

# Personal housing plans

**This factsheet looks at why you are given a personal housing plan if you apply for help as homeless.**

You can apply to the council for help if you are homeless or likely to be homeless in the next 8 weeks. How much help you will get depends on your circumstances.

## Creating a personal housing plan

After you apply for help the council will assess your housing and support needs. This will include looking at what you can afford and any particular needs you have, for example relating to your health.

The council will then draw up a personal housing plan (PHP) for you. The aim of the PHP is that you and the council work together – for no less than 8 weeks – to try to help you keep your current home if it is suitable, or to find you somewhere to live.

You should be given a copy of your PHP.

Not everyone gets a PHP. If you don't meet immigration and residence conditions the council only has to give you general advice and information.

## What's in your PHP

Your PHP contains steps for you and the council to take. Some of your steps will be compulsory. Others are 'recommended'. All the steps should be reasonable.

## Emergency accommodation

If it's likely you are homeless, meet immigration and residence conditions and are in 'priority need' the council must provide you emergency accommodation so you have somewhere to stay while you and the council work on the steps in your PHP.

## Agreeing the steps

The steps in your plan should take account of your wishes. The council will ask you to agree to the steps in your plan.

Explain clearly if you think a step is not reasonable, for example because it isn't practical or realistic for you.

## Examples of reasonable steps

Your steps might be to:

- claim benefits
- look for an affordable private tenancy – you may be asked to widen your search area if you can't afford where you are
- work with a service that can help you.

The council's steps might be to:

- negotiate with your landlord for you to stay in your current home
- arrange mediation if your parents/family have said you cannot live at home
- increase security at home if you want to remain there but are at risk of violence.
- help you claim benefits to help you pay your rent and pay off arrears
- give you a list of landlords to contact (or contact them for you if you can't do it)
- provide a deposit.

## Updating your PHP

The council should change the steps in your PHP if they are no longer reasonable or your circumstances change. Tell the council why you think a step in your PHP should be changed or removed.

## Cooperating with the PHP

The council can stop helping you if it decides you have deliberately and unreasonably refused to take a compulsory step in your PHP. It can only do this after it has given you a written warning and given you reasonable time to do what is asked. If you still don't, the council has to write to you again.

## Challenging the council's decisions

You can ask the council to review a decision:

- about its own steps in your PHP if you think there are other actions it should take which would help you.
- to stop helping you after 8 weeks, if you think it didn't do enough to follow its own steps in your PHP
- that you have deliberately and unreasonably not cooperated with it

You must ask for a review within 21 days of the council's decision.

If you are on a low income you may qualify for [legal aid](#) to help you.

## Further advice

You can get further advice from Shelter's free\* housing advice helpline (0808 800 4444), a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice office, or by visiting [england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice](http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice)

\*Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.



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### Note

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