

## Homeless prevention

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### Housing options for care leavers

Housing authorities have a duty ([section 179](#)) to provide advisory services free of charge to people in their district. The service must be designed to meet the needs of certain groups, which include care leavers.

Social services must help you after you leave care if they arranged your accommodation for at least 13 weeks between your 14th and 18th birthdays, including at least one day since you turned 16. You can get support from social services, including help finding somewhere to live, until your 25th birthday or until your education or training ends if that is later.

Before you leave care you're given a pathway plan setting out what support you might need to live independently. This should include where you are going to live.

You're given a personal adviser whose job it is to make sure that you claim everything you are entitled to. They can help you with application forms for housing, benefits, education and training courses. They should also help you with learning life skills, like how to budget and how to manage your own housing.

### Which council ?

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You can ask any council for help if you are homeless. It's unlawful for a council to turn you away, but if you don't have a 'local connection' you could be referred to your local council if it is safe to do so. Examples of when you have a local connection with a council's area are if you:

- live, work or study there
- are under 21 and were in care there in the past

### Applying as homeless

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If you think you will be made homeless in the next 56 days, and you cannot find your own alternative accommodation (despite the help of the agencies mentioned above), you can approach any local authority in England, and ask for assistance. Provided you are eligible, the council will assess your needs, and draw up a plan to help you resolve your housing problem.

This plan will include the steps that you and the council will take to find a solution. This might involve, for example, ensuring you have approached all the right agencies in the right way, maximising benefits, or getting help with training or work

## Vulnerability

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As a care leaver, we would decide if you are more vulnerable than an ordinary person and may decide you are in a priority need group as a result. If this is the case, we will provide you with suitable temporary accommodation, while we try and help you to find a more permanent solution

Many factors can contribute to being vulnerable, including having no family support. You may be asked for evidence about the effect being homeless will have on you from your doctor, psychiatrist, probation officer, or anyone else who knows you well.

Whether you are vulnerable or not, we will try and relieve your homelessness for a period of 56 days. If we are unable to help you find a home during this 'relief period', and you are in priority need (and have co-operated with us), we may then make you a direct offer of housing.

## Further housing support and advice

**Homechoice** - Where North Somerset Council is the corporate parent and the Care Leaver is ready to live independently, or with floating support. The Homelessness Prevention Officer for care leavers must confirm in writing that the applicant is ready for such a move and has acquired reasonable skills to sustain a tenancy.

**Supported accommodation** – If you think you'll need quite a lot of support to live independently when you first leave home, you might be interested in supported accommodation. You'll live with other young people and have a support worker. They'll support you to develop skills like money management, cooking, doing your laundry, shopping and accessing benefits. They'll also help you with your education, employment and training goals.

**Private rented accommodation** – We have a deposit bond scheme and a dedicated lettings team who search for suitable and affordable housing. We can negotiate with landlords and agents on your behalf and support you with a move into independent living.

## Contact us

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Claire Ward - 01934 426435 or 07825453700 or [Claire.Ward@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.Ward@n-somerset.gov.uk)



Resource Centre - 01934 421900

Housing Solutions – 01934 426330

## Still need help?

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You can also get information and advice from [www.england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/housing\\_for\\_young\\_people/help\\_and\\_housing\\_for\\_care\\_leavers](http://www.england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/housing_for_young_people/help_and_housing_for_care_leavers)