

## 4. Refuge accommodation

If you are at risk of abuse you can work with Test Valley Borough Council to secure a refuge place.

## 5. Supported Accommodation

You may be referred to accommodation which includes emergency beds and rooms in a hostel, shared accommodation that offers support in the form of individual plans. Your case worker can refer you to projects that are deemed suitable.

## 6. Family Hostel

You and your household may be secured accommodation at our family hostel which is managed by Aster. Your case worker will decide if you are eligible for this and refer you to the project. This is not a direct access hostel, you can not refer yourself.

## 7. Temporary accommodation

Your case worker may nominate you to our stock of temporary accommodation that is managed by our partner housing associations. This accommodation will remain available to you until you are either successful in securing accommodation in the private sector or via Hampshire Home choice.

The above options are just some of the examples on how you can work with the Council in securing accommodation when you are homeless.

Please note the Council can make a non-priority decision at any stage through out the relief duty. If you have been found in non-priority need:

- The Council will notify you of this decision in writing.
- You will have the right to appeal this decision.
- If you are in non-priority need the Council still has a duty to provide you and assist you with reasonable steps in trying to secure accommodation but they do not have a duty to secure you emergency accommodation or provide you with accommodation.

**Test Valley Borough Council**

**Housing and Environmental Health Service**

**Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover,  
Hampshire, SP10 3AJ**

**Tel: 01264 368000**

**Former Magistrates Court, Romsey,  
Hampshire, SO51 8AQ**

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**[www.testvalley.gov.uk](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk)**

# Securing accommodation when you are homeless



[www.testvalley.gov.uk](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk)



TestValleyBC



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The Council's 'relief duty' and securing accommodation when you are homeless.

## 1. What does it mean to be homeless?

Homelessness does not necessarily mean not having a home. Even if you have a roof over your head you can still be homeless. This is because you may not have any rights to stay where you live or your home might be unsuitable for you and your family.

### What situations mean you might be homeless?

- Staying in emergency accommodation such as hostel or bed and breakfast
- At risk of violence or abuse in your home
- Living somewhere that you have no legal right to stay or live in
- Forced to live apart from your family, or someone you would normally live with, because your accommodation isn't suitable
- Temporarily staying with friends or family
- Living in very poor conditions that affect your health
- Living somewhere that you can't afford to pay for
- A disaster such as a fire or flood
- Facing eviction from a landlord
- Relationship breakdown and you have no legal rights to remain in the accommodation



## 2. How do I secure accommodation if I am homeless?

Everybody is entitled to general housing advice.

If you are eligible, homeless and in priority need you may be entitled to interim emergency accommodation. The Council must help you secure suitable accommodation for you and your household and will work with you to secure longer term suitable accommodation.

If you are eligible and homeless (regardless of priority need or intentionally homeless) the Council may owe you the 'relief' homelessness duty.

If you do not have a local connection to Test Valley Borough Council, then the Council may refer you to a local authority where you have a local connection, and they will owe you the relief duty. In these circumstances, Test Valley Borough Council will conduct the housing needs assessment before referring you and your household.

### How do I get help to secure accommodation under the relief duty?

- Test Valley Borough Council will notify you in writing if they owe you the relief duty
- The Council will produce a personalised housing plan outlining reasonable steps for both parties on how to secure accommodation
- If you were already owed the prevention duty, your case officer will do another housing needs assessment and update your personalised housing plan. The Council will write to you bringing the prevention duty to an end and confirm that they owe you the relief duty.
- You and the Council will work together to secure accommodation to relieve your homelessness. This does not mean the Council has to house you, but it does mean the Council must take reasonable steps to help you find somewhere suitable to live.

- You and the Council have 56 days to relieve your homelessness

### **3. What options are available for me to secure accommodation?**

#### **1. Private Rented Accommodation**

The 'Rent Deposit Loan Scheme'. The Council can lend you the deposit/rent in advance to secure housing in private rented accommodation. Your case worker will advise you what you are entitled to and it will be outlined in your personalised housing plan. The accommodation you secure does not have to be in Test Valley.

Your case worker will ensure that the accommodation is affordable and help you apply for any relevant benefits that you may qualify for. Your case worker can provide you with details of landlords, letting agents and websites to look for private rented accommodation.

#### **2. Social and affordable rented accommodation**

You can apply for accommodation with housing associations via the Council's housing register, Hampshire Home Choice. All social and affordable rent properties in Test Valley are advertised through Hampshire Home Choice. You are responsible for bidding for accommodation you wish to be considered for and to keep your application up to date and renew it every year. These may be reasonable steps in your personalised housing plan.

There is a considerable wait for social housing in Test Valley.

#### **3. Shared housing, lodging and family**

You can arrange or apply for shared housing, renting a room, staying with family and friends.