Making a homeless application to the council

Am I homeless?
You don’t have to be sleeping on the streets to be homeless. You might be:
• staying with friends
• living in rundown accommodation
• staying in a refuge, hostel or B&B
• at risk of violence or abuse at home.

How do I apply?
Go to your local council’s housing department or homelessness unit and say you want to make a homeless application. The council cannot turn you away – they have to look into your situation.

What should I bring with me?
If you can, bring with you:
• some form of ID (passport/birth certificate/driving licence)
• proof of income (benefit book or wage slip)
• your national insurance number.

What happens when I apply?
You’ll need to fill in an application form. A homelessness officer will then interview you. You can ask a friend or relative to sit in on the interview with you.

Nowhere to stay?
If you’re nowhere to stay, the council should offer you a place in a flat, hostel or B&B – this is temporary accommodation. If the council tells you that it doesn’t have any temporary accommodation available, or gives you a list of hostels so you can find somewhere yourself, call Shelter Scotland’s helpline.

What does ‘intentionally homeless’ mean?
This means that the council thinks you didn’t do anything to prevent yourself from becoming homeless.

What is local connection?
You will have a local connection if you live or work in the council’s area, or have family there. If you’ve passed tests 1-2, and the council doesn’t think you have a connection, it may refer you to another council where you do have a connection. This council has to offer you a permanent home.

If you pass all the tests and the council will have provide you with settled accommodation, you may have to wait in temporary accommodation until a suitable home is available.

Settled accommodation can be either:
Permanent accommodation – can be a Scottish secure tenancy, a short Scottish secure tenancy or an assured tenancy.
Non-permanent accommodation – can be a short assured tenancy of at least 12 months (only with the consent of the applicant), or where a housing support services assessment has identified that a applicant requires housing support services and it is not appropriate to provide this support within permanent accommodation.

If you don’t pass the tests and the council won’t house you and you feel their decision is wrong, contact Shelter Scotland’s helpline and an adviser will help you work out what to do next. The council has to let you stay on in temporary accommodation for a few weeks, and it must give you help to find a new home.

Getting help from Shelter Scotland
If the council refuses to help, call Shelter Scotland free housing advice helpline on 0808 800 4444. An adviser can tell you what you’re entitled to and help you deal with the council.

The rules that govern homelessness legislation changed at the end of 2012. The major change was the ending of the priority need test, this means that if you are assessed as unintentionally homeless you have the right to a home.