



Housing Resource Pack

Welcome to the accessible version of our information for young people in Somerset. If you have any suggestions of how we can improve the document's accessibility, please feel free to email us.

To get to any section in the table of contents just press CTRL and click on the heading, or on mobile click on the subject in the table of contents.

If you are reading a printed version, please be aware that it may not be the original, latest text. Visit our website to ensure you are using our latest version. Always check with a CA adviser if you want to be sure of our latest advice.

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What does that mean? A guide to Private Renting Terms: Part 1

Tenancy

A tenancy is a type of contract. The landlord and tenant must have the intention to enter into a legally binding agreement. It can be a written document but could also be verbal.

It sets out what is expected as part of the agreement e.g. the length of the tenancy, the amount of rent you need to pay, what you should expect the landlord to do and what you are expected to do as a tenant. The most common tenancy for private renting is an Assured Shorthold Tenancy.

Security Deposit

A sum of money taken from a tenant at the beginning of the tenancy held against non-payment of the rent and any damage to the property (above and beyond reasonable wear and tear - we will explain what this means below).

Rent and Arrears

Rent is a fee (usually monthly) paid in exchange for accommodation.

Arrears refer to rent that hasn't been paid. For example, if you hadn't been able to pay rent for 2 months, you would be in 2 months' arrears.

Fixed Term or Periodic

A tenancy can either be:

- fixed term which means it is running for a set period of time
e.g. 6 month fixed term
- periodic which means it is running on a week-by-week or month-by-month basis depending on how often you pay your rent.

Furnishings

Not all properties are furnished, some properties might be part furnished (have some furniture such as fridge/oven) and other properties might be completely unfurnished.

It is always worth asking for an inventory of what is included in the property.

Get in touch with us

If you or someone in your life needs help, you can visit our [online advice form](#) to ask for help.

You can also call Citizens Advice on 0808 27 87842 from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday. If Deaf or Hard of Hearing please call the Citizens Advice Text Relay service on 03444 111 445.

What does that mean? A guide to Private Renting Terms: Part 2

Reasonable Wear and Tear

Fair wear and tear is the deterioration of an item or area, due to its age and normal use. This means damage to the property that is expected over time e.g. minor scuff marks on the floor

Tenancy Deposit Scheme

A landlord is legally required to register the tenant's security deposit in a Tenancy Deposit Scheme which protects the money for the tenant and will assist with any disputes at the end of the tenancy.

References

A tenant reference involves a number of checks and verifications to help landlords decide whether a tenant is suitable for their property. Some landlords carry out these checks themselves, while others use a letting agent or professional tenant referencing company.

Notice

A declaration given by either a landlord or tenant that the tenancy agreement is coming to an end. There are rules around how much

and how notice must be given by the tenant and the landlord. Your landlord may need to have given you specific documents for your notice to be valid. We will cover this in our section on a separate document in this pack.

Guarantor

Some landlords and agents ask for a guarantor before they'll offer you a tenancy.

A guarantor agrees to pay your rent if you don't pay it. They sign an agreement which confirms their responsibilities and when they have to pay. You might be asked for one if you have poor or no credit history in the UK, are a student or renting for the first time, are unemployed or have a low income.

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Tenancy Deposits

What is a tenancy deposit?

Landlords and letting agents often ask for a tenancy deposit before you sign a tenancy agreement and move in as protection against damage to the property and unpaid rent.

A tenancy deposit can also be called a security deposit.

How much can the landlord ask for?

A tenancy deposit cannot usually be more than 5 weeks' rent.

This limit applies to Assured Shorthold tenants, students in halls of residence, and lodgers - as long as your rent is less than £4,167 a month.

(Monthly rent multiplied by 12 divided by 52) multiplied by 5 =
maximum tenancy deposit

Deposit Protection Scheme

Deposit protection rules only apply to Assured Shorthold tenancies.

Your landlord or agent must:

- protect your deposit with a deposit protection scheme within 30 days

- give you certain written information about the scheme they use
- keep your deposit protected during the tenancy

Getting your deposit back

You should get a full refund when your tenancy ends unless there is a reason for deductions.

This could include:

- missed rent payments
- damage to the property
- Your landlord cannot charge for fair wear and tear.

If you are unhappy with the deductions, you can raise a dispute with the Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme.

Most of this information has come from the Shelter website, [please see their website](#) for more information on this topic.

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Disrepair in Private Rented Accommodation

What are your rights and how to report it?

Landlord's Responsibilities

Your landlord is responsible for repairs to the: roof, walls, windows and external doors; water and sewage pipes; gas pipes and electrical wiring; basins, sinks, toilets and baths; drains and guttering; central heating and gas fires (unless you installed them).

Your landlord doesn't have to repair any damage caused by you, someone you live with, or your guests. If you rent from a private landlord, your landlord has to carry out electrical safety checks. Speak to your council if you are unsure whether your landlord has complied.

Reporting Disrepair Issues

The first step is to report the issue to your landlord as soon as possible. It is best to do this in writing. If you tell your landlord in person or by phone, follow it up with a written copy. Date any letters you send and keep copies.

This way, if you have problems getting your landlord to do the work, you can prove they were aware of the problem and you asked them to fix it.

How long should it take and what should I do?

There is no fixed time limit for repairs, the landlord should carry out works within a 'reasonable time frame. Repairs such as burst pipes should be carried out urgently.

You should allow access to the property for the landlord to assess what repairs are needed and to carry out work. They should give you 'reasonable notice' of this, 24 hours is normally appropriate.

Risk of reporting repairs

If you rent from a private landlord, they might start eviction proceedings if you complain. There is some protection against 'revenge' evictions if you ask the council to inspect your home for hazards and they give your landlord an improvement notice or an emergency remedial notice but it is important you know the risk.

What to do if landlord doesn't do repairs?

If your landlord doesn't carry out the repairs, you could consider the following steps. It is important you have evidence of you reporting the repairs to your landlord.

1. Contact Private Sector housing team or environmental health at Somerset council and ask them to inspect the property. You can do this via the [online form](#).

2. You can take your landlord to court to ask the court to order the repairs. Taking your landlord to court should be the last resort. It's best to get advice first.

Most of this information has come from Shelter, [click here](#) for their full information.

If you or someone in your life needs help, you can visit our [online advice form](#) to ask for help, and read [this information](#) on the situation.

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Top Tips for Joint Tenants

You have a joint tenancy if you and the other tenants all signed a single tenancy agreement or your tenancy agreement has other tenants' names on it.

1. Joint tenants are equally responsible for things like rent - this means if one person doesn't pay their portion of the rent, you'll all be in rent arrears.
2. You have joint control of the property, e.g. if someone wants to have guests to the property, you have no real right to say no. It is worth discussing this together at the start of the tenancy.
3. It can be difficult to end the tenancy within the fixed term. You can try to get another tenant to replace you but the landlord and the other tenants must agree.
4. Joint tenants are all responsible for any damage to the property, so the landlord could choose who to ask to pay for it. The landlord does not have to ask the joint tenant who has caused the damage to pay for it.
5. Usually you all pay a single deposit to the landlord or letting agent before you move in. The money is treated as one deposit for the whole tenancy. You can ask the landlord or agent to record your individual shares on the tenancy agreement.

6. If you all move out by the end of the fixed term, the tenancy will usually end for everyone if you all leave by the last day of the fixed term. Some contracts say you have to give your landlord notice if you're going to do this. So check your agreement a few months before you plan to leave.
7. If anyone stays on after the fixed term ends, the joint tenancy continues as a rolling or periodic tenancy if at least one joint tenant stays on after the fixed term ends. This means that everyone is still responsible for rent - even those who have moved out. If you have moved out, you have 2 options that can end your joint tenancy and your responsibility for rent. Firstly, ask the remaining tenants to sign a new tenancy agreement with the landlord without your name on it. This is usually the best option for everyone. Alternatively, give a 'notice to quit' to the landlord. This ends your joint periodic tenancy and ongoing responsibility for rent. You do not need permission from the other tenants or the landlord to do this. It could leave your former housemates in a difficult position because their tenancy will also end when your notice ends. If the landlord accepts rent from them or they sign a new agreement, then they will have a new tenancy and can stay on.

Most of this information has come from the Shelter website who are housing specialists, [please see their website](#) for more detail on this topic.

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Local Housing Allowance

What is local housing allowance?

Local housing allowance is a rate set by the government.

Your local housing allowance rate affects how much help you get when renting from a private landlord.

It is used to work out both:

- housing benefit
- universal credit housing element

How is LHA calculated?

Your LHA rate depends on:

- your age
- who you live with
- rent levels in your area

It is based on how many bedrooms you can claim for.

The number, age and sex of the people in your household affects your LHA rate.

Most single people under the age of 35 only get the shared accommodation rate even if you're not sharing.

But there are exceptions for some people.

How to work out what you get?

Once you've worked out your bedroom entitlement, you can go on the local housing allowance calculator to work out how much you would be entitled to per week. Please [click here](#) for the link to the calculator.

To work out your monthly rate, you need to do

(Weekly LHA rate divided by 7 multiplied by 365) divided by 12 =
Calendar monthly LHA rate

How many bedrooms can I claim for?

There are different rules for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit

Universal Credit

You should include:

- you and any dependent children
- your partner if you live with them
- any other adults who live with you but do not pay rent

Do not include lodgers or other joint tenants, except for your partner.

Housing Benefit

You should count everyone who lives in your home including lodgers and other joint tenants.

Bedroom Entitlement for both benefits

You can usually claim for 1 bedroom for

- you - and a partner if claiming as a couple
- each other couple (only if you claim HB)
- each other person aged 16 or over (even if part of a couple if you claim UC)
- 2 children under 16 of the same sex
- 2 children under 10 of any sex
- any other child under 16

There are some exceptions where you might be entitled to an extra bedroom, for example if you need an overnight carer, have a foster child or need an extra room due to a disability.

See the [Shelter website](#) for more info on this topic.

Will it be enough to pay my rent?

Local housing allowance doesn't always cover the full rent so you might find you have a shortfall between what you get in your benefits and your rent. You need to be able to cover this difference.

If you are struggling, you can try to claim discretionary housing payment from the council. Please [click here](#) to claim.

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Social Housing

What it is and how do you apply?

What is Social Housing?

Social housing is housing where the rents are set according to local incomes. It can be provided by local councils or housing associations.

Social housing aims to:

- be more affordable than private renting
- provide a more secure, long-term tenancy

How do you apply?

You apply for a council or housing association home by joining a waiting list or housing register.

You need to:

- check if you can join the list
- fill in an application form
- wait for the council's response

Your priority on the list is based on your circumstances.

Who can apply?

You need to be a British or Irish citizen or meet the immigration conditions.

Most councils have local rules about who can join their housing register. These rules are explained in a document called the allocation policy. You can view this on the council's website.

By law, the following groups of people must be allowed to apply:

- people who count as legally homeless
- people living in overcrowded accommodation or very bad housing conditions
- people who need to move because of a disability, medical, welfare or hardship reasons

In some areas, only these groups of people may be able to go on the register.

The council could still refuse to allow you onto the housing register if you fall into one of these groups. For example, they may be able to exclude people with a history of antisocial behaviour even if they are homeless.

For much more information on applying for social housing, please see the [Shelter website](#).

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A Guide to Homefinder Somerset

What is Homefinder and how to register?

Homefinder is a website where all council or housing association homes for rent in Somerset are advertised. It is the website you need to use if you want to bid on social housing. The link to the website is [here](#).

People who are registered with Homefinder Somerset can view the homes being advertised and tell us which homes they would like to be considered for. This is called bidding, but does not involve any money.

Before you can start bidding on a property, you need to register for Homefinder which you do online by [clicking here](#).

You can register if you are:

- over 16 years old
- Have either been living in Somerset for the last 2 years, or have previously lived in Somerset for 3 of the last 5 years, or
- Have a local connection to Somerset, for example because you work in Somerset or have immediate family who have lived in Somerset for more than 5 years
- Are not subject to immigration control

Once you are registered, you will be placed in a band according to your priority.

How are homes advertised?

Homes available to let in Somerset are advertised each week on the [Homefinder Somerset website](#).

Homes are advertised from 12.00 a.m. on Wednesday morning to 11.59 p.m. on the following Sunday night. No homes are advertised on Mondays or Tuesdays.

The adverts tell you the location, size, rent and other features of the home, and who the landlord is.

The adverts also tell you if there are any special requirements that an applicant must meet. For example, the minimum age for older persons' accommodation, or if a local connection is required to a particular area in Somerset.

How do I bid on properties?

You can bid for up to 3 homes each week. You can only bid for homes that match your household needs. For example, if you need a 2-bedroom home you will not usually be able to bid for 3 bedroom homes.

To bid, click the 'Sign in' option. Enter your email address and password. This will bring up the 'Your account' page.

Click on View Homes to see basic details about the homes that you are eligible to bid for. Click on the address or photo of any homes that you are interested in to see the full details. You will be able to see your position, if you were to bid, on the list of people who have bid at that time. Please note that your position could change up until the end of the bidding period, as other people add or remove bids. To place a bid for a home click 'Place Bid'

What happens after I bid?

At the end of each weekly advertising cycle a list is produced of all qualifying bids. The list sorts applicants by their band and how long they have been waiting.

If your bid meets all the specifications on the advert, and you are the top bidder, the landlord will carry out a number of checks which may include making sure that your circumstances have not changed from the information on your application and that your rent payments are up to date. If you pass all the landlord checks, you will normally be invited to view the home.

If you have had a change of circumstances that you haven't let us know about, have rent arrears or have been guilty of anti-social

behaviour, and the landlord is unable to offer the home to you, they will move to the next applicant on the list. To help you with future bidding, you will get advice on the steps you would need to take to be considered for another home. If you are being considered for a home, you will be able to see this from the 'Your Account' page. Whilst you are being considered you will not be able to bids for other homes.

If you decide to refuse the home, it will be offered to the next applicant on the list who meets the conditions specified in the advert. If you refuse a number of homes, you may be suspended from bidding. If you have been accepted as homeless by a Somerset local authority, you should always seek advice before refusing a home, as this could affect your chances to be accommodated, and may end any duty the local authority has to provide you with a home. When the home is ready, you will be contacted about signing the tenancy agreement and collecting the keys.

This information has been taken from the Homefinder website. You can view their full guidance [here](#).

Get in touch with us

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5 Tests of Homelessness

1. Homeless

You're legally homeless if:

- you have nowhere to live in the UK or abroad
- you have a home but you can't access it - for example, if your landlord has unlawfully evicted you by changing the locks
- it wouldn't be reasonable for you to stay in your home - for example, because of abuse, poor conditions or you can't afford it
- you have nowhere you can keep your home if it's moveable - for example, if it's a caravan or house boat

You're classed as being threatened with homelessness if:

- you have to leave your home within 8 weeks - for example, if you're asked to leave somewhere temporary
- you're given a valid section 21 notice to leave your home and the notice ends within 8 weeks

2. Eligibility

You're usually eligible for help

- if you're a British or Irish citizen living in the UK (if you're a British or Irish citizen recently returned to the UK, the rules can be complex so get in touch with us for advice)
- if you have indefinite leave to remain or settled status in the UK.
- refugee status or humanitarian protection
- leave to remain with recourse to public funds

There are lots of other people who might be entitled to help, please [click here](#) for more information.

3. Priority Need

Some people always have a priority need.

Other people have to prove they are 'vulnerable.' Vulnerable means you would be at much greater risk of harm than most people if you become homeless.

Please click here to see our [priority need resource](#) for more information on what the criteria is for priority need.

4. Intentional Homeless

It means you deliberately did something to cause you to lose your home. For example, if you:

- caused antisocial behaviour
- did not pay your rent when you could afford to

You are not intentionally homeless if, for example, you:

- could not control the situation because of domestic abuse
- could not deal with your money or tenancy because of disability, your mental health, or drug/alcohol problems

[Click here](#) for advice from Shelter on how to avoid being intentionally homeless:

5. Local Connection

You can ask any council for help if you're homeless or at risk of losing your home.

The council usually looks at whether you have a local connection to the area.

You can apply to any council for help if you're homeless. If you do not have a local connection to the area, you could be referred to a different council for help.

But the council cannot refer you to an area where you would be at risk of domestic abuse or violence.

[Click here](#) for more info on what counts as local connection.

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How to get help from the council if you're homeless

If you're already homeless, or likely to become homeless within the next 8 weeks you can apply for help getting somewhere to live from your local council. This is known as making a homeless application.

The council will look into your situation to decide what help they might be able to give you.

Before making an application check if you're entitled to homeless help. If you're not sure, it's still worth applying because the council has to review all applications.

If you're not a British citizen and you've been rough sleeping your right to stay in the UK might be affected. If you're applying to the EU Settlement Scheme your application cannot be turned down because of rough sleeping.

The council might have to give you emergency housing straightaway depending on your circumstances while they look at your application, you should always ask for this. If they refuse to give you housing, you can challenge their decision.

If the council won't let you make a homeless application or they refuse to give you emergency housing and you think you should be entitled, contact us for advice.

If you're aged 16 to 17 or you've recently been living in care, social services usually have to help you with housing.

It's best to go in person or phone Somerset Council housing department as soon as possible, because it can take a long time to be dealt with. Tell them you want to make a homeless application. Please see their website for how to get in touch, <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/housing-support/homelessness-advice-and-assistance/>

They will arrange for a housing officer to interview you - this will usually be on the same day if you have nowhere to stay that night.

For more information on how to prepare and what to take with you, please [click here](#).

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Am I priority need?

Some people always have a priority need.

Other people have to prove they are 'vulnerable.' Vulnerable means you would be at much greater risk of harm than most people if you become homeless - we will break this down below.

Who is always priority need?

You're always in priority need if you or someone you live with is:

- at risk of domestic abuse
- pregnant or living with dependent children
- homeless as a result of fire, flood or other disaster
- if you're a care leaver between the ages of 18-20, This applies if you were looked after or housed by social services at any time while you were 16 or 17 even if you do not get social services support now.

When you need to prove if you're vulnerable

If you are not in one of the situations above, you can be in priority need if you or someone you live with is vulnerable.

You could be vulnerable for one or more of these reasons:

- mental health problems or a learning disability

- physical disabilities or a serious health condition
- time spent in care, prison or the armed forces
- fleeing violence from someone who is not a partner or relative
- old age
- any other special reason

The council must look at your situation and evidence properly. They must give you emergency housing while they do this if they think you might be homeless and in priority need. If you need to challenge the council's decision, please see our [Challenging a Council Decision resource](#).

All this information has come from the Shelter website who are housing specialists, please [click here](#) for more detail.

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Challenging a Homeless Application Decision

If you disagree with the council's decision about your homeless application, you should challenge it by asking for a review.

You can ask for a review of most decisions, including if:

- the council says they don't have to help you with housing - for example because you're not in priority need
- if the council says they can't give you help to keep your home or find a new one
- if you're not happy with your housing plan
- the council says you don't have a local connection
- you think the housing you're offered is unsuitable

You must normally ask for a review within 21 days of getting your decision. In some cases, you might be able to apply later but this can be complex. Contact us for advice if you've missed the deadline.

It's best to write to your local council asking them to review their decision. If you prefer, you can phone or go to the council to tell them you want a review.

You should also let the council know if your circumstances have changed as this could help your review.

The council might give you housing while they review their decision (this is called 'housing pending review'). You should ask for this when you request a review.

Your decision letter should explain how the council has made its decision. Read your letter and make a note of anything you disagree with and anything you think the council has missed.

If you don't understand the council's decision or need help asking them for a review, contact us for advice as soon as possible.

It's best to have evidence to support your request for a review. For example, you could include a letter from your doctor explaining how you're vulnerable.

The council should write to you with their decision within 8 weeks. They should write within 3 weeks if you're challenging a decision about your housing plan. If you disagree with the council's review decision you can also appeal to the county court. You must do this within 21 days of getting the decision.

Some decisions can only be challenged by judicial review; this is a complex legal process so contact us for advice.

For more info on challenging a decision, [click here](#).

Get in touch with us

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Emergency Accommodation

What is emergency housing?

Emergency housing is accommodation provided as a short-term option while the council:

- look into your housing application
- decide how they need to help you in the long term

Who is it for?

The council must provide emergency housing if they think you might:

- be legally homeless
- meet the immigration conditions
- have a priority need because of children, pregnancy, domestic abuse, or anything else that makes you vulnerable or at more risk of harm

What to expect?

The standard and quality of emergency housing can be basic.

You could be offered a:

- self-contained flat
- hotel or B&B
- hostel or refuge with some shared areas

If you have children or you're pregnant, you should not usually have to stay in a privately owned B&B where you share a bathroom, toilet or kitchen with other people.

If you do have to stay in a B&B, the council must move you somewhere more suitable within 6 weeks.

The council should not use B&Bs to house care leavers under the age of 25 unless there are no other options. If you're 16 or 17, you should not be housed in a B&B.

Where can it be?

The council must try to find emergency housing within the area.

You might be offered something in a different council area if there are no emergency options locally when you apply.

Emergency housing should still be as close as possible to your council's area.

Before you're offered emergency housing in another area the council must consider:

- travel time to work
- disruption to children's education
- caring responsibilities and local support networks

- how easily you can get to important appointments, for example, with a hospital or community mental health team

Do not refuse emergency housing if you have nowhere else. The council might not offer anything else at this stage. You may have to accept lower standards than in longer term housing.

How long will I be there?

You can usually stay in emergency housing until the council makes a decision.

This usually takes at least 2 months.

You might have to move during this time. For example, if you're offered a B&B in an emergency but something more suitable becomes available.

If you qualify for the main housing duty, the council must find you somewhere suitable to live. You may have to move from the emergency housing into more suitable temporary housing before you get a final offer of longer term housing.

If you don't qualify for the main housing duty, the council no longer have to provide accommodation. The letter must explain why you don't qualify.

You should ask for a review of the council's decision within 3 weeks if you think it's wrong. You can usually get free legal help with this.

Ask the council to continue to provide emergency housing during the review.

If you're in priority need but the council decides you're intentionally homeless, they must continue to provide emergency housing for a reasonable period, usually a few weeks.

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Housing Help for Care Leavers

Help from Social Services

You could get social services help with housing, money and independent living if you are a young care leaver. You usually need to have been in care for at least 13 weeks since you were 14. This must include at least a day when you were 16 or 17.

You can get help from children's services from age 16 to 21 or until you finish training or higher education.

Pathway Plan and Adviser

Before leaving care, a personal adviser from the council should work with you to make sure you're ready for independent living.

They should get you the support you need and help you with important life skills like budgeting.

They should ask you:

- where you want to live
- about your plans for work, education or training
- what kind of financial support you need

You get a pathway plan with clear goals. This should be looked at again every 6 months, or whenever there is a big change in your life.

You have this support until you're 21, or until you finish training or higher education.

Finding somewhere to live

If you leave care before you turn 18, the council must find you somewhere to live.

Your options should be in your pathway plan. You should be able to visit any new home before you move in.

The council must look at what you want. They must make sure the accommodation meets your needs. The council has the final say on where you live. If you're under 18, you will get support with things like budgeting, but it's unlikely you will get a self-contained flat.

Your personal adviser should visit you in your new home to see how you're getting on. Tell them if you're unhappy about anything.

Help for Care Leavers 18 and over

After you're 18, the council still has to help you plan where you will live.

This support can keep going until you are 21. It could be longer if you are in education or training. You could get help with a place to stay outside term time if you have nowhere else to go.

If you're in foster care, you can sometimes stay in your foster carer's home after you're 18. This is called staying put. Ask your council about it.

As a care leaver aged between 18 and 20, you are in priority need for emergency housing if you're facing homelessness. This is even if you spent only 1 night in care when you were 16 or 17.

You could also be in priority need if you're 21 or over, see our [priority need resource](#) for more info.

Once you're 18 you can usually claim universal credit to help with rent and living costs.

If you need extra money to buy things for your home once you're 18, ask the council about applying for a grant when you leave care.

Most of this information has come from the Shelter website who are housing specialists, please [click here](#) to visit their website for more detail.

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Section 21 notices: Part 1

When can you get a Section 21 notice?

You are likely to receive a Section 21 notice if you are an Assured Shorthold tenant and your landlord would like you to leave the property.

Your landlord doesn't need a reason for giving you a section 21 notice - for example, they might just want to move back into the property.

You can only get a section 21 notice if you have an Assured Shorthold tenancy. Your landlord could give you a section 8 notice as well as a section 21 notice. You might get a section 8 notice if you have rent arrears, for example.

If you get a section 8 notice, don't ignore it. You'll need to deal with it as well as your section 21 notice - and the steps are different. Please go [click here](#) for more information on Section 8 notices.

How much notice should I get?

Your section 21 notice won't be valid if you haven't been given enough notice. Your landlord should have given you 2 months' notice.

If your landlord hasn't given you enough notice, you could tell them that your section 21 notice isn't valid. Your landlord might then give you a new notice if they want you to leave - giving you more time to stay in your home.

You should make sure your new notice is valid.

Is my notice valid?

The first thing you should do is check your section 21 notice is valid. If it isn't, you might be able to challenge it and stay in your home.

There are a number of reasons why a Section 21 might not be valid, please [click here](#) and visit the section called 'Check if my notice is valid.'

If you are unsure if your notice is valid, please get in touch with us for advice by [clicking here](#).

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Section 21 notices: Part 2

What to do if your notice is not valid?

If the notice you have been given is not valid, you'll be able to stay in your home and challenge your eviction.

Your landlord will have to give you a new, valid notice if they still want you to leave your home.

Talk to an adviser if your section 21 notice isn't valid and you're not sure what to do next.

What to do if your notice is valid?

Your landlord can't make you leave your home unless they've gone to court to get a possession order and a warrant for eviction - this means they can use court bailiffs to evict you. If they try to force you to leave before this, it's an illegal eviction - you can talk to an adviser for help to challenge it.

Your landlord can only go to court after the date the section 21 notice says you have to leave.

If you've got a good relationship with your landlord, it might be worth asking them if you can stay in your home for longer. Send a letter to

your landlord explaining your situation and keep a copy of any reply you get.

When your landlord goes to court, you might be able to ask the court to let you stay in your home for longer. You'll need to get papers from the court before you can ask to stay in your home for longer.

Don't leave your home before the date on your section 21 notice if you haven't found somewhere else to live.

You can ask your local council for help as soon as you get a section 21 notice - they might be able to:

- help you stay in your home
- find somewhere else for you to live

Please see [our resource](#) on getting help from the council if you're homeless.

You can find more information on Section 21s [here](#).

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