

A Guide to Temporary Accommodation



A Guide to Temporary Accommodation

Wherever possible we seek to prevent homelessness.

If you have no alternative accommodation and we believe that you are homeless and in priority need, we may offer temporary accommodation while we are assessing your homelessness application or when you have been accepted as homeless and are waiting for a permanent home.

Accommodation during enquiries (Section 188)

If the Housing Options Officer (HO) dealing with your homeless application has enough reason to believe that you may be homeless and in priority need, they should ensure that you have accommodation to occupy until they have completed their enquiries into your application.

This may involve

- › Negotiating with your landlord to allow you to remain beyond your notice date
- › Negotiating with your parents / relatives / friends to allow you to remain whilst enquiries are completed
- › Asking you if you have anyone you can stay with on a short term basis
- › Obtaining emergency accommodation for you

If you then receive a decision which advises you that the council has no duty to provide accommodation for you, any temporary accommodation you have been provided with by this council may cease immediately.

Types of temporary accommodation

The council may use different types of accommodation dependent on the size of your household, any special needs you have and the availability of accommodation at the time you require it.

Bed and Breakfast

In an emergency, the accommodation is likely to be a Bed & Breakfast (B&B) where you share facilities with other residents and although not ideal it may be the only option available. As the B&B's are already furnished, you can only take your personal belongings such as clothes, toiletries and small items. There is very limited accommodation of this type in the area and it is possible you will be offered accommodation outside Stafford Borough.

Leased Properties

The Council has entered into an agreement with Homes Plus to lease properties on behalf of the Council. We can place homeless households into these properties for them to occupy as their temporary accommodation until permanent accommodation is available. The properties are partially furnished and council tax is paid for by the Council. You may be responsible for utility costs ie heating, lighting and water. We do not fund a TV licence.

Refuge

If you have suffered domestic violence, the Council will try to help you get accommodation in a women's refuge. This will ensure your safety while the Council looks at your application.



Suitability of the accommodation

Although we may not be able to meet your every wish/requirement, we will talk to you about any special needs you have, where you work, where your children attend school and your ability to cope away from family. We will then try to match you up with the temporary accommodation we have available that best suits your needs.

However, it is likely that compromises will need to be made as temporary accommodation is subject to availability at the time you are homeless.

Can I appeal against the accommodation offered to me?

You can speak to your Housing Options Officer if you have any concerns, but you need to be realistic about the availability of accommodation. There is no appeal against the suitability of the accommodation offered to you whilst the Council is investigating your application.

Do I have to pay for temporary accommodation?

Yes. None of the temporary accommodation is provided free. You will be expected to pay a weekly charge. If you are on a low income you will need to claim Housing Benefit. Even if Housing Benefit covers most of the charge you may still be liable for some charges. If you do not make sure the weekly charge is paid in full you can be evicted from your temporary housing.

This may result in the Council finding you intentionally homeless. If this happens the Council will not have any obligation to house you and you will have to find your own place to live.

I have got pets, what should I do?

If you are offered temporary accommodation you cannot take dogs, cats or most other pets with you. You need to make your own arrangements to re-home your pets temporarily either with family or friends or place them in boarding kennels or catteries.

If in doubt, call us and if we cannot help we will be able to put you in contact with someone who can.

What about my belongings?

If you are homeless you will need to make arrangements to store your furniture and personal belongings. You can arrange storage with a private storage company at your own expense or perhaps friends or relatives will be able to help you.

If you cannot make your own arrangements the Council can assist you. The Council will arrange a storage company to put your belongings into storage. They will contact you direct to arrange the details. You may have to pay a contribution towards the cost of the weekly storage charge.

If you leave the temporary accommodation you must make arrangements for collection of your belongings. Otherwise we can dispose of your belongings and charge you for the cost of doing so.

How long will I stay in temporary accommodation?

Initially you can stay while we make our enquiries - provided you pay your rent and comply with the agreement that you are required to sign.

Staying on in the accommodation depends on the decision reached on your homelessness application. If you are in B&B and the Council accepts responsibility for housing you we will offer you more appropriate self-contained temporary accommodation as you may have a long wait for permanent accommodation, but this depends on availability at that time. If you refuse this accommodation then we will discharge our duty to you and ask you to leave.

If you are not owed the main duty, either because you are not eligible, not in a priority need category or because you became homeless intentionally, you will be required to leave. We will give you reasonable notice and advice and assistance to secure other accommodation of your own.

If your application is accepted, you can continue to stay in temporary accommodation until a permanent home is secured for you, whether with a housing association or in the private sector.

Compliments and complaints

We welcome feedback on the service we provide and will ask you to complete a survey during your stay in temporary accommodation.

If you are not satisfied with our service, please contact the Housing Options Team.

If you are not satisfied with the response you can make a complaint in person at the Civic Centre, over the telephone, in writing by letter, or email.

Housing Options Team
Stafford Borough Council
Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, ST16 3AQ

OPEN

Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm,
Friday 9am - 4.30pm

01785 619 000
housingadvice@staffordbc.gov.uk
www.staffordbc.gov.uk

   **nextdoor**
