

The Homelessness Reduction Act – what it means for you

The new Homelessness Reduction Act increases the requirements for West Suffolk Council to help all eligible applicants – rather than just those with a 'priority need'.

It builds on previous acts by requiring public authorities (such as the NHS) to notify the council if someone they're working with is homeless or threatened with homelessness.

It adds two new duties:

- **Duty to take steps to prevent homelessness:** The council will have to help people at risk of losing suitable accommodation as soon as they are threatened with homelessness within 56 days. This means people should get help on receiving a valid notice from their landlord.
- **Duty to take steps to relieve homelessness:** The council will have to help all those who are homeless to secure suitable accommodation, regardless of whether they are 'intentionally homeless' or priority need. This should mean that all eligible households are offered help to find a home, rather than some people being turned away. It should also ensure that the true scale of homelessness is recorded.

If neither of the above steps work and the household becomes, or remains, homeless, then those in priority need retain their right to be rehoused, but non priority households will not be entitled to further help.

Shelter offers further advice on homelessness:

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness