

Do I have a local connection?

The fifth in a series of five factsheets that considers the issues that a local council will look at if you apply to it for housing if you are homeless.

This factsheet looks at who has a local connection.

Most people apply for help from the council in the area where they live if they become homeless. However, you can apply to any council you wish. It is unlawful for a council to turn you away when you apply, or tell you to apply to another council because you do not have a local connection with its area.

What is a local connection?

In deciding whether you have a local connection the council has to look at whether you (or anyone else in your household) have:

Lived in the area

This means you have lived in the area for six out of the last 12 months, or three out of the last five years. You must have chosen to live in the area; being in prison or in hospital will not count. However, it does count if you lived in the area after being posted there when you were in the armed forces.

Family connection

This means your immediate family has lived in the area for at least five years, and you wish to live near them. This is normally limited to parents, children, brothers or sisters.

Work

Full- or part-time work in the area both count, but casual work does not.

Other special reason

This is not defined but could include circumstances where you need to live in the area to receive specialist health care, or because you had lived there for a long time in the past.

What the council looks at first

Before considering if you have a local connection the council must first decide whether you are:

- homeless* (first factsheet)
- eligible for assistance* (second factsheet)

- in priority need* (third factsheet)
- intentionally homeless* (fourth factsheet).

Duty owed

If you are homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need, not intentionally homeless, and have a local connection, the council owes you the full housing duty. It must continue to accommodate you until it provides you with, or finds you, settled accommodation.

If you are homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need, not intentionally homeless, but do not have a local connection (and neither of the two situations below applies) the council must accommodate you until another council is ready to do it.

Even if you do not have a local connection, the council cannot refer you to another council if:

- 1) you are at risk of violence in an area where you do have a local connection
- 2) you do not have a local connection anywhere else.

Negative decisions

You have the right to request a review of any decision that goes against you or if you think you should not be referred to a different council. However, your request must be made within 21 days of being notified of the decision you disagree with.

Further advice

You can get further advice from Shelter's free** housing advice helpline (0808 800 4444), a local Shelter advice service or Citizens Advice bureau, or by visiting shelter.org.uk/advice

* These terms have special legal meanings which are explained in the relevant leaflets in the series.

** Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.



Specialist support on housing advice

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