

## **Homelessness: how can we help?**

### **Homelessness approaches to the council from the 3 April 2018**

The legislation around homelessness is changing with the introduction of the **Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA 2017)**.

This will place more emphasis on the assistance each council in England can offer customers who have experienced or are about to experience homelessness. This will result in more customers being assisted as each council will no longer consider if a customer has a priority need or has made themselves intentionally homeless initially before they are assisted.

We will register a homeless application for all customers who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days to ensure that more people are assisted as soon as possible.

We will make its decision for whether you are owed the full housing duty at the end of the relief stage if the homelessness has not been resolved.

We will continue to provide customers with temporary accommodation, where applicable, while it seeks alternative solutions to the housing problems.

### **How can we help?**

Our housing solution service can help you in the following ways:

- We can assess your current housing situation and help you to work out what your needs are.
- If you are worried that you might become homeless, we can give you advice on the next steps.
- You can be referred to us in a number of ways, including through other organisations. This service can help you if you have a physical or mental illness, if you are ex-armed forces and homeless, a care leaver and homeless or if you have been released from prison and have nowhere to live. Supported housing may be an option for you in these circumstances.
- We can help you make a housing plan so you can work towards the next steps to find a permanent home.

### **Are you experiencing financial difficulty?**

Our team might be able to help you in these ways:

- With a one-off payment to assist with housing costs.
- With rent arrears to stop you being evicted by your landlord.

Our housing service can help you if you are homeless, or if you are likely to lose your home soon.

If you have issues because of new benefit changes such as

- Universal Credit, the Bedroom Tax, Benefit Cap or Local Housing allowance.
- With budgeting and managing your money at home.
- With employment problems and job seeking.
- With getting a smaller, more financially manageable home.

## **Do you rent privately?**

- We can help if you are being harassed or threatened by your landlord, or if you have been locked out of your home, evicted or if the rent is being increased.
- We can work with you and anyone who might try to make you homeless, to resolve your housing problems.

## **Finding a home**

We can help you with:

- Your Home-Link housing application.
- Assessing and reviewing your priority need as a homeless household, including if you have extra or complex housing needs.
- Looking at the housing options available to you, including temporary accommodation or private housing.
- Finding somewhere to stay tonight, in an emergency, when you have nowhere else to go.

For more information visit our website: [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/housing](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/housing) or call: 01284 763233