



Specialist Advice with Support Service

This is personalised and practical housing, debt and welfare advice delivered by a Shelter expert on a one-off or casework basis. It helps people who need a little extra practical support with a housing related issue to keep their home and live independently.

Above all, our services prevent and tackle homelessness.

Enquiries

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Shelter

Why specialist advice with support is so important

There's little doubt that homelessness is on the rise. In the first quarter of 2016, it rose by 9% on the same period the previous year.¹

The links between housing, poverty and poor health are well proven but also complex. That's why we expertly identify and address the wider issues people face – offering the guidance needed to access, keep and improve a home.

This service uniquely meets the needs of clients whose needs fall in-between those addressed by advice services and support services. That means they have needs that aren't complex or high enough to meet the threshold for statutory support services but require a little practical help to put them into practice.

Examples include taking someone to an appointment, helping them attend a property viewing or helping them to move into a property.

Whatever the individual scenario, we calibrate the level of support needed.

71,540

households were living in temporary accommodation within Local Authorities in England at the end of March in 2016. (2)



What our Specialist Advice with Support Service does

A combined approach of advice and guidance with individual casework support enables individuals to act upon the help given. The service builds on our experience of working with elderly people, families and single parents, as well as those with mental health conditions or multiple complex needs.

- Prevention and early intervention to address a housing need before it turns into a genuine threat of homelessness
- Work with other agencies to ensure an integrated approach to service delivery
- Locate our advisers where clients are likely to visit (such as town centre offices or the offices of partner agencies like the Local Authority or Job Centre Plus)

The scope of our Specialist Advice with Support Service includes the following aspects:

Housing

- Homelessness
- Identifying and securing suitable accommodation
- Rent or mortgage arrears and possession action across all tenures
- Landlord issues, eg. disrepair, harassment
- Housing rights following relationship breakdown
- Affordability checks on properties
- Accompanying clients to viewings of properties
- Helping clients understand their rights and obligations as a tenant
- Resettlement support to ensure clients are settled in their new home, confident to manage their tenancy, and know where to access follow on support
- Contacting local landlords and hostels



Debt

- Negotiating payment plans, dealing with debt collectors or bailiffs
- Bankruptcy, debt relief orders, voluntary arrangements or administration orders
- Income maximisation
- Support to manage income and pay bills
- Producing budgeting plans
- Using template letters to send to creditors

Benefits and welfare

- Entitlement to benefits and tax credits
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Overpayments, underpayments and sanctions
- Reviews and appeals, including advice on tribunals
- Applying for benefits online including Discretionary Housing Payment
- Accessing other local services

Specialist Legal Advice

- Legal advice is available by telephone, email or face-to-face
- Legal aid and free legal advice, including representation in court
- Making a disrepair claim on behalf of clients against landlords and settling disputes over tenancy deposits
- Making a claim for unlawful eviction by or harassment against landlords





How we achieve **change**

We're committed to helping our clients enjoy settled accommodation that delivers all the benefits of independent living, economic wellbeing and better health.

Our Specialist Advice with Support Service enables us to work with individuals on specific issues. By helping people achieve sustainable outcomes which promote independent living, the service reduces their need for other statutory services.

Our key service aims:

- **Securing and maintaining settled accommodation**
- **Financial wellbeing**
- **Improved health**
- **Work, leisure, social, education and training benefits**
- **Prevention of eviction and compliance with statutory orders**
- **Greater community involvement**

61%

of clients who were having financial difficulties saw an improvement in their circumstances. (3)

“Shelter have proved to be an excellent partner. They have been clear about what they can deliver and have delivered consistently throughout our relationship. They communicate well and offer great insight.”

(Mark McPherson, Director of Strategy, Partnership and Innovation at Homeless Link – partnered Shelter on the London Plus project)

Shelter helps millions of people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness through our advice, support and legal services. And we campaign to make sure that, one day, no one will have to turn to us for help.

We're here so no one has to fight bad housing or homelessness on their own.

Please support us at shelter.org.uk

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shelter.org.uk

¹ DCLG, Homelessness Statistics, Table 770, Jan to Mar 16, published 30 June 2016.

² DCLG, Homelessness Statistics, Table 775, Jan to Mar 16, published 30 June 2016.

³ Shelter, 2016, Outcomes survey, Unpublished dataset