

Wakefield Council - Housing Needs Service

Housing and Homelessness

If you are homeless, or think that you are going to become homeless, you should seek advice from Wakefield Council's Housing Needs Service.

We offer a free, confidential advice and information service that may help you to keep your home or help you find accommodation that meets your needs. We will help you to understand the different options that are available in the Wakefield District to solve your housing problems.

Our service is available on a drop-in basis, which means you may have to wait to be seen. Our busiest times are approximately 12-2pm. If you contact the service near closing time, this may limit the time we have to assist you on that day.

To allow us to give you the best advice, please bring all relevant documents with you, such as:

- ID
- your tenancy agreement
- your notice
- any other tenancy related documents

Where we have reason to believe that you are, or that you may become homeless, within 56 days we will consider what help we can provide you with under the homeless law.

How we can help you under the homeless law?

We will consider your difficulties and decide what help the Council must provide you. We will provide you with decisions in writing explaining how we have arrived at our decision and what duty is owed to you and how we can help you further.

Where we are satisfied that you are eligible for assistance* and homeless or threatened with homelessness* within 56 days we will:

Undertake an assessment and provide you with a personalised housing plan

This will identify what has caused your homelessness or threat of homelessness, your housing needs and any support you need in order to be able to secure and retain accommodation.

Following this assessment we will work with you to develop a personalised housing plan which will include actions that will be taken by us and by you to prevent or relieve

your homelessness.

Depending upon your circumstances you will be owed a prevention duty or a relief duty.

Prevention duty

If you are threatened with homelessness* within 56 days we will help you to stay in your current accommodation or help you to find a new place to live before you become homeless. This prevention duty will continue for 56 days unless it is brought to an end for any reason. You will be provided with details how this duty can be brought to an end.

Relief duty

If you are already homeless* or it has not been possible to prevent your homelessness we will take reasonable steps to help you find accommodation. This relief duty will last for 56 days unless ended in another way. You will be provided with details how this duty can be brought to an end.

At this stage you may be offered somewhere to live on a temporary basis if we have reason to believe that you fall into a priority need category* set out in the homeless law.

Local connection

If you meet the criteria for a relief duty we will consider if you have a certain connection to the Wakefield District, for example, you work here. If you have no local connection to Wakefield but you do somewhere else we may refer you to the area where you have a connection to help you.

What happens if I haven't resolved my difficulties when the relief duty comes to an end?

We may not have a further statutory duty to work with you if you do not fall within a category of priority need*, however we have services that would continue to work with you if you are rough sleeping. In circumstances where you have priority need* we will have regard to how your relief duty has ended and make a judgement to whether we consider you to have become intentionally homeless*. You will be notified what duty is owed to you and how this affects you, how long the duty will last and how it may come to an end.

What happens if I disagree with a decision you have made?

We will write to you to explain the reasons we have made decisions on your application and tell you how you can challenge the decision if you don't agree with it.

***Homeless law assessment terminology.**

The homeless law requires local authorities to make decisions on different elements of your circumstances; some of these are very detailed and complex but to help you understand the process we have provided you with a general overview:

Eligible for assistance

Most people will be eligible for assistance; however some people subject to immigration control and other persons from abroad may not be.

Homeless or threatened with homelessness

This means if you have nowhere legally to stay that is reasonable for you to do so, or if you will have to leave your accommodation within 56 days.

Priority Need

There are several categories of priority need set out in the homeless law, for example having dependent children or is a vulnerable person.

Intentionally homeless

Have you done or failed to do something that has caused you to become homeless.

For more detailed explanations of the homeless legislation and additional general advice on housing and homelessness issues and your rights, you can also visit the Shelter website at www.shelter.org.uk or call their free telephone helpline on 0808 8004444.

Housing Needs Service (HNS) Contact details

Housing Needs Service
Queens House
Queen Street
Wakefield
WF1 1JR

Email: housingneedsservice@wakefield.gov.uk
Phone: 01924 304362 / 304360

Service availability:

	Telephone Service	Appointments and Drop-In
Monday-Wednesday	8:30am - 5pm	9am - 4pm
Thursday	10am - 5pm	10am - 4pm
Friday	8:30am - 4:30pm	9am - 4pm

If you become homeless out of office hours contact the Council's contact centre on 0345 8 506 506.

Further information and the Housing Fact Sheets are available on Wakefield Council's website: <http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/housing/options/housing-for-vulnerable-adults>