

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE HOMELESS (or threatened with homelessness)



THE FOLLOWING EXPLAINS:

- **The service provided by the City Council**
- **How your application will be assessed**
- **Your rights as an applicant**



MAKING AN APPLICATION

Please contact Homeless Services at the Civic Centre, Carlisle or telephone 01228 817000 for an appointment with the Homeless Persons Officer.

You should contact us for advice as soon as you think you may have to leave your present home.

If you have no where to stay we may be able to help by making arrangements to place you and your family in temporary accommodation while your homeless application is being assessed.

The Council may also be able to help you keep your home by talking to your landlord, arranging mediation or discussing other options with you so please contact us to see how we can help.

What happens next?

- You will be interviewed by the Homeless Persons officer who will ask questions about your situation;
- If you are eligible for assistance, homeless and in a priority need group (see below) the Council will offer you temporary accommodation and make sure you are registered on the housing waiting list for permanent accommodation. You will have to pay for this accommodation.
- If you are not homeless or threatened with homelessness, or are homeless intentionally or are not in priority need, the Homeless Support officer will advise you on the housing options available in Carlisle and may place you in a temporary hostel for a short time while you find somewhere to live. He/she will also register you on the housing waiting list provided you are eligible to apply for accommodation.
- If you have recently moved from another part of the country the Homeless Support Officer will contact the local authority in that area to try to arrange accommodation for you (unless it is dangerous for you to return there).
- Other housing options may be renting with a private landlord or housing association.



THE INTERVIEW

The Homeless Persons Officer will ask questions to find out if:

- You are eligible for assistance;
- You are homeless or about to become homeless within 28 days;
- You have a priority need for accommodation;
- You became homeless intentionally;
- You have a local connection with the Carlisle area;
- You have no other accommodation available to you.

These questions have to be asked to fully investigate your application for accommodation under the Homelessness Act. The Homeless Persons Officer may also need to check what you say with a previous landlord, with another agency or with caseworkers.

If you have children you should bring copies of their birth certificates with you to the interview and if you are expecting a baby a letter from a doctor or EDD certificate will be needed.

Any legal documents asking you to leave your accommodation (for example a Possession Order or formal notice from your landlord) should also be brought to the interview.

ASSESSING YOUR APPLICATION

1. Are you eligible to receive assistance?

You are automatically eligible for assistance if you are:

- A British citizen, or
- A citizen from another country who has unrestricted permission to live in the United Kingdom for an unlimited period of time;
- A recognised refugee or other class of person specified as eligible by the Secretary of State.

2. Are you homeless?

- You will be homeless if you have no where to live anywhere in the United Kingdom. This includes the following circumstances-
 - (a) You have somewhere to live but are unable to get into the property;
 - (b) You have somewhere to live but you are likely to face violence if you stay there.
- You are threatened with homelessness if you are likely to become homeless within 28 days. This includes circumstances where you have been issued with a court order or legal notice from your landlord requiring you to leave your home.

3. Are you in priority need?

You are in priority need if you (or a member of your household):

- Are pregnant;
- Have dependent children living with you
- Are a person who is vulnerable due to old age, mental illness, handicap or physical disability or other special reason ;
- Are a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as a fire, flood or other disaster;
- Are a person aged 16 or 17 who has not just left the care of a local authority;
- Are a person aged 18-21 years who was previously under the care of a local authority;
- Are a person who was previously looked after, accommodated or fostered (under the Children's Act 1989) and is vulnerable as a result;

- Are a person who is vulnerable as a result of being a member of Her Majesty's regular naval, military or air forces;
- Are a person who is vulnerable as a result of serving a custodial sentence, been remanded in custody or committed for contempt of court;
- Are a person who is vulnerable as no longer being able to occupy accommodation due to violence or threats of violence.

4. Are you intentionally homeless?

You may be considered intentionally homeless if:

- You have deliberately given up a home you could have continued to live in; or
- You have deliberately done something or failed to do something which you knew would result in the loss of your home, and it would have otherwise been reasonable for you to stay in your home, or
- You have entered into an arrangement under which you are required to leave your home and the purpose of the arrangement is to take advantage of the services available to you through the Council as a homeless person, or
- You have failed to take up accommodation which was available to you despite having been given advice and assistance to secure such accommodation.

5. Do you have a local connection with the Carlisle district?

You will have a local connection with Carlisle if:

- You have lived within the district for 6 of the past 12 months or 3 of the past 5 years, or
- You have a permanent job in the district;
- You have a close relative who has lived in the district for the last 5 years;
- You previously lived in the district and have been serving in the armed forces and on discharge would like to return to the area in which you were brought up.

6. Is any other accommodation available to you?

The Homeless Persons Officer will check whether any other accommodation is available to you and give you advice and assistance in securing it.

This may for example be if your household has been illegally evicted from a property or if the property is in a very poor physical condition assisting in getting the landlord to improve it.

REACHING A DECISION

The Homeless Persons Officer may need to investigate further some of the answers to the questions above before reaching a decision on whether you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, in priority need and eligible for assistance.

She/he will let you know how your application is progressing at regular intervals. She/he may also ask you for additional information or for your permission to approach other agencies on your behalf.

The Council has to reach a decision within 33 days of your application. The Homelessness section hopes to let you know the outcome of your application as soon as possible.

An officer from the Council will always notify the decision to you in writing. The letter will also set out clearly the reasons for the decision.

If the Homelessness Section refers your application to another local authority you will be told that this has happened.



PROVIDING ACCOMMODATION

Temporary accommodation

If you are considered to be homeless and in priority need, you will be offered temporary accommodation until a decision is reached on your homeless application.

Temporary accommodation is usually in a hostel.

If the decision made is that you are homeless, in priority need and eligible for assistance the Council will assist you in finding permanent accommodation (see below).

If the decision made is that you are not homeless, not in priority need or ineligible for assistance you will be asked to leave the temporary accommodation, usually within 7 days. You have a right to request a review of the decision made and information on this is set out below.

Permanent accommodation

You will have been registered on the housing waiting list at the time you made your homeless application. If your homeless application is accepted the Council will help you find permanent accommodation by making a nomination to a local housing association or by finding accommodation for you in the private rented sector. The Council does not own any housing accommodation itself.

YOUR RIGHT TO REQUEST A REVIEW



If you disagree with the outcome of your homeless application you have the right to request a review of the decision made.

This request must be made within 21 days of receiving the decision on your application.

If you wish to request a review please contact Homeless Services at the Civic Centre.

A separate information leaflet is available on how to request a review.

WHERE TO GO FOR ADVICE IF YOU ARE THREATENED WITH HOMELESSNESS

Council Offices

Homeless Services, Civic Centre, Carlisle
Opening hours - from 9.30am-4.30pm

Tel: 01228-817000

Out of office hours **(Emergency contact only)**

Tel: 01228-511061

Benefits Advice Agency

Carlisle

Tel: 01228 625250

Other Advice agencies

Carlisle Community Law Centre

8 Spencer Street

Tel: 01228-515129

Open 9.00 to 5.00 Monday to Friday

Citizens Advice Bureau

5 & 6 Old Post Office Court
Carlisle

Advice Line Tel: 01228-633900

Appointments Tel: 01228-633909

Opening hours

Monday	CLOSED	
Tuesday	10.00 am – 4.00 pm	(Benefit appointments)
Wednesday	10.00 am - 4.00 pm	(drop in session)
Thursday	10.00 am - 4.00 pm	(drop in session)
	10.00 am – 4.00 pm	(telephone advice)
Friday	10.00 am – 4.00 pm	(appointments only)
Saturday	10.00 am - 12.00 noon	(drop in session)

Shelter

10 Kent Street
KENDAL

Tel: 0845 5151945

Or

Shelterline

(Free Number) 0808 8004444

This document can be provided in large print, on tape, in braille or in other languages upon request.