

**This factsheet looks at what to do if you are homeless in Wales and the help that your local council might have to give you.**

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Finding yourself homeless can be a frightening experience.

If you are homeless, or about to become homeless in the next 56 days, you should contact your [local council](#) as soon as possible and ask to make a 'homelessness application'.

As well as knowing what help is available in your area, the council might have to give you help to stop you from becoming homeless, or help to find you somewhere to stay.

If the council think you might be 'homeless', 'eligible for assistance' and in 'priority need', they must make sure you have somewhere to stay whilst they look into your situation and decide what other help to give you.

## Am I homeless?

The law says that you should be considered homeless if:

- You have nowhere to live in the UK or the rest of the world
- You can't stay in your home because of violence or threats of violence

- You have nowhere where you can live with your family
- You don't have permission to stay where you are
- You've been locked out of your home and can't get back in
- Your home is a boat or a caravan and you have nowhere to place it
- You have somewhere to live but it is not reasonable for you to stay there – this could be because of serious overcrowding, really bad conditions or because you can't afford your housing costs.

## Am I eligible for assistance?

Most people are eligible for assistance, but some people from abroad are not, such as asylum seekers, those without leave to remain the UK, people who aren't entitled to 'public funds' and illegal immigrants. If you are from an European Union or European Economic Area country and are working or self-employed in the UK you should be eligible. The rules can be complicated, so if in doubt get advice.

[sheltercymru.org.uk](http://sheltercymru.org.uk)

## Am I in priority need?

The council only has to secure accommodation for people who are in 'priority need', and only once they have already unsuccessfully tried to prevent your homelessness or help you find other accommodation.

In most cases, you will be in priority need if one of the people included in your application falls into one of these categories:

- Pregnant women
- People responsible for dependent children
- People vulnerable because of a special reason, for example, old age, physical or mental illness or disability
- People made homeless by fire, flood or other disaster
- Victims of domestic abuse
- Young people aged 16 or 17
- People aged 18-20 who are at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation
- People aged 18-20 who have spent some time in care
- Armed Forces personnel who have been homeless since leaving the forces
- People who have a local connection with the area and are vulnerable as a result of being in prison

## What is a local connection?

When the council look into your situation they may want to decide if you have a 'local connection' with the area. If you do not have

a connection then they may decide to refer you to another area.

You have a local connection with an area if you or someone in your household:

- Has a job in the area
- Lives, or has lived in an area for at least 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years
- Has a close relative (such as a brother or sister, parent or adult child) who has lived in the area for at least 5 years
- Needs to live in the area for a special reason, for example to receive specialist healthcare.

## Am I intentionally homeless?

When deciding whether it must provide you with somewhere to live, the council can decide to consider if you are 'intentionally homeless'. The council might decide you are intentionally homeless if it finds that becoming homeless was your own fault, for example:

- 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 become homeless on purpose to get accommodation from the council.

[sheltercymru.org.uk](http://sheltercymru.org.uk)

## **I don't agree with the council's decision**

The council should write to you and tell you its decision and the reasons for it. If you don't agree, then you should get advice as soon as possible. In some cases you can ask the council to review their decisions but you have to ask within 21 days of being notified in writing of the decision.

## **The council have found me somewhere to stay but it is not suitable**

If you don't think the accommodation provided by the council is suitable for you or anyone in your household you should tell the council why. Don't refuse the offer without getting advice first because the council may not have to offer you anything else.

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Information contained in this factsheet is correct at the time of publication. Please check details before use.

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### **Further advice**

send us an email at

<https://sheltercymru.org.uk/email-advice/>

[sheltercymru.org.uk](https://sheltercymru.org.uk)