

## **Help and housing for care leavers**

**As a care leaver you may be able to get housing and other help from West Suffolk Council. The help you get mainly depends on your age.**

### **What is this factsheet about?**

This factsheet provides advice and information to young people who are leaving care, who are seeking help from West Suffolk Council Housing Options Team. It contains information on support that is available you, ideas for finding somewhere to live, making it a successful, and information on how to settle in a home of your own.

### **Suffolk County Council Leaving Care Team**

The County's Leaving Care Team will help Suffolk's care leavers prepare for adulthood and develop your independence. You will be entitled to this support up to the age of 21 and 25 if there is an additional need. If you have been 'looked after' for 13 weeks from the age of 14 and for at least a day following your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday you will become an eligible child under the Child Leaving Care Act 2000.

### **Staying Close**

Staying Close is a DfE time limited project, focused on supported young people leaving residential care in Suffolk. The project provides move on houses and works with care leaver up until the age of 25. They also offer help with training and employment opportunities. If you have moved on from a registered children's home and feel you would benefit, you can contact the team on [stayingclose@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:stayingclose@suffolk.gov.uk).

### **The Housing Register**

Affordable housing is in short supply in Suffolk. We do accept applications onto the Home-Link scheme from anyone who is eligible and can demonstrate a local connection to West Suffolk, or who is a Suffolk care leaver.

Under the West Suffolk lettings policy, additional priority may be awarded to applicants leaving care who are ready to move to a permanent home of their own. This will be dependent on a meeting with the Choice Based Lettings team.

### **Threatened with homelessness?**

If you think you will be made homeless in the next 56 days, and you cannot find your own alternative accommodation, you can approach any local authority in England, and ask for help. Provided you are eligible, the council will assess your needs, and draw up a plan to help you resolve your housing problem.

This plan will include the steps that you and the council will take to find a housing solution. This might involve, for example, ensuring you have approached the right agencies, maximise your benefits, or getting help with training or work.

## **Already homeless?**

If we are satisfied that you are eligible, and do not have any accommodation that you have the right to occupy, and can gain access to, we will try to help you resolve your homelessness. As a care leaver, we would decide if you are more vulnerable than an ordinary person, and may decide you are in a priority need group as a result. If this is the case, we will provide you with suitable temporary accommodation, whilst we try and help you find a more permanent solution.

Whether you are vulnerable or not, we will try and relieve your homelessness for a period of 56 days. If we are unable to help you find a home in this 'relief' period and you are in priority need (and have co-operated with us), we may then make you a direct offer of housing.

## **Further help**

Please contact the Housing Options Team on 01284 763233 or visit [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/housing](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/housing)

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