

ARE YOU HOMELESS OR FACED WITH HOMELESSNESS?

FIRST STEPS

If you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in the next 56 days, you should contact the Homeless Assessment Prevention and Advice (HAPA) service to make a homeless application, details can be found at your nearest Council Housing Office. You will then be asked to fill in a form by the people at reception (*if you need help to fill in the form, the council staff should help*). After this, the Council will arrange for you to have an interview with a homeless officer.

THE INTERVIEW AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

During the homeless interview, a homeless assessment officer should explain about the process you will go through. If you are unclear about anything, ask them to explain a little more. They should then ask you if you have anywhere to return to. If the answer is no, the Council will provide you with temporary accommodation for 28 days, if this is required, while they investigate your homelessness claim. *Remember you don't have to accept the offer of temporary accommodation to make a homeless application if you have somewhere else to go temporarily.* The homeless assessment officer should then ask about your circumstances and the reasons you are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is best to give as much information as possible at this stage.

THE DECISION

Once the Council have made a decision about your homeless application, they should send you a letter explaining their decision, the reasons for it, and what happens next. The Council may decide that you are homeless and in need of housing or, they may judge that you are not eligible to be housed through the homeless route.

There are certain criteria or 'tests' that you must meet to be eligible to be housed through the homeless route, these are;

1. Are you homeless?

The Council determine this through investigating your circumstances.

2. Are you in priority need?

There are certain groups of people who are seen as being a priority for housing. This includes; *16-17 year olds, people leaving care, people who are pregnant or living with someone who is pregnant, those with mental health issues, people with addictions, people with physical disabilities, those with dependant children, people leaving armed forces or prison, and those who face or are threatened with violence or abuse.*

3. Have you made yourself intentionally homeless?

The Council investigate your claim to find out why you became homeless. If you have done something that has lead to you becoming homeless, the Council will not normally provide you with accommodation.

4. Do you have a local connection?

Normally to be housed by a local authority a homeless applicant has to be connected to that area. To have a local connection, the applicant has to have either lived in the area, have family from the area, or work in the area.

If you are unhappy with their decision you have a right to appeal it. This can be done through an advisor or advocate who can help you to challenge the Council's decision.

HOMELESS AFTER DARK

If you are homeless out with normal office hours you can contact the North Ayrshire Homeless Standby Team on 0800 0196 500.

LEAVING HOME IN AN EMERGENCY

Unless you are in danger, we would advise you to stay where you are until you are able to plan and organise your move. But if you HAVE to leave, go to the North Ayrshire website or Shelter's website for further information.

www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk

www.scotland.shelter.org.uk