Worried about losing your home

What happens after you ask us for help?

Lichfield District Council

Being worried about losing your home is an uncertain time, and we know you will want to understand how quickly we can help you.

Here's what to expect when you approach us as homeless:

1

You reach out for help

Our duty housing options officer will contact you on the same or next working day to carry out an initial assessment.

If you register at a weekend or bank holiday, we'll contact you on the next working day. **If you are homeless out of hours and have nowhere to stay (for example friends or family), please call 0300 303 8234.**

2

Your full housing assessment

If you are eligible for homelessness assistance and are homeless, or threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days, your housing options officer will help you develop a Personalised Housing Plan which his kept under review.

This sets out what actions you and your housing options officer will take to resolve your homelessness. We will ask you for information and evidence - the quicker you can get this to us, the faster we will be able to help you.

➔ If you are **not at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days**, we will explain why and explain what advice and support is available - we may refer you to our tenancy sustainment team. **You can always come back to us if your situation changes.**

3

Helping to prevent you from becoming homeless

Your housing options officer will first work to try to prevent you from becoming homeless (this is called the prevention stage).

This could include speaking with your landlord or family, helping with rent arrears or looking at ways to improve your income, including checking you are receiving all the benefits you may be entitled to. We may also refer you to partners such as Citizens Advice.

If you are eligible, we will also help you join the housing register.

4

Already homeless or prevention has not worked

If we haven't been able to prevent you from becoming homeless, we will continue to help you under what is called the relief stage.

This usually lasts for up to 56 days. You may still be in your current home when this stage begins, for example while an eviction is being completed. You should stay there for as long as it is safe and legally possible to do so. When you have to leave, if we have reason to believe you may be **eligible for assistance and have a priority need, we will arrange** interim accommodation for you, while we continue to look into your circumstances.

➔ If we don't have a duty to provide interim accommodation, you will need to make your own arrangements for somewhere to stay, for example with family or friends.

5

Still homeless when the 56-day relief stage ends

Your housing options officer will then assess whether we owe you a main housing duty.

If we do, you will be given the emergency band on the housing register and we'll provide you with temporary accommodation while you find a new home.

A main housing duty does not guarantee a social rented home, and we may encourage you to look at other options including private rented or supported accommodation.

6

If we don't owe you the main housing duty

We will write to explain our decision, what further help or accommodation, if any, we must provide, and how to ask for a review if you disagree with our decision.

➔ **If we have no continuing duty to accommodate you, you will need to arrange somewhere to stay.**

We will explain your housing options, and if you remain eligible for the housing register, you will be able to continue bidding with the priority banding that reflects your circumstances.

No set timescale

Everyone's circumstances are different. How quickly you find a longer-term home will depend on your individual situation.

What we can promise is that we are here to help and guide you through each stage of your journey, so you understand what is happening, what you need to do and what happens next.

Find out more at www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/homeless.