



# Are you homeless or about to become homeless?



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If you have become homeless or are sleeping rough, please visit our [Emergency Accommodation and Night Shelters](#) page.

If you are an organisation and have identified someone who may be at risk of homelessness, please refer them to us. See [Duty to Refer](#) for more information.

If you're at risk of becoming homeless, you should contact us as soon as possible so that we can work with you to try and prevent this from happening.

The council can help if:

- you have been asked to leave your accommodation by your family or friends you have been staying with
- you have been served notice by your landlord
- you cannot afford your rent or your accommodation is in disrepair
- you are already homeless and you have nowhere to go.

Please refer yourself to the Housing Options team by completing the [Housing Options referral form](#) or you contact us to arrange an appointment for an initial assessment – 020 8207 2277.

If you are referring somebody else other than yourself, please visit our [Duty to Refer](#) page.

## Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

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Since April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act has changed the homelessness duties for all Local Authorities in England.

The new legislation means that all applicants who are eligible and about to become homeless will be entitled to receive advice and assistance in order to prevent them from becoming homeless.

The Act changes the way the Council address and resolve the issues around homelessness by introducing two new duties in addition to the main housing duty. These two duties are:

## **Duty to Prevent Homelessness**

We will provide advice and assistance to people who are about to become homeless within 56 days. If you are eligible for assistance and at risk of losing your home, we will try to prevent your homelessness by working with you to, either, help you remain in your current accommodation or help you find somewhere else suitable for you and your household. Under the Law and as part of our prevention duty, all applicants will be required to work and engage with the Council as we take steps to prevent their homelessness together.

## **Duty to Relieve Homelessness**

If you are already homeless, and considered eligible, or if we cannot prevent your eviction from your current accommodation, and if you are considered to be a 'vulnerable person', or a person considered to in "Priority Need" the Council can offer you emergency accommodation while we continue to work with you to find alternative accommodation that is suitable for you and your household. Under the new Act and as part of our effort to find you alternative accommodation, all applicants will be required to work and engage with the Council as we take steps to end their homelessness.

## **The Main Housing Duty**

If we have been unsuccessful in securing alternative suitable accommodation after 56 days, this duty will come to an end and Hertsmere Borough Council will make a decision as to whether or not a main housing duty will be owed to you. If, after 56 days, it is assessed that you are homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and you did not become homeless intentionally, the Council will be under a duty to find you a long term alternative, suitable accommodation. An offer of suitable accommodation can be in the private sector or social housing and could be outside of Hertsmere Borough Council.

## **Showing us you are eligible and homeless or at risk of homelessness.**

You will need to be able to prove that you are  [eligible for help](#) and are actually  [homeless or at risk of becoming homeless](#). That may include a section 21 notice or a letter confirming your circumstances. If you are already homeless and do not have a connection to Hertsmere, we may refer your application to another authority.

## **Getting an initial assessment and creating your Personal Housing Plan**

Once we have confirmed your eligibility and circumstances, you will

meet with a Triage Officer for an initial assessment and to discuss your options. If we are able to assist, you will then be allocated a caseworker and invited to create your own Personal Housing Plan on how you will address your housing problems. The most likely option will be a home in the private rented sector.

## Strategies and action plans

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### Housing strategies and action plans

For further information please see our [Homelessness FAQ's](#) page or contact the Housing Options team on 020 8207 2277.

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