

Factsheet 16: Temporary Accommodation

What is Temporary Accommodation?

Local authorities have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended). Households may be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of enquiries into an application, or they might spend time waiting in temporary accommodation after an application is accepted and until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.

What & where will the Temporary Accommodation be?

The Council has a range of temporary accommodation properties in the Runnymede borough. The council will make one offer of suitable temporary accommodation only.

What factors are considered when deciding on suitability?

When allocating suitable Temporary Accommodation the TA Manager will consider a number of factors including the composition of the household, the ages of any dependent children, any relevant health issues and some social issues.

Can I refuse or review the Temporary Accommodation offered?

If the applicant believes that they have a reason to refuse the offered accommodation, sufficient evidence will need to be provided before a decision can be reached on suitability. If the decision is agreed, alternative temporary accommodation will be offered. Applicants who refuse the Temporary Accommodation without valid reason will then need to secure their own accommodation and only advice and assistance will be given by the local authority.

How long will the Temporary Accommodation be for?

Where an absolute duty to secure accommodation exists, a household may have to spend a period of time in temporary accommodation before a final offer of accommodation is made. The length of time applicants spend in temporary accommodation will depend on individual circumstances and will mainly depend on length of shortlist. Applicants are housed in date order according to the time they entered temporary accommodation. Applicants will no longer be able to bid on properties once they are placed in temporary accommodation. Where a no duty decision is reached by the Housing Options Team, temporary accommodation will be ended by the service of Notice to Quit in 28 days.

While in temporary accommodation applicants are encouraged to seek private rented accommodation to widen the choice of properties and areas that accommodation may be available in. If successful applicants may be assisted with funding for deposits and rent in advance.

Applicants should be aware that when they are made a permanent offer the accommodation could be within the private rented sector. There is no right to a Council

tenancy or social housing tenancy for any homeless household and the Council will look for private rented accommodation where possible.

Applicants are reminded that a refusal of a suitable offer of settled accommodation could result in the loss of the temporary accommodation. If the offer is deemed suitable, no further offers will be made.

What additional costs should you expect?

Unless otherwise specified, applicants will be responsible for paying their own utility bills i.e. gas, electric, water & sewage. All temporary accommodation units are on a card and key system for their gas & electric supplies. Applicants are also responsible for the Council Tax. Applicants are further advised to arrange their own contents insurance.

All temporary accommodation is let as Non-furnished. Applicants are responsible for providing their own furniture, including sofas, beds and kitchen white goods i.e. cookers, fridges/freezers and washing machines. Applicants may find the following organisations helpful in sourcing any items they may need: -

Woking Hospice Furniture Shop

www.wsbhospices.co.uk

Tel: 01483 487710

Woking Community Furniture Project

www.wokingcfp.co.uk

Tel: 01483 750005

Surrey Re-use Network

www.surreyreusenetwork.org.uk

Tel: 0800 082 0180

www.snaply.co.uk

www.freelywheely.com

www.uk.freecycle.org

Besom Project

www.besom.com/local-besoms/runnymede

01784 470387

Salvation Army

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/addlestone

01932 829678

What is expected from Tenants?

Property Inspections and Required Standards

Applicants placed in Temporary Accommodation are expected to maintain the property to the standard to which they receive it. A property inspection report will be given on entry. Regular 6-8 weekly visits will be carried out by the TA Manager to ensure that these obligations are met. If any issues arise, households will be expected to rectify any damage etc and a target date given to do so. A follow up visit will then be carried out to ensure that any issues have been resolved to the satisfaction of the Council.

If problems with maintaining standards persist, applicants will be bypassed for a permanent offer of accommodation until the situation improves. If an offer of permanent housing is made, a pre-exit visit with households is arranged and an exit inspection carried out. If there are any maintenance issues then the offer of permanent accommodation could be withdrawn. Once the property is vacated and inspections carried out by our maintenance team, charges will be made for any removal of rubbish or works that need to be carried out.

Rent and consequences of non-payment (arrears)

There is no toleration of arrears in temporary accommodation and applicants could risk losing their home through failure to pay their rent. If an applicant is claiming housing benefit, their claim will be made on day of entry to temporary accommodation with relevant documentation provided. If rent is to be paid in full, this must be paid regularly and in advance.

Should an applicant fail to pay their rent and accrue arrears on an account, then applicants will be required to make arrangements to clear arrears in instalments. If arrears continue then the applicants will be served with a Notice to Quit. Failure to then vacate will result in an application to the County Court for a repossession order. In the event of the above, the Council will then discharge its duty to the applicant and will no longer provide temporary accommodation.

The applicant will also be deemed to be intentionally homeless and responsible for resolving their own housing situation. Applicants can remain on the Housing Register but will be reassessed to a lower band to reflect the intentionally homeless status.

Anti-Social behaviour (ASB)

The Council takes all reports of ASB very seriously. When a report is received, the TA Manager will carry out a full investigation and involve any relevant agencies, such as the police, children's services etc.

If the Council considers the ASB to be evidenced and if the ASB continues despite Council intervention, then a Notice to Quit will be served and notice to vacate the temporary accommodation will be given. If an applicant does not vacate, a possession order will be sought from the County Court, and the above details outlined in the Rent Arrears paragraph concerning intentionality will apply to applicants and then affect any future offers of permanent housing.

ASB is perceived by people in different ways and affects everybody differently. Loud music is often a problem, particularly in a shared environment and applicants are required to keep noise to an acceptable level.

The use of drugs is taken very seriously and the police are involved immediately. ASB also includes allowing friends/family/visitors into your property who cause a nuisance to others. Applicants are personally responsible for their visitors and their behaviour.

Dogs/Cats

The Council does not allow dogs to be kept in temporary accommodation. In **exceptional cases**, where a temporary accommodation property lends itself to keeping a pet, we may give permission. Permission needs to be sought in writing by an applicant. If dogs are acquired without the Council's knowledge an applicant will be asked to re home the animal. If an applicant does not rehome an animal, a Notice to Quit will be served as breach of the non-secure tenancy agreement and the details outlined above in the Rent Arrears paragraph will apply with regards to intentionality.

Joining the Hosing Register

Applicants are reminded that if they are not already on the housing register, and they are eligible to do so, that that should join immediately. If you are on the list then you must ensure that you change your circumstances, i.e. address details. This must be completed any time there is a change in your tenancy details. We cannot amend your branding until these details have been provided by yourself.

Further useful information: -

Runnymede Factsheets

Factsheet 7: Joining the Housing Register

Factsheet 15: Discharging Homeless Duty into the Private Rented Sector

Shelter Factsheets

Tips on Temporary Accommodation

Suitability