
Service Standards - Homelessness Prevention and Advice Team

Homeless Prevention and Advice - Telephone Advice line

Our Telephone Advice Line, 01372 474590, operates from 8.45 am to 5 pm Monday Tuesday and Thursday, from 9am to 4.45 pm on Fridays and from 11am to 5pm on Wednesdays.

There is an out of hours service available for any person or household who is homeless that night and this can be accessed out of hours (i.e. between 5pm to 9am Monday to Thursday and from 4.45 pm on Friday and over weekends and bank holiday) by dialling 0300 1237718. This is an emergency service for people who are homeless and require accommodation that night. It operates 365 days of the year.

When you call the Homelessness Prevention and Advice Team we will:

- Offer you housing advice over the telephone
- Provide accurate and clear information in plain English
- Be open and honest about what we can deliver
- Listen carefully and treat you fairly
- Work to ensure you are able to remain in your own home wherever possible
- Aim to answer telephone calls promptly and deliver excellent customer service.
- When answering the telephone, staff will clearly state their name and the service name.
- Aim to answer your enquiry directly. If we cannot answer your enquiry or transfer you to the right person, we will take your details and ask someone to contact you as soon as possible.
- Offer you an appointment if you are threatened with homelessness or



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- Normally to attend that day if you have nowhere to stay that night
- Keep your information safe and respect its confidentiality

The email address for the Homeless Prevention and Advice Team is housing.options@elmbridge.gov.uk

Homelessness Prevention and Advice appointments / face to face contact

When you have an appointment, interview and face to face contact we will

- Provide our service in a professional and efficient manner
- Be open and honest about what we can deliver
- Listen carefully and treat you fairly
- Keep your information safe and respect its confidentiality
- Give clear and relevant advice and information in reply to any query.
- Provide induction loops, sign language facilities and an interpretation
 - service if you need them. (this will need to be by an arranged appointment so we can best meet your needs)
- Provide accurate and clear information in plain english
- Provide a private area for confidential enquiries.
- Advise you as soon as possible if we need to cancel an appointment.
 - In these circumstances, we will apologise and arrange another meeting
- If you have an appointment we will see you in 5 minutes

If you are threatened with homelessness and in line with our Prevention Duties we will:

- Provide you with the offer of an interview in our offices or over the telephone
- Give you the contact details for the officer dealing with your case
- Following your full housing interview, your Homelessness Prevention and Advice Officer should confirm the advice / information given to you along with the actions both you and the council have agreed to take to assist you to



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prevent your homelessness. This will be your Personal Housing Plan. This should normally be sent to you within 4 working days.

- We need you to read your plan and respond to any questions that we may raise within it so we can ensure we provide the best plan
- Keep you informed about the progress of the actions we have agreed to carry out in order to assist in preventing you becoming homeless
- Issue with a written notification regarding whether or not a prevention duty has been accepted.
- Work with other internal and partner organisations where appropriate and refer you to them when necessary to assist in preventing your homelessness

If you are homeless in line with our relief duties we will:

- Assess your homeless application in line with our statutory duties
- Arrange temporary accommodation if you are found to be in priority need in line with our statutory duties and continue to work with you to assist you to seek a longer term housing solution for at least 56 days.
- If you are not in priority need we will still work with you and provide advice to help you secure accommodation but we may not be able to this given the housing shortage in Elmbridge
- Provide you with a Personal Housing Plan (PHP) to confirm the advice / information given to you along with the actions both you and the council have agreed to take to assist you to secure accommodation.. This should normally be sent to you within 4 working days.
- Issue you with a written notification regarding whether or not a relief duty has been accepted and what this means for you.
- Advise you on how to ask us to review your homelessness application if you disagree with our decision
- Carry out an assessment as to what would be suitable accommodation for you

- Place you in accommodation in Elmbridge wherever we can if temporary accommodation is required but if not available we will commit to moving you back in Borough as soon as we can having regard to competing needs

Applicant / Your responsibilities:

- We expect you to tell us truthfully everything we need to know to prevent you becoming homeless or to assess your homelessness application properly
- We expect you to co-operate with the Homelessness Prevention and advice Service while we are assessing your housing options and taking any actions that has been agreed with you in your Personal Housing Plan or other request made by us associated with your application.
- We expect you to inform us immediately if your circumstances change
- We expect you to provide us with all documents we ask you for to enable us to assist you and assess your application/s
- We expect you to keep to the rules of any temporary accommodation that we may arrange for you.
- Speak to us politely and courteously, without being abusive.



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