https://www.housingrights.org.uk/professionals/advice-and-information/homelessness-advice-professionals/emergency-help-homelessness

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Emergency help for homelessness

This information is for professionals working in housing and homelessness in Northern Ireland.

If you are a member of the public looking for help, please visit our housing advice pages.

The Housing Executive runs an emergency service for people who need help with homelessness outside of office hours.

NIHE Out of Hours service

Contact the Out of Hours service by calling 03448 920 908.

Housing Executive staff will talk to the caller to work out if they have a duty to provide temporary housing. The Housing Executive should arrange emergency accommodation if there is reason to believe the person is homeless and has a priority need.

The Housing Executive may arrange transport to the temporary accommodation.

Person is ineligible

There is no duty to provide emergency accommodation if it is immediately obvious that the person is ineligible.
Establishing eligibility, particularly for people from abroad, is tricky and requires a full investigation.

A person should only be refused emergency help on these grounds if they have had a very recent eligibility decision or are clearly subject to immigration control and unable to access public funds.

Night shelter and crash beds

There are a few night shelter and crash facilities in Northern Ireland.

These are not considered to be ‘accommodation’. The Housing Executive should not discharge its duty to provide accommodation by telling someone to queue at a night shelter.

These are hostels which offer people a bed for the night based on who is first in the queue. People will usually have to leave the accommodation in the morning and will have to queue again for a bed the next night.

Centenary House night shelter (Belfast)

Centenary House provides 21 emergency bed spaces, three for females and 18 for males.
People can queue for a space, but the Housing Executive can reserve bed spaces for a person which allows them to stay for three nights.

Annsgate crisis accommodation for women (Belfast)

The Welcome Organisation provides five emergency beds for women with multiple and complex needs.

Morning Star House (Belfast)

Morning Star House on Divis Street provides a small number of crash beds. People must queue for a space.

Social services duties to help with homelessness

The Housing Executive is generally responsible for assisting people who are homeless.

Social Services may have duties to assist a homeless person if they are:

- under 18
- over 18 with experience being in care

- destitute and vulnerable

Footnotes