

Help in Kirklees

if you are aged 16 or 17
and are homeless or
at risk of being homeless



Facing the possibility of having nowhere to live or leaving home suddenly, can be a very stressful and a difficult time. It's important you have the right support and advice, so you don't become homeless in the first place. But if you can't stay where you are, you need to understand what the best options are for you.

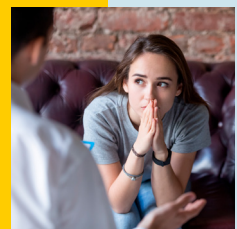
Being at risk of homelessness

You don't need to be actually homeless to get help in Kirklees. We want to help you if you are really worried that you might need to leave your family home very soon, but you are still living at home now. We can help you to try to work on any difficulties, including finding ways you can carry on living at home, or planning with you and your parent/carer(s) what else needs to happen.

What is being homeless?

You don't need to be sleeping on the streets to be homeless. If you are staying somewhere that is not safe for you, or you don't have any legal rights to be in that accommodation (like sleeping on someone's sofa) you can be supported as homeless. Whenever possible, as long as it's safe for you, it's better to stay at home, trying to sort things out, with help and support, or waiting and planning a move, is preferred to becoming homeless.

Remember... leaving home at a really young age is hard. It's not just us saying this, lots of young people who have been homeless will tell you this too.



Where can you get help and support?

If you are thinking of, or have to leave home, there are lots of things to think about...

Talking the situation through with a trusted adult can be helpful

If you need advice or help, you can talk to:

- Family and Friends
- School or College
- YES Workers
- Social Workers
- Youth Workers
- Young People's Housing Solutions Officers.

Professionals will:

- listen to you and find out what is happening
- make sure you are safe
- explore your situation and provide advice and information
- help you and your family to come up with solutions
- support you until a solution is found.

Don't worry if you receive lots of information, there is space at the back of this booklet to write down any notes or questions you have!



Finding out about your situation...

We need to understand your situation in order to work out the best way we can help you.

If it is felt that you are at risk of homelessness, or are homeless, then Kirklees Children's Services and Kirklees Housing Solutions Service will speak with you about a '**Joint Assessment**' which is a way of finding out more about you and covers your housing situation, family life, and other things about you (like your safety, college/training, your health, what your interests are or what you feel you are good at).

A joint assessment will outline what your needs are, and inform a plan of what needs to happen next.

Kirklees Children's Services and Kirklees Housing Solutions have a legal duty to complete two assessments. A **Child in Need Assessment** and a **Statutory Homeless Assessment**. It helps to work out with you what your options are and what sort of help you might need. In Kirklees we undertake these duties as a Joint Assessment.

During your assessment there may be some things that are difficult for you to talk about, but it is really important you give the social worker and the housing officer as much information as possible about why you are homeless and the reasons you can't return home.

You can take someone you trust to the joint assessment.

What if I need somewhere to stay while the joint assessment is being completed?

You may be able to continue to stay at home, or return home, as long as it is safe to do this.

If you can't go home, first of all we will talk to you and your parent/carer(s), to see if there is a family member or a friend where you can stay safely.

If there is nowhere else, we can look at emergency accommodation for you. This might be for a night or two, until we can find a family member or friend for you to stay with.

We will make sure that the accommodation will be suitable for you. For example, it could be:

Supported accommodation – with other young people who have been homeless, or are leaving care - This is with 24 hour support on site.

Nightstop – where you stay with a family in their spare room. All Nightstop hosts have been checked and trained to have young people to stay on a night by night basis.

Foster care – with this option you would need to become a 'Child Looked After', which means you would be in the care of Children's Services.

While you are in emergency accommodation, we will keep on trying to help you to return to your parent/carer(s) home, or to a family member or friend, if this is safe.

What happens after the joint assessment is complete?

There are few things that could happen, for example:

- You might be able to return back to your home, with support from a number of services.
- You might be able to live with a relative or with a trusted and safe friend – again with help from a number of services.
- You might be assessed as being homeless and in need of accommodation. The right accommodation will be discussed with you so as you are aware of what will happen.

After the Joint Assessment, Children's Services will continue to undertake an assessment to make sure that you are safe, and your needs are met. Part of the conversation with you will be about how we support you which can be via Child in Need, or as a Child Looked After. To help you make a decision about what is best for you we will share with you what both mean. You will be helped no matter what you choose, and you can change your mind!

If you decide you want to be supported as a 'Child in Need' you will:

- Have a support worker provided in supported accommodation
- Have a social worker who will visit and need to see you regularly
- Have a 'Child in Need' plan (a support plan) to ensure you have support – this could be for a few months or until you are 18 years old
- Given help to claim benefits (if you are eligible)
- Will be required to make payments out of your money towards your bills
- Get practical help if you need it to develop your independence skills
- Receive support to help you to settle into your new home
- Be offered help to set up your new home with any furniture that may be needed
- Be helped to find a house/flat to move to when you are ready to do this.



If you decide you want to be supported as a **'Child Looked After'** you will:

- Have a Social Worker who will visit and need to see you regularly
- Have the Council as your 'corporate parent'
- Have appropriate accommodation arranged by the Council until you are 18 years old
- Have a review with an Independent Reviewing Officer – you can be involved in the review meetings and hear what is spoken about
- Be offered a health assessment and a review of this each year until you are 18 years old
- You will have access to the Care Leaver Offer
- Will not be able to claim any benefits until you are 18 years old – Kirklees Council will pay for your accommodation, and give you an allowance
- Have a 'Pathway Plan' which is about you, including your future, living independently, your health, education, training and employment, finance, family, and housing
- Have a 'Personal Adviser' to help you as a care leaver. This applies to young people who are looked after more than 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, including some time after their 16th birthday
- Have support where you live until you are 18 years old
- Make payments out of your allowance towards your bills
- Be helped to find a house/flat to move to when you are ready to do this.

What Next?

What will happen about my housing situation in the long term?

Whether you choose to be supported as a 'Child in Need' or 'Child Looked After', Kirklees Council will aim to provide you with good preparation, a gradual transition and flexible ongoing support to help you achieve a successful move to independent living when it is agreed the time is right for you.

The joint working arrangement between Children's Services and Housing Solutions Service will better prepare you for the realities of living independently and they will involve you in the planning and decisions about your housing options. They will aim to be realistic about what is available for you in Kirklees, and provide you with flexible support to help you settle in.

What are some of my housing options long term?

Housing Solutions have commissioned Supported Accommodation Providers who offer 24-hour individual support to 16-21 year olds. These types of accommodation are fully furnished flats or studio rooms depending on availability and suitability. Each young person is given a support worker and young people are expected to attend planned sessions with their worker.

Your support worker will liaise closely with Kirklees Housing Solutions Service through the referral process and throughout your stay, until all parties - including you, agree you are ready for independent living.

Once you and a Social Worker or the Supported Accommodation Provider agree you are ready for independence, your HSO (Housing Solutions Officer) will support you to explore your options and help you find your move-on home, this could be with

family, in a private rented property or Social Housing if this is what you decide is right for you.

You will be supported with making a Housing Application and looking for suitable properties by your HSO right through until you secure your own tenancy where you will then receive tenancy support, if you agree. The HSO will help set up your utilities, claim benefits if appropriate; help you to avoid debt; and address any other issues you may need support with around your tenancy. You won't be alone.

Your rights

Your Social Worker will explain your rights to you. It can sound complicated but...

- **Children's Services** are responsible under the Children Act 1989 for ensuring that 16 and 17 year olds who are assessed as needing accommodation have full support.
- **Kirklees Housing Solutions** are responsible for helping you under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. If you don't want to be a 'Child Looked After' and you are homeless and 'eligible' then you will be provided with support.

Help

If you are 16 or 17 years old and you are homeless or worried about becoming homeless; contact Kirklees Children's Services, Duty and Advice Team on **01484 456848**.

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/housing/housing-advice-care-leaver-under-25.aspx>



Notes

I have read and understand this booklet

It has been explained to me that I can be 'accommodated' by Children's Services under section 20 of the 1989 Act

I have been offered an advocate to help me understand my options

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