

**Accommodation Guide
for 16 & 17 years old
who may be homeless
in Warwickshire**



This Fact Sheet explains the responsibilities of Children's Services & the Housing Department to 16 and 17 years olds who find themselves homeless.

Young people and homelessness

Being aged 16 and 17 and facing the possibility of having nowhere to live or having to leave home suddenly can be a very stressful and confusing time and it is important you receive the right support and advice so you fully understand what your options are so you can make the right decisions.

Being homeless can happen to anyone. There is always a way of managing and sorting a crisis.

If you already have a worker supporting you, such as a social worker you should talk to him/her straight away. If you do not have anyone supporting you and you find yourself homeless, or you are sofa surfing, or at risk of being homeless then there are 2 agencies that have a legal duty to help you. These are Warwickshire County Council (WCC), and the Local Housing Authority, (LHA) who are based in your district council.

You can contact either of these to request support. The support and possible accommodation you can expect from the two agencies will vary and will depend on your own unique set of circumstances. This leaflet aims to explain how this all works.

Returning Home

The priority for both agencies will be to support you to return home, where safe to do so, or find alternative options for you so you can be settled and live safely. It is important to note that you will not get your own accommodation at this stage, as you will not usually be able to have your own tenancy at 16 or 17, only a licence to occupy a property. Even then it is difficult to find a landlord who will rent to a younger person. There are also limits on how much, if anything, you will receive towards your rent, and usually the most you can expect to be able to afford is a single room in a shared house.

Assessment of your needs

You are a priority to be found accommodation as you are 16 or 17 years old. Other issues you may face like mental health problems, drug or alcohol misuse, health issues or if you are a Care Leaver may also increase your priority.

What will happen

Children's Services & Housing Departments will help you make choices. They will give you the facts.

During and after your assessment WCC and the LHA will continue to explore the possibility of you returning home, where safe to do so. However, if it becomes absolutely clear you can't return home either or both agencies should make sure that you have a suitable and safe place to stay if you are unable to return home or live with another family member.

This might be temporary accommodation or longer term depending on your own set of unique circumstances.

If you are assessed as a Child in Need, a social worker will talk to you about being "accommodated" by WCC. You will normally be assessed as a Child In Need if you:

- Have no money for food.
- Don't have anywhere to live.
- Have problems with health or education.
- Live with a violent person.
- Unable live at home with parents/guardians.

If you agree to being accommodated by WCC under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 then you will be known as a "child in care".

This accommodation is often provided as an emergency, and is often for a short period of time whilst other support is looked at with you and your family. If there are no other options, you may be able to stay accommodated by WCC until you reach 18, and possibly receive support past this age depending on the length of time you have been in care.

This accommodation may be foster care, but is more likely to be supported accommodation or shared accommodation, where a worker will support you in your day to day living and accessing education/employment.

As a “child in care” you have to have an allocated social worker who oversees your care as WCC becomes your “Corporate Parent”. Your social worker will visit you regularly and work with you towards living independently, this is known as a Pathway Plan and will include support with any parts of your life you need help with, such as education, health, identity, finances and family.

You may receive ongoing support post 18 from the leaving care service (if you have been accommodated for more than 13 weeks before your 18th birthday).

If you do not consent to being accommodated and supported by WCC you may still be able to get help with your accommodation from the LHA. In order to get help with accommodation from the LHA you will need to make a homeless application. This will be discussed as part of the assessment process referred to above.

If you are accommodated by the LHA then you may well be placed in supported accommodation, or in a room in a shared house. Being accommodated by the Housing Department means you are responsible for paying your own rent, bills and any service charges. If you are eligible then you should make an application for benefits. Recent changes to benefits mean allowances towards housing costs will probably not cover your entire rent so you will need to top this up from other benefits. You will also need to pay for any other bills such as electricity, gas, food, phone and so on.

Your support worker should support you with any financial/benefit questions you may have. Your worker can discuss what post 18 support you will receive depending on your status.

Your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will be able to give you more details of the options available to you. You can decide with the support of your Social Worker or Personal Advisor what is best for you. Refer to this accommodation for care leavers guide to help you understand your accommodation options.

Jargon

Word	Definition
Bidding process	This is the way you express an interest in a property that you would like to rent. The districts and boroughs all have slightly different processes but details of properties are usually available online or by phone once you have registered.
Tenancy	The right to use land or live in a building in exchange for rent.
Deposit	Landlords ask for a sum of money, usually equivalent to one month's rent or more, which they keep for the time that you rent the property. At the end of the tenancy they will return it if they are happy there are no rent arrears, damage or missing items that need paying for.
Letting Agents	A letting agent looks after a landlords property and finds the best people to move into that house.
Private Landlord	Someone who owns a property that they rent out to earn money. It can be a person or a company.
District and Borough Councils	The County of Warwickshire is divided up into 5 separate administrative areas. Warwick and Stratford are Districts while Rugby, Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire are Boroughs. They are each responsible for Housing Services in their area.
Floating Support Worker	They provide housing and support for vulnerable people, helping them to develop the skills and confidence to live independently
Universal Credit	By and large Universal Credit (housing costs) has replaced housing benefit except for exempt accommodation such as supported accommodation/ lodgings.

Useful contacts

Organisation	Contact Numbers	Websites	Email Addresses
Warwickshire MASH	01926 414144	www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mash	N/A
Emergency Duty Team	01926 886922	N/A	N/A
St Basil's Floating Support	02476 889571	Referrals.Warwickshire@stbasils.org.uk	N/A
Supported Accommodation Atherstone, Nuneaton, Rugby (P3)	0808 164 6220	https://warks2.p3charity.org/	warksyp@p3charity.org
Leamington Spa, Stratford (St Basils)	01926 698 590	N/A	accommodationwarwickshire@stbasils.org.uk
Citizens Advice	03444 111 444	www.citizensadvice.org.uk	N/A
Housing officer	01926 414 841	N/A	samchurch@warwickshire.gov.uk
Asylum Support Tribunal	0800 681 6509	https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-asylum-support	asylumsupporttribunals@justice.gov.uk
Albert Kennedy Trust	0207 831 6562	www.akt.org.uk	gethelp@akt.org.uk
Warwick District Council	01926 450 000	www.warwickdc.gov.uk	contactus@warwickdc.gov.uk
Stratford District Council	01789 267 575	www.stratford.gov.uk	info@statford.gov.uk
Rugby Borough Council	01788 533 533	www.rugby.gov.uk	contact.centre@rugby.gov.uk
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council	024 7637 6376	www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk	customer.services@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk
North Warwickshire Borough Council	01827 715 341	www.northwarks.gov.uk	customerservices@northwarks.gov.uk
Talk to Frank	0300 123 6600 sms-82111	www.talktofrank.com	N/A
Compass (substance misuse support and advice)	01788 578227	N/A	N/A
Duty Worker Contact	01924 414 891	www.warwickshire.gov.uk.leavingcare	leavingcareduty@warwickshire.gov.uk
OUT OF HOURS CONTACT	01926 886 922	N/A	N/A

WCC want to make sure that you have the best possible experience, wherever you live. We'd really like you to tell us what you think about where you're living. We also want to know as soon as possible if something's wrong with the accommodation or support. Please email us @ cicc@warwickshire.gov.uk