

What is best for me?

**Youth Homelessness
advice for 16 & 17
year olds**



SURREY

You have told the council you are homeless or threatened with homelessness and so we are carrying out an assessment of your needs.

What is Homelessness?

Being homeless means not having a safe place to call home.

Causes of Homelessness

A number of factors can lead to a young person becoming homeless. Some young people often become homeless because it is safer to leave home than to stay. The following are some of the causes of homelessness:

- violence,
- abuse,
- family breakdown
- problems with mental health

What Happens Next?

The plan is for a social worker to complete an assessment of your needs within 10 working days. As part of this process the social worker will talk to you and your family/those who have been caring for you.

Possible Outcomes for the Assessment

- We may decide that you can return to home to your family
- As part of this process, your Social Worker may undertake mediation work between you and your family to ensure your safe return home.

- It may be agreed you should go and stay with relatives or other responsible adults in your life.
- We may decide that you need to be provided with accommodation by Children's Services and be looked after by the local authority and will have an allocated social worker.
- If you don't think you need to be looked after you may still be able to apply for supported accommodation. The social worker will need to assess your situation and your needs and will support your application if necessary.

Your Wishes and Feelings

If the outcome of your assessment decides you are homeless, we will work with you and your family to support a return home to your family. We will also talk to you about what your options are and ask you to tell us what you think is best for you.

This leaflet gives you some more information about what your options might be.

Option 1 – Looked After Child (S20)

You can be looked after by social services.

- If you are looked after, we will carry on working with you/your family to support a return home.
- You will be provided with accommodation and support. The type of accommodation and support you will be offered will depend on your needs. Your wishes and feelings will be taken into account in deciding what accommodation is best for you. For example, it may be foster care, a residential home, a placement in a family or someone else's home or a supported living hostel. This accommodation will be provided up to your 18th birthday.
- If you stay in care you will have a care plan and a pathway plan that sets out what help you may need to achieve your longer terms plans to go to college or university, into an apprenticeship or work.
- You will have regular visits from a social worker.
- Your case will be reviewed by an independent Reviewing Officer.
- The Independent Reviewing Officer must check that the council is looking after you and listening to what you have to say.
- Your right to support as a Care Leaver will depend on how long you are in care. As a care leaver, you may be entitled to receive support from the Local Authority beyond the age of 18.
- You will be provided with support to plan your move into adult life.

Option 2 – Supported Accommodation (S17)

If you are unable to return home and do not wish to be accommodated under S20, your allocated worker will discuss your options for supported accommodation with you.

- They will assess situation in detail and decide whether you are homeless or not.
- 16/17-year olds who are homeless but do not want to be looked after by Children's Services are usually considered to be in priority need of accommodation.
- You may be provided with temporary accommodation initially until supported accommodation becomes available.

You will be responsible for paying your own rent and living costs. This is likely to mean you will need to claim benefits. Housing Benefit will normally cover the rent, but you will have to pay the weekly service charge out of your income or other benefits. The weekly service charge rate varies from £8 - £12 depending on the provider of the accommodation.

- You will be allocated a Key worker who will support you in your claims for benefits and help you settle and support you in temporary accommodation until you are settled in supported accommodation.
- In Supported accommodation, you will be allocated a Worker who will support you in managing your budget, paying your services charges, accessing education/training/apprenticeship/employment opportunities and with accessing other services (e.g. re-registering with GP, youth services, counselling).
- If you fail to pay your rent or service charges, you are likely to be evicted if you do not agree a payment plan to pay the rent or service charge arrears.

- If you are evicted from your supported accommodation because of something you have done (or failed to do – such as paying rent or breaking the rules set out in the supported accommodation) the council is likely to decide you are ‘intentionally homeless’ and will no longer have a duty to provide you with accommodation.
- You will be able to live in the supported accommodation beyond 18 years of age.
- Your support Key Worker will help you move on to more independent accommodation.

If you need any further information about your options please ask the social worker carrying out your assessment.

We may give you a list of people/professionals who can provide you with independent advice about these options.

Please sign below to confirm that you fully understand the information provided:

Name-----

Date-----

Useful Information:

Surrey Children's Services

Request for Support Team:

Availability: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

- **Phone: 0300 470 9100**
- **Out of hours phone:** 01483 517898 to speak to our [emergency duty team](#).
- **Email: emails are dealt with during normal office hours**

For concerns for a child or young person:
csmash@surreycc.gov.uk

Fax number: 01483 519862

Centre Point:

Telephone Number: 0800 587 5158

<https://centrepoin.org.uk/youth-homelessness/>

Borough/District Council Contacts:

<u>North West -</u> Runnymede: 01932 838383 Surrey Heath: 01276 707100 Woking: 01483 743 834	<u>North East -</u> Spelthorne: 01784 446383 Elmbridge: 01372 474590 Epsom & Ewell: 01372 732000
<u>South West -</u> Guildford: 01483 444244 Waverley: 01483 523188	<u>South East -</u> Mole Valley: 01306 885001 Reigate & Banstead: 01737 276790 Tandridge: 01883 722000