

Advice for young people

If you, or someone you support, are 24 years old or younger, you can get more help depending on your exact age. If you're having trouble at home or do not have a place to live, you're not alone and it's not your fault.

Whether it's us at Housing Rights, or another organisation, we'll make sure you get help

Urgent help for young people

The health and social care trust, (also called 'social services' or the 'trust') is in charge of taking care of you. They'll help you find a place to stay and get support, including:

- checking your needs and situation – they must do this within ten days. They'll look at why you can't live in your home and what housing or other support you need.
- talking about where you'd like to live, if you're working or studying, and who you know that can also support you
- finding a place for you to stay – this can include staying with someone you know, foster care, children's homes or residential schools

Health and social care trust and other organisations

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[Contact the trust in your area](#) to get help or the 16+ team at social services to speak to a social worker.

If you're not getting the help you need, or your social worker is not listening to you, you can contact:

- [Childline, 0800 1111](#)
- [MACS, 028 9031 3163](#) – for any support needs
- [VOYPIC, 028 9024 4888](#) – if you're in or have been in care

If you need a place to stay now, you can also call a hostel:

- Malone Foyer (South Belfast), [0800 171 2222](#)
- Flax Foyer (North Belfast), [028 9059 3301](#)
- Strand Foyer (Derry/Londonderry), [028 7128 1155](#)
- Jefferson Court (Derry/Londonderry), [028 7136 1306](#)
- Slate (Omagh), [028 8225 9000](#)

Under 16

If you're 16 or younger and have nowhere to live or do not feel safe in your home, you're legally entitled to help. Social services will find you a place to stay. You can also talk to VOYPIC to see what you should get. It can depend on whether you spent time in care.

Age 16-18

Either social services or the Housing Executive is responsible for helping you. They will work with whoever needs to take the lead in supporting you.

Over 18

Usually, the Housing Executive is in charge of support if you are 18 or older. Social services may still help you if you spent time in care and you're:

- 21 or younger
- 24 or younger, and still in full-time education
- destitute and vulnerable, and the Housing Executive does not have a duty to help
- vulnerable and your benefits do not cover your housing payments

Leaving care

When it's time to leave care, start getting ready to live on your own. Taking care of yourself can feel scary. Getting ready can make it easier once you're not in care anymore. You should:

- talk to your social worker to sort out what housing support you need and make a plan
- contact [Make the Call](#) to see what benefits you can get
- [speak to our advisers](#) to make sure you're getting all the support you need

Students

Many students live in college or university residences or housing, or a private rental. As a student, you may be a tenant or a licensee. It's important to [know your tenancy type](#) so that you understand your rights. Usually, students cannot get benefits to pay for housing costs.

Options for students include:

Residence halls

Speak to the welfare officer of your student union to find out your options. You're usually a 'licensee' which means the school can easily evict you. But you should check the terms in your agreement which explains your rights and responsibilities. Depending on the terms, you may be a tenant even if your agreement is titled as a 'licence to occupy.'

Private rentals

Such as a shared house, room in a shared house, or flat. Check Studentpad to find private rentals. [Work out a budget](#) and make sure you can afford it.

University housing

These are private rentals owned by the college or university. Priority goes to students with children, mature students or students with specific needs.

Purpose-built student housing

Another private rental option managed by private companies. Apply directly to the company for a place.

Wherever you live as a student, make sure you understand agreements before you sign and stay on top of your bills. It can be very expensive if you don't. Our advisers can talk you through the process.

Your contract explains when and how to pay. Make sure to keep receipts when you pay, including the deposit. If you're having a hard time paying or might fall behind on payments:

- reach out to your landlord right away, you can work together to come up with a solution that works for you both
- contact your student union and ask about student hardship funds
- [speak to our advisors](#) to look at repayment plans you can afford

More advice

- [Homelessness assessment](#)
- [Emergency help](#)