

Leaving home in a hurry



If you do have to leave home in a hurry, try and think about where you might stay before you leave. To help you survive on your own, and be able to claim benefits, it is very important that you take as many of these things with you as you can:

- passport
- birth certificate
- national insurance number
- driving licence, if you have one
- medication or any personal stuff such as glasses or inhalers
- cheque book, bank and credit cards
- change of clothes/warm coat
- toiletries
- address book/mobile phone
- benefits book

Keep these numbers with you at all times and don't be afraid to use them whenever you need to

Childline (free, 24-hour)
0800 1111

Shelter's free housing advice helpline
(Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
0808 800 4444

Samaritans (free, 24-hour)
08457 90 90 90

Runaway helpline (free, 24-hour)
For people aged 17 and under
0808 800 70 70

Message home helpline (free, 24-hour)
For people aged 18 and over
0500 700 700

These numbers may not be free from a mobile phone, so you may have to try a landline first.

Help from the council's housing and social work departments

If you have nowhere to stay, you can go to your local council's housing department and make a **homeless application**. The council has to offer you somewhere to stay while it looks into your situation. If the council refuses to help you, get help immediately by ringing Shelter on the number above.

- If you're aged **16 or 17 and homeless or likely to become homeless within two months**, the housing department should always help you. You may also be able to get help from the social work department.
- If you're aged **16 or 17, homeless and have been in care** (for a total of at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 and when or after you turned 16), the social work department has to find you somewhere to live and offer you financial support. You can also get help from the housing department. The social work and housing departments have to work together to help you. If each department tries to refer you to the other, get help immediately by ringing Shelter on the number above.
- If you're aged **18 or over and homeless, or are likely to become homeless within two months**, the housing department has to accept a homelessness application from you. If they don't, ask for written reasons why and get help immediately by ringing Shelter on the number above.
- If you're aged **18 to 21, homeless and have been in care** (for a total of at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 and when or after you turned 16), you can get help from social work and the housing department. Both departments have to work together to provide whatever help you need. If each department tries to refer you to the other, get help immediately by ringing Shelter on the number above.

REMEMBER being homeless does not mean that you are sleeping on the streets. It means you don't have a home. You can be staying with friends, live in a hostel, or be too scared to go home and still be homeless.

If you need help and advice, don't be afraid to call one of the above numbers. After calling for advice you will often be directed towards someone you can meet face-to-face, who can help you sort out your problems.

Good luck!