

**Information you will need to give us**  
**Before you phone us, please have these details ready.**

- Name, address and postcode of your service.
- Your name/name of practitioner working with the family, and contact details.
- Family name of your client.
- Client details – date of birth, age, ethnicity, gender, any disability.
- Details of children – number of children, dates of birth.
- Postcode of where the family is living.
- Names of relevant local authorities.
- Case details so far, particularly what kind of tenancy the family holds.
- Details of any previous contact with Shelter regarding this client's housing situation:
  - date of contact
  - name of Shelter adviser
  - unique case-reference number provided by Shelter.

For more information about Shelter's Children's Service, or for access to online housing advice, please visit our website:

[shelter.org.uk/childrensservice](https://shelter.org.uk/childrensservice)

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Registered charity in England and Wales (263710)  
and in Scotland (SC002327)

Shelter

# The Shelter Children's Service Advice Line

## 0845 421 4444\*

(For professionals' use only.)



**Lines open 8am–8pm, Monday to Friday.**

\*Calls cost less than the local rate.

Free advice and information for service professionals to best support families experiencing housing problems.

Shelter

**Do you believe a child's wellbeing is being affected by their family's housing situation?**

**Do you always know what advice to give a family about their housing problems?**

### **Who we are and what we do**

The Shelter Children's Service Advice Line helps professionals, such as yourselves, to support families in housing need. It offers you direct access to our specialist housing advisers who can provide expert information on housing issues to best support the families you work with.

Our aim is to reach the children in families that are facing housing problems or those at risk of homelessness, who are living in temporary accommodation or are statutorily homeless.

We recognise that families without stable housing are among the most vulnerable in our communities, and we know that the education, health and emotional development of children living in poor quality or temporary accommodation can suffer significantly as a result.

Whether you are a children's service professional, or service co-ordinator, the Advice Line will provide you with a highly relevant service for many of the families with children that you work with.

### **Confidentiality and data protection**

Shelter is an independent organisation. Information you give us is confidential\* and will not be shared with anyone without the client's full agreement. In line with the Data Protection Act 1998, we keep case details securely on file for six years and the client may request a copy of their records from us at any time.

\*We only refer details in exceptional circumstances, if there's a 'child at risk' or vulnerable person.

**Please note: this Advice Line is specifically for the use of professionals working with families, not for use by clients directly.**

### **How we can help**

This service is free for you to use. Our confidential and independent housing advice will be of help to you if families using your centre or scheme are facing any of the following housing issues:

- bad housing conditions/disrepair
- rent arrears
- mortgage problems
- loss of accommodation due to family breakdown
- overcrowding
- living in temporary accommodation
- housing benefit problems
- eviction
- or any other housing-related issue.

Our advisers can provide information and advice on a full range of housing issues, including:

- explaining the rights of council tenants or people with private sector tenancies
- explaining the legal duties of local authorities
- identifying families who may be statutorily homeless
- investigating people's housing options.

As well as providing you with housing information on a consultancy basis, we are able to refer more complex housing issues to one of our Shelter advice centres where an adviser can support the family directly. Where appropriate, we can:

- liaise with landlords and housing associations
- advocate on behalf of your clients.

**Please see overleaf for important information.**