



**TAKE!
NOTICE!**

**SHELTER
CYMRU**

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Survival Guide

This guide has been put together by people who have been through temporary accommodation themselves; they are sharing their advice in the hope of making your experience of temporary accommodation a bit easier.

www.sheltercymru.org.uk

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YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Temporary Accommodation is a reality for many people across the country. Being placed in temporary accommodation can leave people feeling isolated and stressed; it's important to remind yourself that it is TEMPORARY and to believe that things will improve.

A key part of getting through this time is remembering that you are not alone. There will be a range of organisations in your area who can help; please reach out, ask questions and find out what support is available to you.



YOU ARE STILL YOU

Our homes are an important part of our identities and place in the world. For some people, being placed in temporary accommodation can shake their confidence and make them feel unsettled. The following advice might help with this:

- Stay in touch with family and friends. Tell them what is happening and confide in them as much as you can. Talking things through with people you trust can really help.
- Keep to your normal routine as much as possible; being housed somewhere temporarily doesn't mean that your life has to be put on hold. Maintaining a routine can help you keep a sense of normality.
- Take care of yourself. It isn't always easy to eat healthily or exercise regularly, but do what you can to take care of your mind and your body.
- Try to stay positive. It might be tough at times, but you will get there in the end.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Make a note of your new address. Put the full postal address in your phone or diary as you are probably going to be asked for it many times.

Make a note or take a photo of electricity, gas and water meter readings. There are many different types of meter, so make sure you are familiar with the type you have and ask the landlord or agent how to use them. Get them to run through how the heating and hot water works. Make sure the water supply is on and find out where the stopcock is - you never know when you will need it!

Know the routine. When is bin day? Where are the fire exits? Is there Wi-Fi?

Maintain boundaries. Other people can be an amazing source of support and advice, but relationships can sometimes get difficult - try to avoid borrowing or lending money or valuable items.

Find out about the local area. Find the GP, supermarkets, convenience stores, leisure centres, parks and play areas. Food can be expensive - find out where the food banks are if you need them.

Join the local library. You can use their computers to access the internet and your e-mails. The notice boards can be really useful sources of information.

Be organised. There is not always room for all your possessions when you move into temporary accommodation. Label boxes/bags and pack them so you can easily find the items you use the most.

Make sure you know the house rules, if there are any. People can get caught out, don't be one of them. Whatever you think about them, they are the rules so don't fall foul of them.

Be prepared to cohabit. You may find yourself sharing kitchens, bathrooms and communal areas. This can be a source of tension, but stay calm and talk to support workers or staff if any situations arise.

Take pictures. If there is any visible damage or disrepair then get evidence. You do not want to be billed for them at a later date. Pictures can also help you explain why somewhere is unsuitable.

Be sensible with your money. Living in temporary accommodation can be more expensive than living somewhere more permanent. If things get financially tough there are sources of help available such as the Discretionary Assistance Fund or Discretionary Housing Payments. Find out if you are entitled to any benefits or grants that can help you. Most importantly, if you are falling into debt, please seek help.

Be prepared to move quickly. The process of finding permanent accommodation can be slow, but when things happen they can move fast. Keep a few boxes spare - you always end up with more bits and bobs than you think. Look out for 'white van man' phone numbers and when a house or flat becomes available, you'll be ahead of the game.



YOU CAN DO THIS

Be proactive. Contact your housing officer regularly, find out what's happening with your case and discuss any problems. Don't be afraid to speak up if you have a question or a complaint. However, be respectful and make your point politely.

Keep on top of your benefits. Make sure you let the DWP know of any changes of circumstance. Don't be afraid to follow up to check that changes have been made.

Keep records. Things can get lost or forgotten, so keep as much evidence as you can. Get receipts or photocopies of all forms you hand in. You can use the library to scan documents and save them to your email. Also, keep a note of dates, times and people's names so that you can give exact information about your case. Things don't have to be very detailed to be useful.

Keep documents safe. Make sure that your paperwork is safe and you can access it when you need it. A few seconds of filing can save you a major headache later on.

Know your rights. If you do not think the accommodation available is suitable, you can ask the council to look at the offer again. To be considered suitable, accommodation should be:

- The right size for your household
- In good enough condition
- Fit for you and your household to live in
- Affordable for you
- In a suitable location
- Safe & secure

BUT, please don't turn down an offer without advice as your council may not have to give you any more help.

Choose your battles. Be prepared to compromise with the local authority, support workers and other tenants. Nothing is perfect.

Don't be discouraged. Stay focussed on the fact that this is temporary.

Don't be ashamed. Housing difficulties really can happen to anyone.



Since 1st December 2022, the law on renting homes in Wales has changed. People living in temporary accommodation have stronger rights in some situations. This depends what decision the council make about your homelessness application and who your landlord is. For more information visit Shelter Cymru's online advice pages

GETTING SUPPORT

SHELTER CYMRU exists to defend the right to a safe home, because home is everything. They help thousands of people across all of Wales every year who have been affected by the housing emergency by offering free, confidential and independent advice.

Helpline: 08000 495 495

Website: sheltercymru.org.uk/get-advice

CITIZENS ADVICE provides free, confidential and impartial advice. They can help with a number of issues including money, benefits, housing or employment problems.

Helpline: 03444 77 20 20

Website: citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/contact-us

CALL: COMMUNITY ADVICE & LISTENING LINE is a mental health helpline for Wales, providing emotional support, referral to agencies and free self-help leaflets.

Helpline: 0800 132 737

Or text "HELP" to 81066

Website: callhelpline.org.uk

SAMARITANS is a free, confidential telephone service which is available 24/7 to anyone who needs to talk about what is happening, how they're feeling and help them to find their own way forward.

Helpline: 116 123 (24/7)

Cymraeg: 0808 164 0123

(from 7pm to 11pm only, 7 days a week)

Website: samaritans.org/wales/samaritans-cymru

DEWIS CYMRU can help you find local and national organisations and services that can provide support.

Website: dewis.wales



NOTES

These pages have been left blank for you and anyone supporting you to write down useful information.

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