

# Tips on temporary accommodation

**This factsheet looks at what to do when you are offered temporary accommodation because you are homeless.**

Any temporary accommodation (TA) you are offered must be 'suitable' for you and your family. See the separate factsheet 'Suitability' for what this means.

## Accepting the offer

Ask the council how long you might have to stay - this may affect whether the accommodation is suitable or not. You could be moved a few times before you get a 'final' offer of settled accommodation.

Do not reject an offer before getting advice first. If you feel pressure to accept something you don't like, ask for more time to make a decision. If you refuse an offer, the council might not have to find you anywhere else. You can move in and ask for a review - if you are successful you will get an alternative offer.

## Before moving in

Read your tenancy or licence agreement and ask the council about anything you do not understand. Keep a copy safe.

Claim housing benefit to help pay your rent and ask if any charges are not covered - you will be responsible for any shortfall.

Arrange for a friend or family member to look after your pets, or speak to the council if this is not possible.

Not all temporary accommodation is furnished, so ask the council if you need help with furniture. The council may be able to arrange for your own furniture to be stored temporarily, but you will be charged for this.

Find out if you need to pay council tax. If so, contact the council where your temporary accommodation is located and ask if you qualify for any reduction or discount.

If you are responsible for utility bills - such as gas or water - tell the utility companies the date you moved in so you don't get charged for what the previous occupant used.

Find out who you can contact if problems arise, such as things that need fixing or antisocial behaviour from other tenants. This may be the landlord, managing agent, or a contact person in the council housing options department.

## Settling in

Ask the council where local facilities such as shops and doctors are, and about local transport links. If you have school-age children, you will need to decide if they will stay at their existing school, or arrange for them to move to a new one.

## Dealing with problems

- Report promptly anything that needs repairing in the property, or any other problems you are having in the accommodation to your landlord and/or the council
- Find out where the emergency taps are for turning off gas and water
- Get advice quickly if you have problems with the accommodation. If you move out, the council's duty to help you will probably end.

## Keeping the accommodation

Keep to any rules set by the council or the landlord. Don't redecorate, alter or attempt any repair at the property without getting permission first.

You may be evicted if you don't pay your rent and service charges on time, so tell the council if you think you might not be able to. Rent arrears may affect your chances of moving to settled accommodation.

Report immediately any change in your circumstances (eg a child leaves home or changes to your income) to the council and benefits office.

## Moving on

If you are on a housing waiting list, put in regular bids and/or stay in touch with the council's lettings team.

## 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](http://shelter.org.uk/advice) or [adviceguide.org.uk](http://adviceguide.org.uk)

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

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# Shelter

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## Note

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