

**You may be at risk of homelessness because of:**

- Unemployment or redundancy
- Unlawful eviction or harassment
- Domestic violence
- Mortgage or rent arrears

Sometimes there are ways of preventing or delaying becoming homeless, for instance;

- Getting timely advice before the problem gets any worse
- Finding out what your rights are to stay in your home
- Applying for benefits to help you pay your rent or mortgage
- Getting help to improve the conditions in your home
- Contacting your landlord or mortgage lender if you are a tenant or homeowner and there is a problem or danger of losing your home
- Finding somewhere else to live

If you think you are going to become homeless or are homeless you should try to get help from the Council or any other advice agency as soon as possible. See Leaflet 1

You may be entitled to direct help from the council providing you meet all the requirements under the Homelessness Act. Otherwise, you will only be entitled to advice and assistance in finding accommodation.

## What happens if I apply as homeless to the Council?

The first three things the Council will check will be

1. Are you eligible for assistance? - Most people are eligible for assistance providing they are not subject to immigration control. This includes those from abroad with limits to their right to stay in the country, or those seeking asylum.
2. Are you homeless or threatened with homelessness within the next 28 days?  
-The legal definition of homelessness is broad. You should be considered homeless if:
  - You have nowhere to live in the UK or anywhere in the world.
  - A court has asked you to leave your home
  - You have somewhere to live but it is isn't reasonable to continue living there.
3. Are you in priority need? - you will be classed as being in priority need if you fall into one of the following categories:
  - A person who has dependent children
  - Pregnant women
  - Someone who is vulnerable as result of old age, mental illness, physical disability or other special reason
  - Single women fleeing domestic violence
  - Children leaving care
  - 16/17 year olds
  - People vulnerable as a result of leaving institutions such as the armed forces and prison.

## The Council will also carry out checks as to whether:

4. You have a local connection with the borough from which you are applying – that is, that you have been a resident in Hackney for six of the last twelve months, or three of the last five years.
5. You have not made yourself intentionally homeless - the Council will investigate whether you have made yourself deliberately homeless. For example, you did something or failed to do something which resulted in the loss of your home.

## How we make our enquiries

1. The Council will ask for details and documentation in order to carry out its assessment accurately and fairly. Therefore it is essential that you bring important papers when you attend the homeless person's section, such as the correct notice from your landlord to leave the premises, court eviction order, rent book, tenancy agreement, medical papers, benefit books, tenancy agreement, passport, immigration papers etc
2. While the council carries out enquiries into your case it will ensure that you have somewhere to live if you satisfy the above criteria. This may mean providing hostel or Bed & Breakfast accommodation, which you will have to pay for. You will be able to apply for housing benefit to cover the rental cost if you are not working or are on a low income.
3. Make sure the information you give to the council is correct; if you are unsure then say so. It is a criminal offence to withhold, or give false or misleading information. If any of the information you provide is subsequently found to be false you could get prosecuted by the Council. If found guilty, you could be fined up to £1000, as well as getting a criminal record.

### **Our Decision**

1. Once enquiries into your application are completed, the Council will give you a written decision whether it has a duty to rehouse you or not.
2. If you do not agree or are unhappy with the outcome of your application you can ask the council to review its decision. See Leaflet 1