Housing Rights

https://www.housingrights.org.uk/housing-advice/homelessness/emergency-help

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Emergency help

This information is for people living in Northern Ireland.

Get a bed for the night

If you need a place to stay tonight:

- call the Housing Executive on 0344 8920 900 or
- if it's out-of-hours, you can call them on 0344 8920 908

If you have homeless points, they must find you a place. If you don't, they may still be able to find you somewhere or give you a list of hostels you can contact.

Depending on your situation, you can get help if you need a ‘crash bed’ (an emergency bed for the night).

The Housing Executive must give you temporary housing if you:

- have homeless points, or
- do not have homeless points, but you have a priority need (such as having children), or
- are waiting for a review of your homelessness decision (also called an ‘interim duty’)

If the Housing Executive says it has no duty to find you somewhere to stay, they may give you a list of self-referral hostels. In this case, you will have to contact each hostel to see if they have a space. Demand can be high, and it can be hard to find a space.

Talk to our advisers if you think:

- you're entitled to temporary accommodation
- but you have not been offered a place

Temporary accommodation

There are different types of temporary accommodation. You must pay rent while living in temporary accommodation. Some hostels might also have service charges. You may qualify for Housing Benefit, which can help with your housing costs.

Hostels and single-lets

Usually, the Housing Executive will offer you a place in a hostel. There are different types of hostels for men, women and families.

The Housing Executive can sometimes offer a 'single-let'. This is a house or flat owned by a private landlord. Single-lets are usually for families or people with specific needs.

In an emergency, you may be offered a room in a B&B.

The temporary accommodation should be suitable for you and your household. Get advice if you think it doesn't meet your needs.

Temporary accommodation from social services

If the Housing Executive cannot get you a place, social services may be able to get you temporary housing if you:

- are under 18 (or under 25 if you've spent time in care), or
- have a complex physical or mental health condition, or
- are destitute and have a child (or are vulnerable)

Speak to your social worker or local trust for more information.

Find a hostel, night shelter or foyer

Some night shelters and homeless hostels in Belfast offer emergency beds. These are available on a first-come, first-served basis. You may need to queue up. Some options include:

- Centenary House, 028 9032 0320
- Morning Star House, 028 9033 3500
- Simon Community, 0800 171 2222

The Welcome Organisation offers beds for women only.

Temporary accommodation for young people

If you're under 25, you can ask for a place in a foyer. Foyers offer temporary accommodation as well as extra support and training. Depending on the foyer, you'll have either your own flat or your own room.

The Housing Executive can find a foyer for you, or you can contact:

- Flax Foyer (North Belfast), 028 9059 3301
- Malone Foyer (South Belfast), 0800 171 2222
- Strand Foyer (Derry/Londonderry), 028 7128 1155
- Slate (Omagh), 028 8226 7010

Find out more about housing options for young people.

Video: How to get temporary housing

Video transcript

It can be scary when you don't have a place to stay and you don't know where you're going to sleep from one night to the next.

If you don't have anywhere to stay, you can contact the Housing Executive. Anyone can ask them for help but they aren't able to give everyone emergency or temporary housing.

The Housing Executive will ask about your situation and find you a place to stay if you:

- have nowhere to stay, and

- you or someone in your family is vulnerable, for example, if you have dependent children

If you've already been assessed by the Housing Executive and got 70 housing or 'homeless' points, they will find you temporary accommodation.

You might think where the Housing Executive places you isn't suitable. This could be because of specific needs you or your family have.

We know this can be hard. But your right to challenge what you're offered depends on whether you have homeless points or not.

Get in touch with us if you think the temporary accommodation from the Housing Executive isn't suitable. We can talk you through your options.

It's usually best to take the temporary accommodation - even if it doesn't seem quite right for you. It's better to have a place to stay, while you work out your other options.

You'll usually get a place in a hostel. If the Housing Executive can't find you a place, you can contact hostels yourself. There are details on our website.

Contact Housing Rights if you need to talk about problems finding somewhere to stay. You can call, email or chat to an adviser online.

Get extra help if you're homeless

There are other organisations that can help people experiencing homelessness. They can help with things like food, warm clothes and making phone calls.

In Belfast, contact:

- The Welcome Organisation, 028 9024 0424
- Extern Homeless Support Team, 028 9033 0433

In Derry/Londonderry, contact:

- First Housing Aid & Support Services, 028 7126 6115
- Foyle Haven Day Centre, 028 7136 5259

For all other areas, call the Housing Executive at 0344 8920 900 (out-of-hours service: 0344 8920 908).

More advice

- Young people
- Homelessness assessment
- Check your points
- Spitting from your partner