

Housing Advice for Homeless 16 and 17 year olds

This factsheet will offer you advice if you are 16 and 17 years old and homeless or at risk of homelessness. You are legally homeless if where you're staying is unsafe, unsuitable or if you have no legal right to stay there.

You could be homeless if you're staying with friends temporarily because, for example, you're escaping from abuse or the risk of violence. It is in the best interests of young people to live with their immediate families. Where this is not safe or appropriate, with responsible adults in their wider family and friend's network.

Tamworth Borough Council works alongside Staffordshire Children's Services to ensure effective homelessness prevention services for 16- and 17-year-olds. Further information can be found using this link: [Joint Homeless 16 and 17 Year Olds Protocol](#).

More information on support available can also be found on the [Staffordshire Connects Website](#).

If you are 16 or 17 years old, and need to find accommodation when you leave care, Staffordshire County Council has a legal duty to help you prepare for independent living. Their contact details are:

Staffordshire Looked After Children Service Team

Tel: 01782 296290

Email: leaving.care@staffordshire.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Number: 01785 354030

If you are a homeless 16- or 17-year-old, and you are not already known to Children's services social care team, then you will need to be assessed under the Children's Act to determine the best option for you.

Help Available

It is important that you get the right support and assistance.

Children services can be contacted on:

Staffordshire Childrens Advice & Support Service - 0300 111 8007 and select option 1

Emergency Duty Team for out of hours- 0345 604 2886

If you are 16 or 17 and approach Tamworth Borough Council as homeless or at risk of homelessness, a referral will be made to children's services on your behalf. This is to ensure the best support is offered to you and to alert the authorities of any potential safeguarding concerns. Regardless of which department you approach, the focus will be to work with you to prevent you becoming homeless.

Children's Services:

The Children Act 1989 sets out the responsibilities of Children's Services towards children and young people. Accommodation for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds is usually provided under Section 20 of the Children Act. If you are found to be a Child in Need and you meet the criteria for accommodation under s.20, the Staffordshire County Council must provide you with accommodation.

Most 16- or 17-year-old are not eligible for benefits, however the Children services department of Staffordshire County Council can help you by:

- Providing housing or helping you find your own place to live.
- Supporting you financially by paying you enough for your rent, food, bills, travel costs for education and training, clothing, pocket money and childcare if you need it.
- Giving you any other support you need, such as helping with continuing your education, finding work, or dealing with personal problems.

Housing Advice

If you are 16 or 17 years old and approach Tamworth Borough Council for assistance and inform us that you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, a referral will be made to Childrens services for a joint assessment.

If we determine you may be homeless in the next 56 days, an assessment of your housing circumstances and needs will be undertaken. If you feel unable to undertake the assessment alone, you may be able to get support from an advocacy service (details below). The assessment will cover the following points:

- An assessment will be carried out to determine if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness. You will be asked questions about your address history, any medical conditions, and any family you are in contact with.
- You will be asked questions about what support you currently have in place and what support you may need in the future. It is important that you are honest when asked these questions so that the team can agree with you the best course of action.
- You may be asked if you can return home. Every effort will be made to speak to your parent/ guardian to decide if it is safe for you to return home or if you can stay with another relative.
- You will be asked about your wishes and feelings regarding your housing options during the assessment. We will be realistic with you about what options may be suitable for you moving forward.

Home Visits

In cases of confirmed homelessness, home visits may be carried out to families and carers unless there are safeguarding concerns at the property. These visits will be carried out jointly between Tamworth Borough Council Housing Solutions team and children's services to assess if it is suitable for you to return home and family reconciliation can be achieved. If you are unable to return home and this is confirmed by professionals, the joint assessment will explore accommodation options with wider family and friends.

Accommodation options

The types of accommodation which may be offered to you will depend on the outcome of the assessment undertaken. Your housing solutions officer and social worker will explore all accommodation options available to you. Your wishes and feelings around accommodation options will be considered during the assessment and any offer will be made to you based on how suitable it is.

By law, anyone under the age of 18 cannot legally hold a tenancy, however they can hold a license. You could be offered a place with a foster family, in supported accommodation or a hostel for young people, or in more independent accommodation.

If you are 16 or 17 years old, you **cannot go on the housing register** unless you are leaving care or you are owed the main homelessness duty.

Support Services Contacts

The following are useful support services contacts which can help care leavers:

Name of Organisation	Who they can help	Contact details
Centrepont	Centrepont help 16–25-year-olds into a safe place to live, provide a health assessment and plan support for their individual mental and physical health needs. Centrepont is the UK's leading charity for homeless young people.	Tel: 0808 800 0661 Website: Centrepont
St Basil's	St Basils helps young people aged 16-25, across the West Midlands region, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	Youthline Tel: 0300 303 0099 Head office: 0121 7722483 Email: info@stbasils.org.uk Website: St Basils
Tamworth Cornerstone Housing Association	The service helps young, single people aged between 16 and 25 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Tamworth Cornerstone has a range of service that aims to support young people to gain the skills they need to live independently and to lead full and productive lives.	Tel: 01827 319918 Email: info@t-c-h-a.co.uk Website: Tamworth Cornerstone Housing Association (tcha.org.uk)
The Mix	Providing a range of support to under 25's including guidance on housing, mental health, and relationships.	Freephone: 0808 808 4994 Twitter: @themix Facebook: The Mix Website: Get Support - The Mix
National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAC)	Advocacy for children in care and those in need – including children subject to child protection plans, care leavers, children, and young people	Tele: 0808 808 1001 Email: help@nyas.net WhatsApp: 07494788875 Text: 85258 Website: The National Youth Advocacy Service NYAS
Runaway Helpline	A 24/7 support service for those considering running away from home or those who have already run away. Working in partnership with the charity Missing People, they offer advice and practical support for young	Freephone or Text: 116000 Website: Homepage - Runaway Helpline

Contact us

The Housing Solutions team are based at Tamworth Borough Council, they are available to give full advice on your housing needs and explain what options are available to you should you find yourself Homeless or threatened with homelessness. If you are 16 or 17years old a referral will still need to be made to Childrens services.

Contact: Email: Housingsolutions@tamworth.gov.uk

Tel: 01827 709709

If you are homeless and the council offices are closed, then you can contact the homelessness out of hours service on 01827 709709 and choose option 1. You should only use this service if you have nowhere to stay immediately.