

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 – what it means for you

The Homelessness Reduction Act increases the requirements for Southwark Council to help all eligible applicants – rather than just those with a ‘priority need’.

It builds on previous Acts by requiring public authorities (such as the NHS) to [notify Southwark Council](#) if someone they’re working with is facing homelessness.

New duties

It adds two new duties:

- **Duty to take steps to prevent homelessness**: Southwark Council will have to help people at risk of losing suitable accommodation as soon as they are threatened with homelessness within 56 days. This means people should get help on receiving a valid notice from their landlord if they are struggling to find a letting, rather than being told to come back when they have a bailiff's date.
- **Duty to take steps to relieve homelessness**: Southwark Council will have to help all those who are homeless to secure suitable accommodation, regardless of whether they are 'intentionally homeless' or priority need. This should mean that all eligible households are offered help to find a home, rather than some people being turned away. It should also ensure that the true scale of homelessness is recorded.

If neither of the above steps work and the household becomes, or remains, homeless, then those in priority need retain their right to be rehoused, but non-priority households will not be entitled to further help.

The Homelessness Monitor 2017

The 2017 **Homelessness Monitor** shows half (49%) of English councils, and virtually all (94%) London boroughs, report that helping homeless people to find a self-contained private rental is "very difficult" because of the combined effects of rising rents and welfare benefit restrictions, particularly frozen Local Housing Allowance rates. In addition to this almost two-thirds (64%) report difficulties in helping homeless people access social housing, with three-quarters of London boroughs describing this as "very difficult" because there is such a chronic shortage.

Contact us

If you need advice, assistance and support with your housing needs, please contact Southwark Council's Housing Solutions service.

Housing Solutions service

25 Bournemouth Road, Peckham Rye, London, SE15 4UJ

020 7525 4140

Out of hours phone:

020 7505 5000

housing.options@southwark.gov.uk

Call Southwark Advocacy and Support Services (SASS) for further information on 020 7593 1290 or for more information on the council's work in this area please access information on the Southwark Council web site at www.southwark.gov.uk