



**Hart District Council**

**Housing Services**

# **Homelessness guide for care leavers**

Date Reviewed: October 2019

[www.hart.gov.uk](http://www.hart.gov.uk)

## **ABOUT THIS LEAFLET**

This leaflet is designed to help you understand how Hart District Council can help you if you are facing homelessness or are homeless as a care leaver. This leaflet will explain to you the change in law that took place in April 2018.

The aim of the council is to prevent you from becoming homeless and if you are homeless to assist you to find suitable accommodation. The council will do this under two duties, the prevention and relief duty.

### **If you are likely to become homeless**

If you are likely to become homeless, the council has a prevention duty which arises if the council is satisfied that you are eligible and at risk of losing your accommodation within 56 days.

In these circumstances, housing advice should be sought at the earliest opportunity to allow you time to work with the council to prevent your homelessness.

The prevention duty comes to an end in a number of ways, but mainly if you have suitable accommodation open to you for at least six months. If you are unable to prevent your homelessness, you will be owed the relief duty.

## **If you are homeless**

If you are homeless the council has a relief duty which arises if the council is satisfied that you are eligible for assistance and homeless. Again we would advise that housing advice should be sought at the earliest opportunity to allow you time to work with the council to help resolve your homelessness.

The relief duty lasts for up to 56 days and it is not always the council's duty to provide you with accommodation. However, the council will give you advice to help you to secure accommodation.

This duty comes to an end in a number of ways, but mainly if you have suitable accommodation open to you for at least six months.

## **What happens when you approach the council?**

The council will carry out an assessment with you if you are eligible for assistance, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Your Homeless Prevention Officer will create a personalised housing plan with you and discuss your support needs to understand your specific circumstances.

It is important to establish why you are at risk of homelessness or homeless and how you can resolve your housing situation. Your personalised housing plan will record the agreed steps you and the council will take to assist you to prevent your homelessness or to find suitable accommodation.

If you do not agree with the actions within your personalised housing plan, the council will put in writing why the actions could not be agreed and what steps the council thinks would be reasonable for you to take.

If the council considers that you are deliberately and unreasonably refusing to co-operate with the actions in your personalised housing plan, you will be issued a notice which ends the council's duties.

## **Enquiries the council will make**

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 states how the council must deal with homelessness and for whom the council must find temporary accommodation. Unfortunately, this is not for everyone who is homeless.

If you meet the criteria, the council will ensure you have temporary accommodation. This is most likely to be private sector accommodation. The council may make enquiries into your eligibility for assistance; whether you are homeless or threatened with homelessness; whether you are granted priority need status and whether you are homeless intentionally.

## **Priority need**

The law is very specific. Being without a home is not sufficient to grant you priority need status. If you are aged 18 to 20 and a former 'relevant child' under the Children's Act 2000, you will automatically be granted priority need status. If you are aged 21 or above and vulnerable as a result of having been looked after,

accommodated or fostered, then the council must investigate and decide if you are granted priority need status.

## **Intentionally homeless**

You would be seen as intentionally homeless if you are, as a result of something you have done or failed to do, responsible for your own homelessness. If you are found to be intentionally homeless, the council can only provide temporary accommodation for a reasonable period, to give you time to find your own accommodation.

## **Local connection**

The council will also investigate whether you have a local connection to the district. In order to have a local connection to the district you must:

- Normally reside within the Hart District Council district boundaries and have done so for six of the last 12 months or three of the last five years or,
- Have full-time, permanent employment within the district boundaries or,
- Have close family members resident in the district or,
- If special circumstances exist.

As a care leaver, you will have a local connection with every housing authority district located within the county council area of the Children's Services authority. If you normally live in a different area to that of the local authority that owes you leaving care duties, and you have done for at least two years, you will also have a local connection to that particular borough.

If you do not have a local connection with the Hart District Council, but do with another area, you may be referred there.

## **Further advice**

There are a number of accommodation providers specifically for young people, including the following:

- Step by Step Aldershot (01252 346105)
- Supported Lodgings Hampshire (02380 616660)

If you require a referral to Step by Step or Supported Lodgings, this can be completed by your Personal Advisor within the Care Leaver Team at Children's Services, alternatively this can be completed by your Engagement and Support Officer at Hart.

## **Local support agencies**

- Hampshire County Council Care Leaver Team (01256 776187)
- Step-by-Step Aldershot (01252 346105)

## **Contact details**

[www.hart.gov.uk](http://www.hart.gov.uk)

Please contact Housing Services by calling 01252 774420 or emailing [housing@hart.gov](mailto:housing@hart.gov)

Contact Details:

Address: Hart District Council,  
Civic Offices, Harlington Way,  
Fleet, Hampshire,  
GU51 4AE

Tel: 01252 774420

Fax: 01252 626886

Email: [housing.services@hart.gov.uk](mailto:housing.services@hart.gov.uk)

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