

Know your housing

You don't have to be on the streets to be homeless

Are you homeless?

You don't have to be sleeping on the streets or not have a roof over your head to be considered homeless. Most people who are legally homeless are not on the streets.

There are many situations where the council must accept you are homeless, and may have a legal duty to help you with housing.

For example

- You're at risk of violence or abuse where you are living. This can be from a partner, ex-partner or family member, or someone in your area. The council may ask you to provide details of the incidents. Evidence is helpful but the council will not turn you away if you haven't reported to police.
- You don't have 'a roof over your head' i.e. you are street homeless
- You're at risk of losing your home
- You can't afford to stay where you are
- Your accommodation is very temporary
- You are staying with friends or 'sofa surfing'
- You've been locked out or illegally evicted
- Your accommodation is in very poor condition
- You can't live together with your partner or close family
- You have nowhere to put your houseboat or caravan

If one or more of these apply, you may be eligible for help from the council.

Who the council can help

1. You must normally live in the UK long-term and not be subject to immigration control.
2. You must be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days.
3. You have a priority need - this means either you have children, you have a physical or mental health disability, or if you are more vulnerable for other reasons such as fleeing domestic violence.
4. You must not have made yourself homeless on purpose.
5. You must have a local connection with the borough. However, this is not necessary if you are fleeing domestic violence.

If you meet these criteria, you can make a **homeless application**. This means that you are telling the council you are homeless or at risk of homelessness and need their help. By law, you must be allowed to make this application on the day you come to the council.

The council will make an appointment for you to be interviewed by a housing officer.

This should be the same day if you have nowhere to stay that night. You can bring a support worker or friend with you in to the interview.

At the interview

You need to take the right documents to your interview. The process will be quicker if you bring your ID and notice of eviction or a letter from the person you have been staying with. For more information on the homelessness interview, you can look at the **Shelter** website in the 'How to apply as homeless' section.

If the council says it can help you...

If the council accepts that it has a duty to continue housing you, you'll probably have to stay in [temporary accommodation](#) until it offers you somewhere more long-term or '[settled](#)'.

If the council says it cannot help you...

You can challenge the council's decision.

If you think the council's decision is wrong, contact an independent local advice centre like Citizens Advice Bureau as soon as you can.

You can get further advice from:

- Shelter
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Crisis
- National Domestic Violence Helpline
- Southwark Solace Women's Aid
- Stonewall Housing (LGBT charity)
- Metro (LGBT charity)

Southwark Housing Solutions Service

The council's housing options service can help you with either finding or keeping a safe and suitable home for you and your family.

We have a team of housing advisors who will work with you to explore all of your options.

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