds will automatically be in priority need.

How did Sam sort it out?



"I went to Connexions and they told me to call Community Legal Advice. They told me about a housing advice centre near me. The local housing adviser really helped me. He told me that the Council had no right to refuse to help me. He said I am in priority need because I'm under 18 and homeless. He phoned the Council and they agreed to see me again the same day. Finally, the Council got me into emergency housing. After a few days, I got a space in supported housing. Now I'm starting to get my life back together."

Take action

Get advice. The law on homelessness is not easy to understand.

When you talk to someone, always write down *who* saw you, *when* you saw them, *what* they agreed to do, and *when* they agreed to do it by. You might need proof of what has been agreed later on.

If you're not happy with the council's decision, you've got a right to appeal. If you're not happy with the way you've been treated, you can complain. You do have rights – get advice.

Don't delay, do it today!

Getting help

There are services near you that can help with your housing problem.

For details of your nearest advice centre call **Community Legal Advice on 0845 345 4345**

Useful numbers

- **Shelterline – 0808 800 4444**
www.shelter.org.uk
Free 24 hour service for anyone with housing problems. Their website is also very helpful.
- **Community Legal Advice**
0845 345 4345
www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk
Community Legal Advice is a free and confidential advice service paid for by legal aid. If you live on benefits or a low income, call 0845 345 4345 for independent advice about debt, education, benefits and tax credits, employment and housing problems. They can also help anybody find their local independent advice services and CABs.
- **ChildLine – 0800 1111**
ChildLine helpline for children living away from home: 0800 88 4444
- **Message Home Helpline – 0800 700 740**
Free and confidential service to help you leave a message for your family.
- **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline – 0808 800 5000**
Confidential advice for young people running away from home.

advice
services
alliance

Enfield Law Centre



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The law in Scotland and Northern Ireland is significantly different.

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