

Housing and Mental Health



www.testvalley.gov.uk



TestValleyBC



@TestValleyBC

Key Advice

- Your mental health and housing can or might affect each other
- Housing problems can have an impact on your mental health- poor mental health can make it harder to cope with housing problems or housing problems/homelessness can make your mental health worse
- If you have a housing emergency or are homeless you must contact your local housing authority immediately
- You must get professional housing advice immediately if you have a housing problem
- You can receive support and treatment for your mental health problems
- We do not underestimate the impact that housing issues such as the condition of your property, affordability, insecurity of tenancies and benefit welfare reform, has on your mental well being

Housing Advice Available

Housing Options Service at TVBC

You or a representative can contact Test Valley Borough Council's housing option's team. You can speak to a housing options officer for advice on your housing problem. You can contact them on;

01264 368600

www.testvalley.gov.uk

housingadvice@testvalley.gov.uk

The earlier you contact us the more successful you can be in trying to resolve your housing situation. If the housing options team can not resolve the problem they will be able to sign post you to the relevant organisation.

Referral to the Housing Options Team

If you are threatened with homelessness or homeless, your mental health worker is legally bound to refer your case to the local authority. This is known as the 'duty to refer'. Your mental health worker can access the referral form on **www.testvalley.gov.uk**. We need your consent for the referral to be sent to us. Once the referral has been completed it needs to be sent to **dutytorefer@testvalley.gov.uk**.

What if you are homeless and suffer from poor mental health?

You need to contact the Housing Options team at TVBC immediately. (Contact details are on the previous page). The Housing Options team will have a duty to try and relieve your homelessness. Please note that the housing options team will not have a duty to secure accommodation for everyone who is homeless.

You will be invited in for a housing options interview. Together, we will work and agree a personalised housing plan detailing reasonable steps for you and the Housing Service to take to try and relieve your homelessness.

Test Valley Borough Council has some very useful leaflets available to access via their website, www.testvalley.gov.uk or you can collect them from the council offices, these are;

- Preventing Homelessness
- Securing accommodation when homeless
- The rights of homeless people or those threatened with homelessness
- Directory of services that details the help that is available to homeless people and how to access that help

You can also contact a specialist organisation about your housing

Other organisations can also offer advice on many housing problems and can also advise you on issues such as losing your home, getting repairs done or resolving problems with landlords or neighbours

- You can contact the 'Citizens Advice Bureau' either in Andover or Romsey
Andover CAB-01264 365534
Romsey CAB-01794 516378
- Shelter - www.shelter.org.uk.
- Your housing association/landlord. A list of all social landlords in Test Valley can be found at www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk
- Contact an advocate. Advocates can help you get your voice heard. This can be extremely valuable if you're finding it hard to get access to the services you're entitled to. Advocacy services can be found on Mind's website www.mind.org.uk
- Crisis- provides a wide range of services for homeless people www.crisis.org.uk
- Homeless UK-searchable database of shelters, day centres and advice services for homeless people www.homeless.org.uk

- The Pavement-provides advice and information for homeless people www.thepavement.org.uk
- If you're over 60 you can contact Age Uk (England), they can provide information and support for older people including advice on housing www.ageuk.org.uk
- If you're under 25 you can contact Centrepont. Centrepont provide help for 16-25 year olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and can be contacted on 0808 800 0661

How do you get support and treatment for your mental health problems?

Homelessness and housing problems can trigger mental health problems which may include depression, anxiety, panic attacks, psychosis, self harm and suicidal feelings. To access support and treatment for your mental health, these options might be available to you;

- Visit your GP. GP's are experienced and often identify housing issues when discussing factors involved with your mental health.
- Contact Andover or Romsey's mental health team. These teams are run jointly by the Health and Adult Services. They can help you in the community whether you have a short term mental illness or need on-going support. You can find further information at www.tvcs.org.uk/FAQs/andover-community-mental-health-team or www.nhs.uk
- Contact 'Together'.

Together provides mental health support to people in Hampshire helping you to manage mental health and improve your wellbeing, peer support and a program of activities, including mindfulness and managing anxiety sessions. Together can also help you find appropriate housing and managing a tenancy. Their contact details are as follows;

1. Intensive accommodation support; www.together-uk.org/our-mental-health-services/housing
2. Supported accommodation ; www.together-uk.org/supported-accommodation-services
3. Community support; www.together-uk.org/our-mental-health-services/community-support Community support can assist people who have moved into their own homes.

4. Main website address is www.together-uk.org

- Call, text or email MIND's information line to see if they can help you find a local group or service. The number is 0300 123 3393 or Text 86463
- Approach your local MIND service and see if they have a peer support, befriending or other service that might help you. Test Valley's local MIND service can be contacted on Andover- 01264 332297 or Romsey 07739 917731
- Try building up a support network by using telephone support, for example the Samaritans which can be contacted on 116 123. Access peer support groups. Access 'Elefriends' which is MIND's supportive online community resource. You can find out more about this at www.mind.org.uk on the 'elefriends' page

Look after yourself

No matter what your housing situation is currently, here are some ideas that might help;

- Take small steps - You might feel overwhelmed or unsure where to start.
- Writing a list of organisations you need to contact and contact one at a time. On TVBC's website there is a directory services available , this can be found at www.testvalley.gov.uk
- Keep a routine - This will feel like you have some control over things
- Be kind to yourself - It is important not to blame yourself for things that are outside of your control or if you feel you've made a mistake
- Try to exercise - this can be really helpful for your mental wellbeing
- Take time out
- Learn ways to cope with stress.

MIND has some really useful pages on their website about managing stress, improving and maintaining your mental wellbeing and how to increase your self esteem. These can be found at www.mind.org.uk

Test Valley Borough Council
Housing, Health & Communities Service

Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 3AJ
Tel: 01264 368000

Former Magistrates Court, Church Street, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8AQ
Tel: 01794 527700

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