

Moving on from short-term accommodation



Does being homeless mean you will get a Council house?

If you made a homelessness application with us on or before 15 November 2011 – the enforcement date of the Localism Act 2011 – then you will already be on our council housing register.

After 15 November 2011, being homeless does not mean you will get social housing.

Also, Enfield has a long waiting list for council housing. For example, you could wait 15 years for a three-bedroom council property.

Are you entitled to more than one offer of housing from us?

The UK's homelessness laws only require a local authority to make a single offer of suitable accommodation.

Our duty is to help you find a home you can afford which meets the needs you have told us.

When we make you an offer, we are following Enfield Council's placement policy for homeless households (as revised November 2023). This placement policy explains that we will only make one offer of suitable housing.

Why are we offering you housing that is not in Enfield?

We are in a housing crisis. There are fewer places to rent in Enfield. Rents are also high. If you claim welfare benefits, the local housing allowance does not cover all your rent.

You might find it hard to pay rent for a suitable home in Enfield and most of London.

This means the homes we offer will be outside of London and in places farther away.

If you are in a hotel or bed and breakfast, you are in emergency accommodation.

If you are in our temporary accommodation, this is meant to be short-term until we can help you move to longer term accommodation.

You should be ready to move to longer term housing. This housing will likely be farther away and outside of London.

What are the exceptions: who will be offered limited housing in or nearer to Enfield?

There are few exceptions to our policy to offer homes outside of Enfield. For example:

- people who have a confirmed adult social care or children and family services care package;
- households with children doing high-level exams or in their final year of university;
- people who have certain carer, medical or other health needs.

We must have proof of your needs.

We will consider if you are high-priority for housing in Enfield.

You could also be offered housing 60–90 minutes' travel distance from Enfield depending on your circumstances:

- Employment (You must have been continuously employed for at least 6 months and for 24 hours or more each week. This does not include zero-hour contracts.):
90 minutes to place of work

- Education (exam year only):
75 minutes to school
- Carer receiving Carer's Allowance: 60 minutes
- Care Plan and Adult Social Care or Children's Services recommendation for in-borough housing: stay in Enfield
- Applicant at university in final year:
90 minutes' travel
- Adult child at university: they will need to make their own arrangements
- Medical treatment: 75 minutes to treatment.

This is only a guide. We will consider each case and be practical about property locations.

What are the other ways you can get a new home?

We only need to make one offer of housing to you. However, you can increase your choices by finding your own home.

You can register with our housing partners.

You can also search for private rent homes and tell us.

You might get help from our 'Find your own home scheme'. It offers one month's deposit and one month's rent in advance (paid to your landlord).

Why do you have a short time to accept a housing offer?

Our offer of housing will likely be a private sector rental property on the open market.

You would be competing with other renters who could respond quickly. If you want to accept an offer, you might have less than 48 hours to confirm your acceptance.

Does the housing we offer you need to have furniture?

The housing we find or provide you with does not have to be furnished.

What can you do if you do not agree with our decision?

We are required to offer you suitable accommodation.

Suitability is defined by law so our offer might not match your ideal home.

However, if our offered housing does not meet your needs, you might have the right to ask for a review.

You should accept our offer of housing and then ask for a review. This means you will have somewhere to live during the review process.

If you refuse our offer, you can still request a review. But if you are in housing we have provided, you might have to move out.

You must request a review within a specific time after you get our decision. You normally have 21 days from our decision notice to request a review.

What happens if you do not accept our offer?

If you do not respond to our offer – or if you say no to our offer – that means you have refused our offer.

If you do not confirm that you accept our offer, we will check if you are eligible for further help from us.

After we have completed the legal duties we owe you, we will close your case.

If you do not accept our housing offer, then:

- we could end our duty to house you,
- you will not be able to stay in the housing we have provided, and
- we may consider you to be 'intentionally homeless'.

Being intentionally homeless could affect the help you can get from us or another local authority in the future.

Will complaining to your councillor make us give you another offer?

Enfield councillors have already approved our housing placement policy.

If our offer follows the approved placement policy, we will not make you another offer.

Instead, you might be able to request a review of our offer. In your offer letter you should get information about the statutory review process.

Sources and references

Council housing

Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities (chapter 8)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-8-priority-need>

Part 7 of the Localism Act 2011

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/part7>

Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local authorities (chapter 3)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/allocation-of-accommodation-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-3-eligibility-and-qualification>

Offers of housing and our legal duties

Enfield Council (LBE) housing placement policy for homeless households

<https://www.enfield.gov.uk/services/housing/at-risk-of-homelessness#new-housing-placement-policy-for-homeless-households>

Section 5 of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 on 'Duties owed to those who are homeless'

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/section/5#section-5-4-a>

Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities (chapter 15)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-15-accommodation-duties-and-powers>

Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities (chapter 16)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-16-securing-accommodation>

Case law: a homeless resident insisted their council should provide furnished accommodation. The court found that the accommodation does not have to be furnished. Read Escott, R (On the application of) v Chichester District Council (2020) EWHC 1687 (Admin)

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2020/1687.html>

Refusing offers and intentional homelessness

Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities (chapter 19)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-19-review-of-decisions-and-appeals-to-the-county-court>

Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities (chapter 9)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-9-intentional-homelessness>

Refusal of offer taken to court of appeal, the council LB Bromley made an offer that the resident refused. The council ended their duty to house the resident. The court agreed with the council's decisions. Case: LB Bromley v Broderick [2020] EWCA Civ 1522

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/LB-Bromley-v-Broderick-Judgment.pdf>

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Note: the information in this document is correct at the time of publication (28 February 2024).