

Homeless application advice

We will consider your application under the Housing Act 1996, Part VII, as amended by the Homeless Act 2002. This broadly means that we have a legal duty to make certain enquiries and tell you what we can do for you after that.

If we find that you are eligible, homeless, in priority need, unintentionally homeless and have a local connection with Wychavon you will be owed a 'main homelessness duty'. This means that the Council through the Housing Associations or the Private Sector will secure you accommodation that is suitable for your needs.

Our promise to you

We will:

- Do everything we can to prevent homelessness, for example through negotiation, mediation or working with the privately rented sector.
- Aim to complete enquiries into your application within 33 working days.
- Answer your queries promptly, be polite and will treat everyone fairly and with courtesy and respect.
- We will ask for your opinions and for suggestions on how to improve the service we give.
- If you are homeless, or become homeless whilst we are investigating your application, and have a priority need, we will arrange temporary accommodation for you. This can be Bed & Breakfast style accommodation (but only if no other form of temporary accommodation is available).
- Once we accept a duty to rehouse you we will try to move you onto self contained temporary

- accommodation as soon as possible until we can find a permanent property for you.
- If you are a single person, homeless and not in priority need we will undertake a needs assessment for you, ensure that your housing application is maximised, explore options such as hostel accommodation and privately rented accommodation.

- Hostel numbers include:

Birmingham City Mission 0121 6436182

St Pauls Worcester 01905 723729

YMCA Worcester 01905 423197

If you wish you may contact these numbers daily to see if they have vacancies. If you are a woman fleeing violence you can contact:

Womens Aid 0117 9444411

Help Line (24 hour) 0808 2000 247

If you find you are homeless out of normal working hours, 9am - 5pm Monday - Friday, or on a weekend, you will need to call 08450 568035

Your promise to us

You will:

- Do everything you can to provide the information we ask for.
- Provide us with the correct information, so we can speed up our service to you.
- Try and keep appointments with your Homeless Advisor, if not phone and arrange a more suitable appointment.
- Inform us immediately of any change in circumstances that may occur.
- We know you are under difficult circumstances, but, be polite and courteous to us.

Useful numbers

**Wychavon District Council
Housing Needs Department**

01386 565020

housingneeds@wychavon.gov.uk

www.wychavon.gov.uk

**Wychavon District Council
Housing Benefits**

01905 822744

**Worcester Housing & Benefits
Advice Centre**

01905 612774

Benefits Agency

01905 720300

Citizens Advice Bureau

Droitwich 01905 795225

Evesham 01386 443737

Pershore 01386 561561

SHINE Floating Support (16-25 year olds)

Evesham 01386 420800

Shine is Rooftop Housing Groups floating support service to young single people, aged between 16-25 years old in the Wychavon area. Staff provide service users with the advice and support they need, giving them the confidence and know-how to take control of their lives.

Stonham

Worcestershire Floating Support Service

01905 775690

Bromford Support

01527 62550

Homelessness The Facts

2. a practical guide to homelessness



Introduction

This leaflet is a short guide for people who find themselves under the threat of homelessness or indeed homeless in Wychavon.

Our aim is prevent this from happening if we can, by working with you to try and resolve any housing difficulties. This may be negotiating with your Landlord, advice on Welfare Benefits, Housing Benefit Advice to help with paying your rent etc.

How to apply

Wychavon District Council has a range of duties under legislation laid down by government, to help homeless people. This help may be giving advice and information or finding long term housing.

The first thing you need to do if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness is to contact us to see what help, advice and assistance we can offer you. You can reach us on 01386 565020 and ask for the Housing Needs Department.

Homelessness

Not everyone can be helped through the homelessness rules so you will need to read this leaflet carefully to see where you stand.

We will be asking you the following:

Are you eligible?

Not everyone who is homeless is eligible for help with housing. The legislation makes certain people from abroad ineligible for housing assistance. If you are a British Citizen, a

European Economic Area National or a Settled Person you are likely to be eligible. If you have no recourse to public funds or do not pass Habitual Residency Test, we will be unable to help you, but can offer you housing advice.

Are you homeless?

Homeless is a term, which covers a range of situations which people find themselves in. You may be homeless if:

- You have nowhere to stay tonight, or
- You have been staying somewhere but have no legal rights to stay there and are being told to leave, or
- You have been locked out of your home and told not to go back, or
- You have somewhere to live but are likely to face violence if you return, or
- You are forced to live apart from someone you normally live with, or who the Council considers it would be reasonable for you to live with, or
- You are forced to leave your home because of harassment, or
- You have a mobile home, caravan or boat but do not have anywhere to put it or that you can live in.

We usually will not consider you as homeless unless you are within 28 days of losing your accommodation, but we will investigate and try to prevent you becoming homeless before this. People who are not homeless can be provided with housing advice to ensure that their accommodation remains available to them or to help them find alternative solutions to housing problems.

Are you in priority need?

The legislation helps decide the groups of people who are in priority need. You may have a priority need if your circumstances are such that they would make you more vulnerable or disadvantaged if you were homeless and would include.

- Households with dependant children.
- Pregnant women.
- If you are homeless as a result of a disaster such as fire, flood or other disaster.
- Under 18's.
- Those who may be vulnerable due to old age, mental or physical illness or disability, suffering violence, or with an institutional background such as being in care, the army or prison.

People who are not in priority need will be provided with advice and assistance to help with housing problems.

What if I make myself homeless?

The homeless law says you are intentionally homeless if:

- You deliberately gave up accommodation it would have been reasonable for you to have continued to occupy, *or*
- You deliberately did something, or failed to do something, which you knew would mean losing your accommodation, e.g. lost accommodation due to non-payment of rent, anti-social behaviour etc *or*

- You made arrangements to stay in accommodation on an insecure basis which gave you no legal rights, with the intention of making an homelessness application, *or*
- You failed to act on legal/financial, advice/assistance that you have been given to help you find alternative suitable accommodation or to help to stay in your home.

If you are in priority need but homeless through your own fault, we have no duty to find you long-term accommodation. We will help you by giving advice, assistance and short-term accommodation, if you need it.

Do you have a local connection with Wychavon?

We will also be looking to see if you have a local connection with the Wychavon area, this usually includes the following:

- That you have lived in settled accommodation in the Wychavon area a minimum of 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years.
- That you have permanent employment here *or*
- That you have a close family member that has lived in the area for more than 5 years.

If you have no local connection to the area but fulfil all the other criteria, we will refer you to the Council where you do have a local connection. There are exceptions to this for instance if you are fleeing violence from the area you are connected to.