

Housing Advice for family exclusions



Key Advice:

- The council has a duty to do all it can to try to prevent you from becoming homeless, and to help you with your search for accommodation if you have to move
- A detailed assessment of your housing situation will be undertaken with you, and a Personal Housing Plan created, if you are threatened with homelessness or homeless already
- The Personal Housing Plan will agree reasonable steps to try to prevent your homelessness or to secure alternative accommodation.
- There is a legal requirement for you to co-operate with the Personal Housing Plan and the plan can include advice around reasonable behaviour, abiding by appropriate house rules, employment and training, income and expenditure, and support needs

Housing Services – Havant Borough Council

Family exclusions - where a parent or other relative asks a member of the family to leave their accommodation - make up a large proportion of those households seeking advice at Housing Services. In many instances the exclusion is linked to overcrowding or a result of minor disputes between family members. As a consequence, there is a very high demand for help with family (particularly 2 bedroomed) accommodation. This demand far exceeds the supply available. Havant Borough Council does not have a housing stock and housing need is met through joint working with the private rented sector. The amount of accommodation available to the council through the private sector is very limited and demand much higher.

Preventing homelessness

The council has a legal duty to do all it can to prevent someone from becoming homeless and to this end will work with everyone involved in the household to try and resolve any issues that are causing or may lead to an exclusion. All households that are threatened with homelessness will be given a full housing assessment and a Personal Housing Plan. The assessment is intended to find out all the issues that are

causing a risk of homelessness to enable both the council and the household to agree a workable solution, and to identify any additional support needs. The Personal Housing Plan will include reasonable steps to be undertaken to try to prevent loss of accommodation and this could include

- engaging with support services
- agreeing an amount to pay towards household bills
- agreeing to help with household tasks
- keeping rooms clean and tidy
- identifying reasons for rows and agreeing a solution
- dealing with general behaviour issues
- obtaining training and employment

The intention is to help create a home environment that all the family is happy with.

In many instances, the offer support and advice to families can enable a return. This can provide a long-term solution or provide enough time to enable the household to find alternative accommodation in a more planned way.

Housing Options in Havant Borough

Private Rented Sector

There is a good supply of private rented accommodation in Havant and the surrounding areas, but it is in high demand and taken up quickly. You will almost certainly be required to pay some start-up costs to secure accommodation and these costs normally include a rent-in-advance and a damage deposit payment.

The easiest way to find family accommodation is through an estate or letting agent. You will usually need to have a guarantor and the upfront costs before a tenancy will be completed.

Many landlords also prefer employed people and even part-time work could help in your search.

Here are details of some websites you may want to use in your search for accommodation:

www.rightmove.co.uk

www.gumtree.com

www.facebook.com

www.portsmouth.co.uk/property/private-rentals/

If your income is low you may be entitled to support with your housing costs through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. The maximum amount of housing support you can receive is based on an assessment of your household income and the Local

Housing Allowance (LHA) for the area the property is located. For Havant, these amounts are £505 for a 1-bedroomed property, £625 a month for a 2-bedroom property, and £750 a month for a 3-bedroom property. Your income will affect the amount of support you are entitled to.

For guidance on housing support costs and other financial support you may be entitled to you can use a benefit calculator –

www.entitledto.co.uk

<https://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk>

Helping the Search

To help in your search for accommodation, consider the following:

- Can you provide a recent reference from a landlord or a character reference to show a new landlord?
- Plan how you will pay the start-up costs and manage rental payments
- If you have never lived independently think about how you could show a landlord how you can manage the accommodation successfully
- Most landlords prefer working households. If you are not working but are able to, make sure you are getting all the support you need to help you do so as this will increase your likelihood of securing accommodation
- Engage with support services, including Housing. Your Housing advisor could confirm this with a landlord to help secure accommodation
- In certain cases, Housing payments can be paid direct to a landlord. Speak to your advisor if you think this could apply to you.

You may be able to get help towards the start-up costs to secure accommodation through Housing Services. The accommodation must be suitable for your needs and can be inside or outside of the Havant Borough area. Any help with the start-up costs will be dealt with as a loan. Ask your Housing advisor for more information about this, or contact the Housing Services Team on 023 92446379.

Hampshire Home Choice (HHC)

Havant Borough Council has no housing stock. Hampshire Home Choice is the register to apply for social housing in Havant. This includes many Housing Association landlords. You can apply to the scheme on the following website –

www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk

You should apply as early as possible. Many households apply only when there is a crisis but will then face a long wait for social housing.

You will need to provide documentation to prove you are eligible for the scheme:

- Proof of identity, such as a birth certificate, passport or driving licence
- Proof of your current address, for example a Council Tax or utility bill or benefit letter
- Proof of your local connection to show that you have lived in the borough for 1 year, or 3 years out of the last 5, or evidence to prove a close relative (e.g. parent, brother or sister) has lived in the borough for over 5 years

Hampshire Home Choice is a web-based service and you will need access to a computer to access it fully. You can apply to Hampshire Home Choice from the age of 16 but please note the wait for housing through the scheme is often very long. Once you are accepted on the scheme, you should make sure you keep your application up-to-date, and active by completing a yearly renewal.

Any offer of accommodation through Hampshire Home Choice will be decided by the landlord of the property. Debts to the Council or social landlord, records of anti-social behaviour, and convictions for criminal behaviour may be a barrier to accessing accommodation through Hampshire Home Choice.

Emergency Accommodation

If you cannot find private rented accommodation and you have nowhere to live you may need to secure emergency accommodation such as a hostel, night shelter placement or bed and breakfast. Your Housing Advisor will be able to give you advice on what the Council can do to help. The Council will not have a duty to accommodate all single people but will help support in the search for somewhere to stay.

What will the Housing Service do for you?

- Provide support and advice about your housing situation
- If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, we will carry out a full assessment of your situation, and create a Personal Housing Plan to prevent or relieve homelessness
- Work with family and friends, support agencies, private sector landlords and any other relevant parties to prevent the loss of accommodation or to help find alternative accommodation
- Where required, ensure you can access help with any other support needs you have
- Help you manage your Hampshire Home Choice account so you can access social housing accommodation