

## 16 and 17 year old Homeless Housing Advice

This factsheet will offer you advice if you are 16 and 17 years old and homeless or at risk of homelessness. You are legally homeless if where you're staying is unsafe, unsuitable or if you have no legal right to stay there. You could be homeless if you're staying with friends temporarily because, for example, you're escaping from abuse or the risk of violence. Tamworth Borough Council works alongside Staffordshire Children's Services to ensure effective homelessness prevention services for 16 and 17 year olds.

It is in the best interests of young people to live with their immediate families or, where this is not safe or appropriate, with responsible adults in their wider family and friend's network.

### Housing or children's services?

It is important that you get the right support if you approach your local authority as homeless. You can go to either children's services or the homelessness department for help at Tamworth Borough Council for help. If you contact children's services, ask to speak to the duty social worker by contacting 0800 1313 126.

If you approach Tamworth Borough Council as homeless or threatened with homeless and you are under 18, a referral will be made to children's services on your behalf. This is to ensure the best support is offered to you and to alert the authorities of any potential safeguarding concerns. Regardless of which department in the council you approach, the focus will be to work with you to prevent you becoming homeless.

### Assessment

If you approach Tamworth Borough Council for assistance and inform us that you are homeless or threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days, an assessment of your housing circumstances and needs will be undertaken. If you feel unable to undertake the assessment alone, you may be able to get support from an advocacy service (details below). The assessment will cover the following points:

- The housing solutions officer will make enquiries to determine if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness. You will be asked a series of questions in order to help us complete the assessment. You will be asked about your address history, any medical conditions and any family you are in contact with.
- You will be asked questions about what support you currently have in place and what support you may need in the future. It is important that you are honest when asked these questions so that the team can agree with you the best course of action.
- During the assessment you may be asked if you can return home. Every effort will be made to speak to your parent/ guardian in order to decide if it is safe for you to return home or if you can stay with another relative.

- You will be asked about your wishes and feelings regarding your housing options during the assessment. We will be realist with you about what options may be suitable for your moving forward.

### **Children's Services- Home Visits**

In cases of confirmed homelessness, home visits will be carried out to families and carers unless there are safeguarding concerns are the property. These visits will be carried out jointly between Tamworth Borough Council Housing Solutions team and children's services at the earliest opportunity, usually within 5 days after your initial approach to us. The reason for this is to assess if it is suitable for you to return home and family reconciliation can be achieved. If you are unable to return home and this is confirmed by professionals, the joint assessment will explore accommodation options with wider family and friends.

### **What the law says:**

The Children Act 1989 sets out the responsibilities of Children's Services towards children and young people. Accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year olds is usually provided under Section 20 of the Children Act. If you are found to be a Child in Need and you meet the criteria for accommodation under s.20, the council must provide you with accommodation.

### **Financial Support from Children's Services:**

Most 16 or 17 year old are not eligible for benefits, however the Children services department of Tamworth Borough Council can help you by:

- Providing housing or helping you find your own place to live.
- Supporting you financially by paying you enough for your rent, food, bills, travel costs for education and training, clothing, pocket money and childcare if you need it.
- Giving you any other support you need, such as helping with continuing your education, finding work or dealing with personal problems.

### **Accommodation**

The types of accommodation which may be offered to you will depend on the outcome of the assessment undertaken. Your housing solutions officer and social worker will explore all accommodation options available to you. Your wishes and feelings around accommodation options will be considered during the assessment and any offer will be made to you based on how suitable it is. By law, any individual under the age of 18 cannot legally hold a tenancy, however they can hold a licence.

You could be offered a place with a foster family, in a hostel for young people, or in more independent accommodation.

## Support Services Contact

Name of Organisation	Who they can help	Contact details
<b>Runaway Helpline</b>	A 24/7 support service for those considering running away from home or those who have already run away. Working in partnership with the charity Missing People, they offer advice and practical support for young people.	Freephone: 116000 Website: <a href="http://www.runawayhelpline.org.uk">http://www.runawayhelpline.org.uk</a>
<b>The Mix</b>	Providing a range of support to under 25's including guidance on housing, mental health and relationships.	Freephone: 0808 808 4994 Website: <a href="http://www.themix.org.uk">http://www.themix.org.uk</a>
<b>St Basil's</b>	St Basils helps young people aged 16-25, across the West Midlands region, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	Tel: 0300 303 0099 Website: <a href="http://www.stbasils.org.uk">http://www.stbasils.org.uk</a>
<b>Tamworth Cornerstone Housing Association</b>	The service helps young, single people aged between 16 and 25 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Tamworth Cornerstone has a range of service that aims to support young people to gain the skills they need to live independently and to lead full and productive lives.	Tel: 01827 319918 Website: <a href="http://www.tcha.org.uk/">http://www.tcha.org.uk/</a>
<b>Relate</b>	Services include Relationship Counselling and mediation for individuals and couples. Support can be provided face to face with licensed local counsellors or via phone, email and live chat.	Tel: 0121 643 1638 Website: <a href="https://www.relate.org.uk/">https://www.relate.org.uk/</a>
<b>National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAC)</b>	Advocacy for children in care and those in need – including children subject to child protection plans, care leavers, children and young people with disabilities.	Tele: 0808 808 8700 Website: <a href="https://www.nyas.net">https://www.nyas.net</a>

## Contact us

The Housing Solutions team are based at Tamworth Borough Council, they are available to give full advice on your housing needs and explain what options are available to you should you find yourself Homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Contact: Email: [Housingsolutions@tamworth.gov.uk](mailto:Housingsolutions@tamworth.gov.uk)

Tel: 01827 709709.

**If you are homeless and the council offices are closed, then you can contact the homelessness out of hours service on 01827 709709 and choose option 1. You should only use this service if you have nowhere to stay immediately.**

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