

Your Guide to Temporary Accommodation

Important information for you
and your family



Information you'll find in this booklet

1

Your Rights and Responsibilities

Understanding interim accommodation	5 - 6
Understanding temporary accommodation	7 - 9
Behaviour Standards	10 - 13

2

Living On A Low Income

Making a budget plan	15
Ways to cut costs	15
Support with food	16
Support with utilities	17
Support with furniture	17
Claiming benefits	18 - 19

3

Education

Free nursery places	21
Moving school	21
Free school meals	21
School uniform	21
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)	21

4

Health

NHS Services	23
Mental Health Services	23
Drug and Alcohol Services	23
Gambling Services	23
Domestic Violence/Abuse Services	24

5

Useful Links	26
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CHECKLIST

What you must do in the first few days in your new accommodation:



Complete a 'change of circumstances' update on your Universal Credit account (page 18)



Check if you're liable for Council Tax, if so, apply for Council Tax Reduction from the council where you have been placed (page 18)



Provide the documentation your housing officer requests.



Make a separate claim for Housing Benefit on the Council's website. Your TA Officer will do this with you.



Read and understand the Council's Behaviour Standards.



Read and understand the accommodation providers terms and conditions.



Get to know the services available to help you in Mid Sussex or locally.

If you need help with anything on the checklist, please contact your TA Officer at tainfo@midsussex.gov.uk



Your Rights and Responsibilities



Foreword

All interim and temporary accommodation arranged by the Council is checked for compliance with relevant housing standards before being offered. This includes ensuring properties meet HMO regulations where applicable, and that essential safety measures, such as working smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, and appropriate fire safety provisions are in place. Bed and breakfast and hostel placements are subject to the same checks to ensure suitability and resident safety.

Understanding interim accommodation

What is interim accommodation?

When you make a homeless application and the Officer has reason to believe you are homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need, you will be offered interim accommodation while further enquiries are made into your housing situation. **This is the Section 188(1) interim duty to accommodate.**

It is very likely that the interim accommodation that's provided by the Council will be shared accommodation, such as bed and breakfast in the private sector or a hotel. Households with children and pregnant women will only be offered this type of accommodation when no other suitable accommodation is available, and only for a maximum of six weeks. Before the six weeks are up, the council must find and move the household to alternative suitable accommodation.

Bed and breakfast accommodation is never considered suitable for 16–17-year-olds, even in an emergency. For care leavers under the age of 25, it is also unsuitable except in exceptional circumstances and only for very short periods. In all such cases, alternative accommodation will be prioritised without delay.

Hotel accommodation would only be in an emergency, and you would be moved to alternative accommodation as soon as a suitable vacancy becomes available. What we offer you depends on your family composition and what is available.

A lot of interim accommodation has a 'no pets policy'. We can help with kenneling if you need it, but you will have to cover these costs yourself.



When providing interim accommodation under section 188(1) of the Housing Act 1996, the Council will consider the cultural needs and lifestyles of Gypsy and Traveller households. Interim accommodation offers will have regard to issues such as location, space for vehicles and the importance of autonomy and privacy. This consideration forms part of our duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

Please discuss any questions with the temporary accommodation team:

tainfo@midsussex.gov.uk

Will I be moved into accommodation that is not shared?

As your homeless application progresses, you could be moved to self-contained accommodation.

Will I be offered accommodation in Mid Sussex?

While the Council aims to offer accommodation within Mid Sussex wherever possible, when there is a shortage of suitable local accommodation or higher-priority households waiting to move, placements may be made outside the borough. The Council will seek to place you as close as possible to Mid Sussex, taking into account your household's needs. There is no time limit on how long you may be placed in accommodation outside the borough. Please refer to the Council's [Temporary Accommodation Placements Policy](#) section 3.

We will move families back into Mid Sussex as and when properties become available. Moves are usually prioritised based on how long a household has been outside of district and the housing duty that has arisen. Other factors such as support needs may also be considered.

Can I refuse interim accommodation?

We will only make one offer of interim accommodation which we believe is suitable and meets your needs, based on the information you have provided in your assessment, but we will listen to your reasons for refusing a property if you feel it is unsuitable for you. However, there is no right of appeal against the suitability of accommodation offered to applicants under s188 of the Housing Act 1996, although you can seek a judicial review through the courts. If the Council believes that the accommodation we have offered is suitable, and we don't accept your reasons for refusing it, we may discharge our duty to provide you with interim accommodation and no further offers of accommodation will be made.

Before refusing the offer of interim accommodation, please seek advice from organisations such as:

- **Shelter** <https://england.shelter.org.uk>
- **Citizens Advice West Sussex** www.advicewestsussex.org.uk

This factsheet 'applying as homeless: suitable accommodation' created by the National Homeless Advice Service, is another useful resource <https://bit.ly/46Ttc28>

Understanding temporary accommodation

What is temporary accommodation?

You will be offered temporary accommodation once the Council has accepted a duty to house you when you are homeless.

This may be the accommodation that you're already living in as interim accommodation, if it meets your needs.

We have a duty to provide temporary accommodation if we have completed all the enquiries and are satisfied that you are:

- eligible for assistance
- in priority need
- not intentionally homeless

This is referred to as s.193(2) accommodation. If you disagree with the decision made on your homeless application, you have the right to ask for a review. Your decision letter will explain how you can do this.

The 'Applying as homeless: tips on temporary accommodation' fact sheet also provides more useful information about temporary accommodation at <https://bit.ly/46Ttc28>.



Will I still be living outside of the Borough?

When you move into temporary accommodation, you may still be living outside of the borough. Families are moved back into Mid Sussex as and when properties become available. Transfers are usually prioritised based on how long a household has been outside of district and other factors, such as support needs.

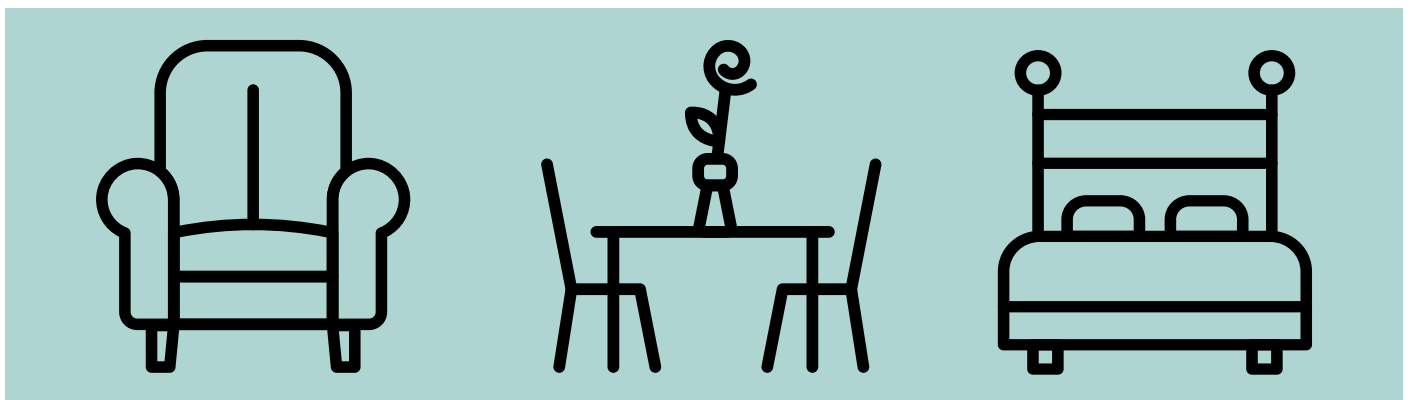
Who should I contact if there is a problem with my temporary accommodation?

In the first instance, you should contact the provider of the accommodation. If you have any issues or difficulties contacting the provider, please contact the temporary accommodation team tainfo@midsussex.gov.uk or phone 01444 477574.

Will my temporary accommodation be furnished?

Your TA Officer will let you know if the temporary accommodation is furnished. Most of our temporary accommodation is unfurnished. This means you will need to provide your own furniture, however, we can support you with essential items.

If you are unable to take your belongings with you into temporary accommodation, the Council will assist with protecting or storing your property, but you will be responsible for any storage costs. If you need support with storage and moving costs please contact the temporary accommodation team: tainfo@midsussex.gov.uk or phone 01444 477574



Can I refuse an offer of temporary accommodation?

We will only offer you accommodation that we believe is suitable and meets your needs; however, you have the right to request a review of s.193(2) temporary accommodation, whether accepted or refused you have the right to request a review if you feel the property is unsuitable for you. Please contact tainfo@midsussex.gov.uk if you wish to request a suitability review.

We will consider the reasons that you have told us that you believe the offer of accommodation to be unsuitable and, if we agree, a further offer will be made.

If we do not agree we will tell you why and re-offer the same accommodation to you. If you still refuse the accommodation the Council may discharge its housing duty to you and you will be asked to leave your current accommodation and no further offers will be made to you. **It is safer to accept and request a review rather than refuse and the Council's homelessness duties ceasing entirely.**

Before refusing the offer of temporary accommodation, please seek advice from organisations such as:

- **Shelter** <https://england.shelter.org.uk>
- **Citizens Advice West Sussex** www.advicewestsussex.org.uk

You can also read this useful factsheet for more information 'Applying as homeless: suitable accommodation' at <https://bit.ly/46Ttc28>



How long will I be in temporary accommodation?

The length of time you spend in temporary accommodation will depend on how long it takes you to secure long-term accommodation. To find long-term accommodation, you can:

Bid on the housing register.

If you are eligible to apply, you must register with Mid Sussex Homemove. For more information and to find out if you are eligible, visit [Apply For Social Housing - Mid Sussex District Council](#).

Please be aware that, if you fall into arrears with any charges you have been asked to pay, you may be overlooked for any offer of accommodation. That's why it's so important that you pay any applicable charges on time.

Housing Journey

For more information on your housing journey, please take a look at "Your Housing Journey Explained" on the Council's website [Homelessness and Housing Advice - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

Find privately rented sector accommodation (PRS)

Private rented sector accommodation will often be the quickest route to settled accommodation so you should start looking for accommodation in this sector. If you

find private rented sector accommodation, please contact your housing officer as soon as possible and ensure you have completed the Council's private sector application for accommodation here <https://online.midsussex.gov.uk/article/1117> You will need to view the property and pay the holding deposit as the Council do not cover this cost. The holding fee should be no more than the value of 1 weeks, rent. If you are eligible, we can then help you with rent in advance and any remaining deposit due. Please be aware that you are not restricted to consider accommodation inside the district.

For more information on how to find private rented sector accommodation check the Council's website [Private Renting - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

Your temporary accommodation Behaviour Standards

Your TA officer will go over the Behaviour Standards for Temporary Accommodation. You should ask them to explain anything that you don't understand. Ensure you keep all documents for reference.

If you are unsure how to contact your TA officer, you can email tainfo@midsussex.gov.uk

Behaviour Standards. What do we expect?

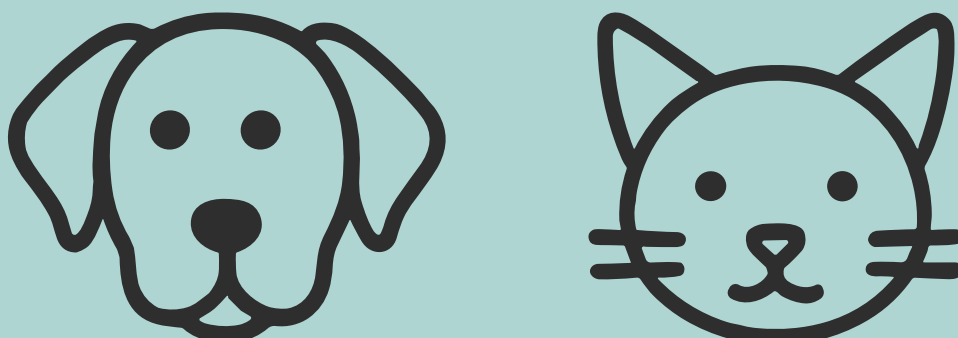
When you are in interim or temporary accommodation owned by a third party, the owner will have expectations of your behaviour and conduct set out in their occupation agreement. A breach of these conditions may result in the Council ceasing to provide you with accommodation. More information on this can be found in the document Behaviour Standards in Interim and Temporary Accommodation.

Smoking and Fire Safety

You are not permitted to smoke in any part of the accommodation or communal areas.

Pets

You are not permitted to bring or acquire pets while in temporary accommodation unless you have prior written approval as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. If an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) is approved, you must complete and sign the Council's ESA agreement and comply with all relevant conditions.



Anti-social behaviour

You must behave in a way that does not cause harm, alarm, nuisance, or distress to others.

Paying your rent

The Council has the power to require the payment of reasonable charges in accordance with s206(2) Housing Act 1996. The charges are for the use and occupation of the accommodation; however, it is anticipated most households will be entitled to either full or partial housing benefit. Your TA Officer will let you know any charges you need to pay. It is your responsibility to ensure any charges are paid and you do not fall into arrears. Falling into arrears could limit your move-on options and might affect your access to the rent deposit scheme. Please email tainfo@midsussex.gov.uk for advice or support.



Accommodation

You must keep your room clean and tidy and ensure all food is stored properly to prevent vermin. You must not make alterations to the room, move furniture, or tamper with fixtures or utilities. Any issues, including repairs or defects, must be reported to the provider immediately.

Visitors

You are responsible for your visitors at all times. Damage caused by your guests may be recharged to you. Overnight guests are strictly not allowed.

Payments and Bills

You must pay all rent and service charges promptly and contact the TA Team if you are struggling to do so. Any bills associated with the accommodation that are not included in the rent will be your responsibility.

Documents

If we request documents (e.g. ID, proof of income), you must provide them by the deadline set. Failure to do so, without a valid reason, may result in your accommodation ending.

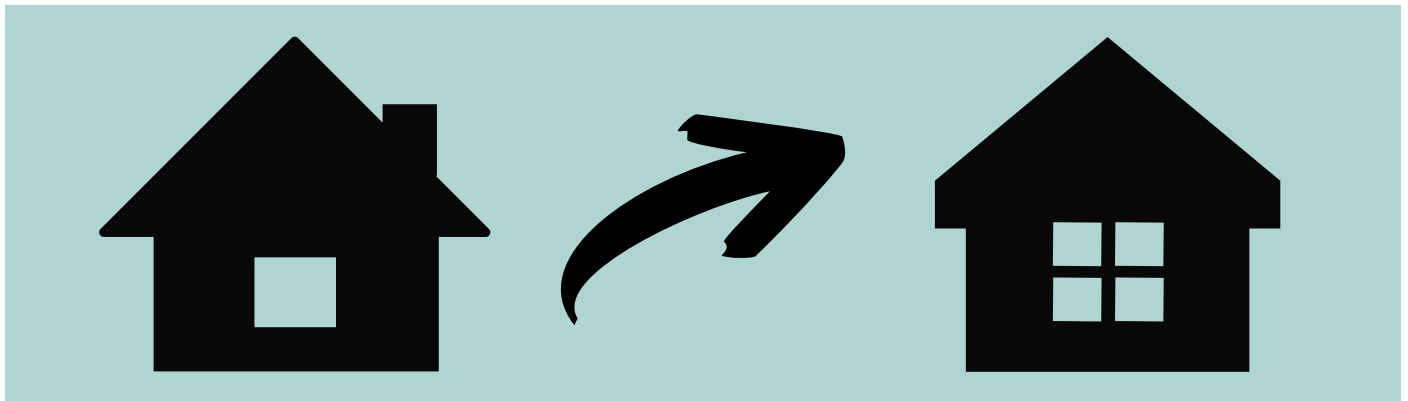
Absence from accommodation

If you plan to be away from the accommodation, you must notify your Temporary Accommodation Officer in advance. Absences of more than 3 consecutive nights

without notification may be treated as abandonment and lead to the termination of your placement under the Council's discretionary powers to manage temporary accommodation placements.

Transfers and changes to accommodation

The Council may require you to move to alternative interim or temporary accommodation. This could be for several reasons including, but not limited to, ensuring the accommodation remains suitable, managing risk, or for cost efficiency. You will be given appropriate notice, and you are expected to cooperate fully with any transfer arrangements. Failure to do so may affect the Council's duty to continue accommodating you.



Moving from temporary accommodation

If you are moving into secure, permanent, or alternative accommodation (such as private or social housing), you must inform your Temporary Accommodation Officer in advance of your move-out date. This is to ensure that your temporary accommodation placement can be closed correctly and to prevent unnecessary charges. **Failure to notify the Council in advance may result in the continued accrual of accommodation charges, which could be recharged to you personally if it is later found that you vacated the property without informing us.**

Accommodation Provider

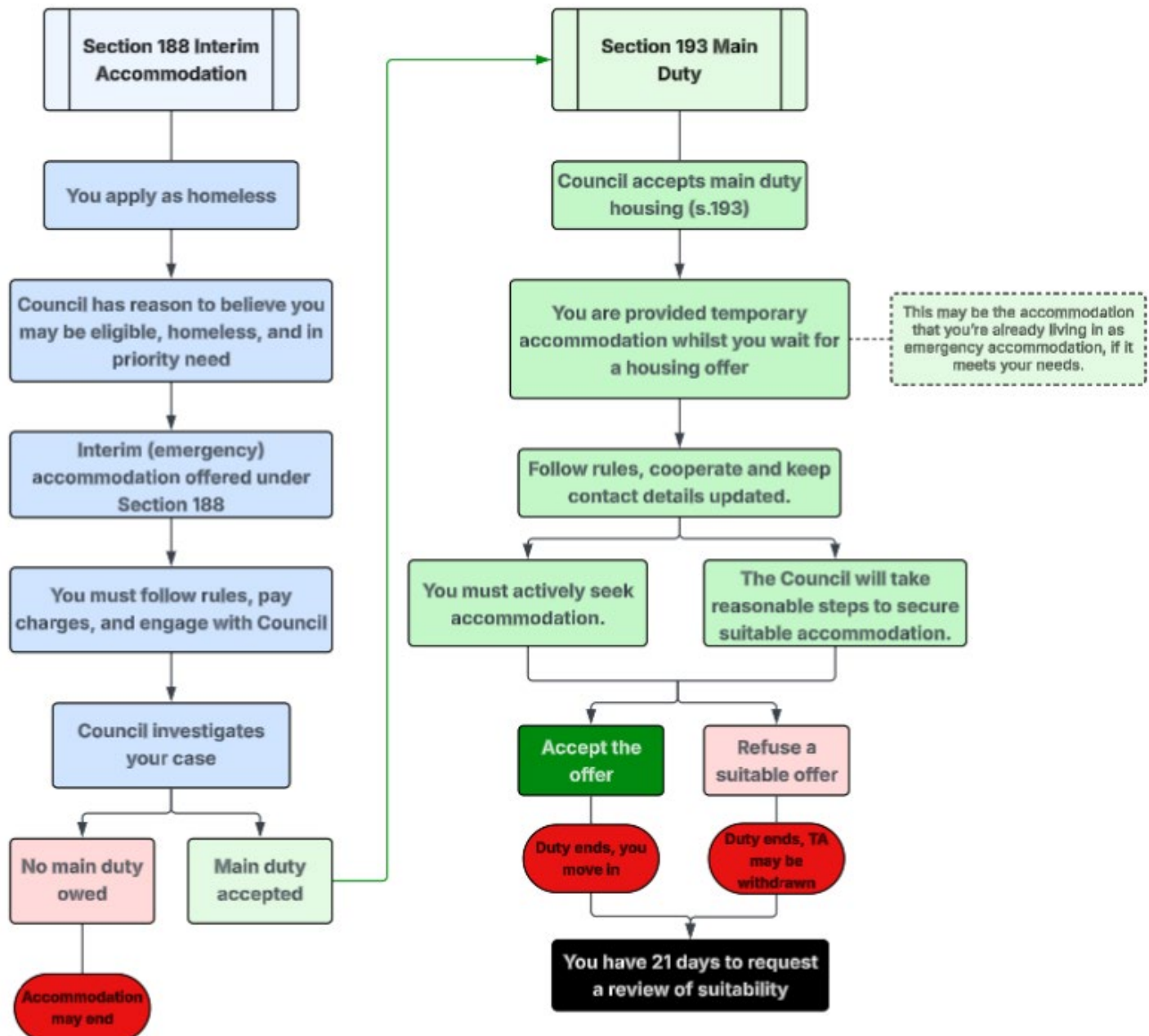
Temporary accommodation arranged by the Council is often provided through private accommodation providers (APs) and is not owned or managed by the Council. As such, each AP may have their own license agreement or terms and conditions that must be followed at all times. It is the applicant's responsibility to comply fully with these rules. Any breach of the AP's terms may result in warnings or, in serious or repeated cases, termination of the placement by the provider. If the placement ends due to such breaches, the Council could end their duty to accommodate you.

It is very important that you understand what conduct and behaviour is unacceptable as the Council may end your accommodation if you fail to adhere to these terms.

A copy of our policy can be found at [Temporary Accommodation - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

This flowchart provides a simplified overview of how temporary accommodation placements begin and end. It is intended as a general guide only and does not represent the full legal process or all possible circumstances. For further information on homelessness, you can visit the Shelter website [Homelessness advice - Shelter England](#)

Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017



Living on a Low Income



Make a budget plan

Making a budget will help you understand where your money goes and where you can save money. It is the first step in taking control of your financial situation, including knowing what's coming in, what's going out and when. It will also help you see whether you're living within your means.

- You can use a find a helpful budget planner [here](#)
- Christians Against Poverty offers a free course to help you budget your money. For more details visit their website: <https://bit.ly/3us6wCe>.

Ways to cut costs

It is easier to decrease your spending than it is to increase your income. There are simple ways to reduce your household bills, such as switching utility providers, shopping around for groceries or getting a cheaper mobile phone deal.

For more information and ideas on how to reduce your expenses visit:

The Money Helper website:

www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en and their budgeting and saving community on Facebook: <https://bit.ly/30wZDm8>.

The Melia website for help with budget-friendly meal plans. It's free to use:

www.meliala.co.uk

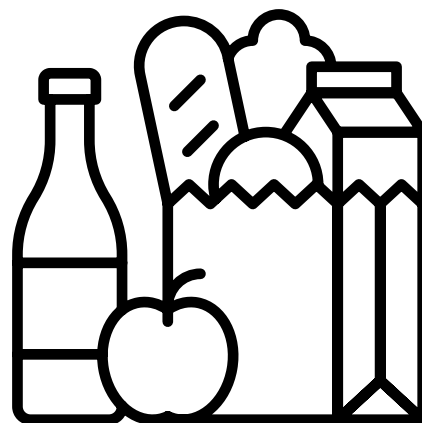
In some accommodation you might not have access to laundry facilities, so you will need to keep a budget to do your washing at a launderette.



For specialist debt advice visit Citizens Advice West Sussex:

www.advicewestsussex.org.uk

Support with food



Foodbank voucher

If you are living on a low income, it can be hard to make ends meet. The following agencies can issue a foodbank voucher:

- Temporary Accommodation Team: email tainfor@midsussex.gov.uk or call housing advice on 01444 477574
- Citizens Advice West Sussex: call 0808 278 7969 or online via their website at [Citizens Advice - Free and reliable advice in West Sussex](#)
- Trussell organisation at [Find a food bank | Trussell](#)

Please visit the Council's website [here](#) for more information on food banks, low cost and free food.

Community foodshop

Your Local Pantry can help families and individuals who are living on a low income. Each Pantry sets its own weekly contribution amount and in return, you can choose items of non- perishable, chilled and frozen food. These items are of greater value than the weekly membership fee so will reduce your weekly shopping bill.

For more information and to register, please visit: [Your Local Pantry](#)

Healthy Start

If you are pregnant or have children under the age of four, you may be eligible for Healthy Start. With Healthy Start, you get a prepaid card with money to spend on milk, healthy food and infant formula milk. You can also get free vitamins.

To find out more visit: www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/
email healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk or call 0300 330 7010.

Turn to Us has an easy-to-use benefits calculator and grant search tool to check what benefits you might be able to claim and what grants you might be able to apply for. For more information visit their website [www.turn2us.org.uk/Get- Support](http://www.turn2us.org.uk/Get-Support)

Support with utilities

Depending on the type of temporary accommodation you are placed in, you might have to set up utility accounts or pay service charges to cover the cost of the bills.

Your supplier

If you are using a pre-payment meter and cannot afford to top it up, you may be able to get temporary credit from your supplier. They might add this to your meter automatically when you run out of credit, or you might have to contact them and ask. [Find out who your energy supplier is](#) if you're not sure.

British Gas

If your own supplier cannot help, and you are in debt on a pre-payment meter, you could get support from <https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/> (this is available to British Gas and non-British Gas customers).



Turn2us

Provides additional information on support for energy and water bills [here](#).

Citizens Advice Bureau

The CAB have some useful links for household support [here](#).

Support with furniture

If your accommodation is unfurnished, you may need white goods or furniture. This page has examples of websites and shops with free or low- cost items to help furnish your home.

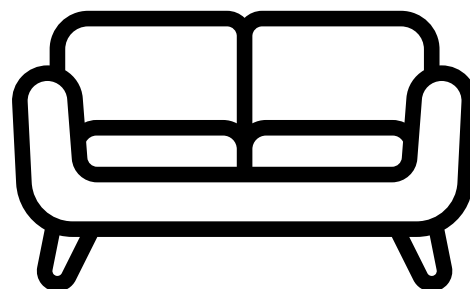
Useful websites

[Freecycle](#) for free used items.

[Freecycle](#) for free used items.

[Gumtree](#) for free used items.

Facebook Marketplace.



If your temporary accommodation is in Mid Sussex, the TA Team can make a referral to Furnihelp for free used items. Please email tainfo@midsussex.gov.uk if you wish to request this service.

Claiming benefits

If you are claiming benefits and have moved into emergency or temporary accommodation you must update whoever pays your benefits about your change of circumstances so that you keep getting the right payment. You will also need to make a separate claim for Housing Benefit from the Council to get support with housing costs for your temporary accommodation.



Universal credit

Report changes using your Universal Credit online account at www.gov.uk/sign-in-universal-credit or contact the Universal Credit helpline at www.gov.uk/universal-credit/contact-universal-credit

When you move into temporary accommodation, it is important to update your Universal Credit (UC) account with your new TA address and select “Temporary accommodation provided by your local council” as the housing type.”

Housing benefit

When you are first placed in emergency or temporary accommodation, your TA Officer will assist you to apply for housing benefit to help cover the cost of the accommodation. You will be asked for evidence to support your claim, if you fail to provide this, your housing benefit claim will not be awarded and you will need to pay the full cost of the accommodation. [Evidence Required - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

If you are transferred to alternative temporary accommodation, you will need to submit a change of address form to housing benefit. If you fail to complete this, your housing benefit claim will be suspended. You can do this online via the Council’s website here: [Forms - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

Council tax support

If you need help paying your council tax, you can apply for council tax support. More information and how to apply can be found at [Council Tax Support & Housing Benefit - More Information - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

Disability benefits

Call the Disability Service Centre on 0800 121 4433 to report changes if you get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP). www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline

If you disagree with a decision about your entitlement to benefits, you can ask the DWP for a review. You usually need to request the review within one month. If you need help, contact Citizens Advice.

Child benefit

You can report changes by:

- using the Child Benefit online service at www.gov.uk/report-changes-child-benefit
- calling the Child Benefit Office on 0300 200 3100 (you'll need your National Insurance number)
- writing to HM Revenue and Customs - Child Benefit Office PO Box 1, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE88 1AA, United Kingdom

All other benefits

Contact Jobcentre Plus www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus/existing-benefit-claims

Most organisations will need your National Insurance (NI) number if you contact them by phone. You can find this:

- on your payslip on your P60
- on letters about your tax, pension or benefits.
- in the National Insurance section of your personal tax account. You can check this at www.gov.uk/personal-tax-account.

Services that can help you to understand which benefits you are entitled to:

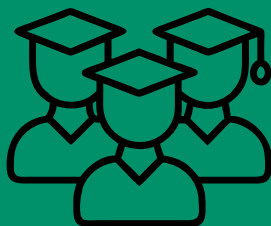
- **Citizens Advice West Sussex:** call 0808 278 7969 or visit their website: [Citizens Advice - Free and reliable advice in West Sussex](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/west-sussex/)
- **Turn2us** You can calculate what benefits you are eligible for at www.turn2us.org.uk
- **Shelter website** https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/benefits
- **Government website** www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

Please note:

If you do not report a change of circumstances to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), you might receive more benefits than you are entitled to. If you do, you might have to pay some of the money back. For more information www.gov.uk/benefit-overpayments.



Education



Free nursery places

Free childcare (also known as Free entitlement) is provided by the Government for all 3- and 4-year-olds. It allows access to free, good quality, flexible early education and childcare through a pre-school, nursery or childminder registered to offer free places, along with some holiday playschemes meeting extra criteria. You can find out what is available in your area at [Find free early education and childcare - GOV.UK](#)

Moving school

If your accommodation is outside of Mid Sussex and the journey is too difficult for your children to commute, you may want to consider changing schools. You can find primary and secondary schools in your area at [School Catchment Area Checker To Compare Schools | Best School Guide](#)

Free school meals

To check your eligibility and apply for free school meals, visit [Apply for free school meals - GOV.UK](#)

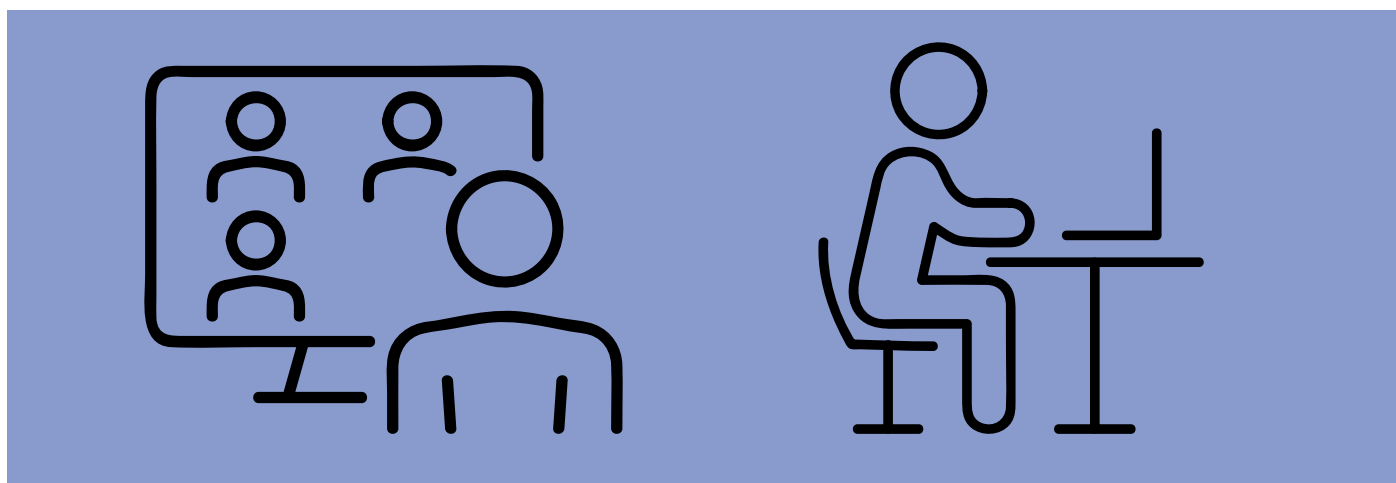
School uniform

Local authorities and trusts might choose to provide school clothing grants to help with the cost of school clothing in cases of financial hardship. In some cases, individual schools may run their own schemes to provide assistance, particularly for supporting new intakes of pupils entering the school or in the event of substantial changes to the existing uniform.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

If your child is already attending school or nursery, you can contact the SEN Coordinator (SENCO) to discuss any concerns you may have. If your child is not yet attending school or nursery, you can contact your Local Council. To find the Council in your area, go to [Find your local council - GOV.UK](#)

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS) services also provide free, impartial advice on matters relating to SEND. Visit their website for more information at [Find your local IAS service](#)



Health



NHS Services

To access local health services near you, visit [NHS website for England - NHS](#) and select the service you are looking for under NHS Services.

Mental Health Services

If you need urgent help for your mental health, call 111 and select the mental health option.

If you're 18 or over and it's not urgent, the NHS talking therapies services may be able to help you. You can find out about the talking therapies service in your area and get in touch with them without speaking to your GP, although you need to be registered with a GP to access. Find out more about Talking Therapies at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/find-nhs-talking-therapies/>

You can call Samaritans free on free on 116 123 if you need to talk to someone now.

For children and young adults, visit the NHS website at [Mental health for children, teenagers and young adults - NHS](#) to get help and advice.

Mental wellbeing audio guides

[Mental wellbeing audio guides - NHS](#)

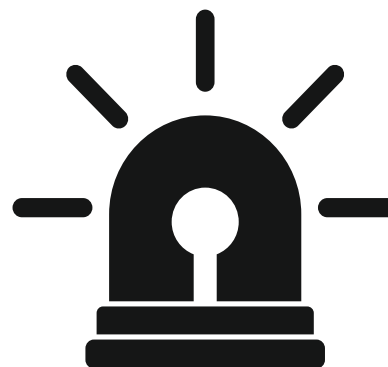
5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing

[5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS](#)

In the event of an emergency, always dial 999.

Drug and alcohol services

If you are struggling with alcohol and/or drug misuse, you can talk to FRANK on 0300 1236600 or visit the website at [Find drug and alcohol support near you | FRANK](#)



If you or someone else needs urgent help after taking drugs or drinking, call 999 for an ambulance. Tell the crew everything you know. It could save their life.

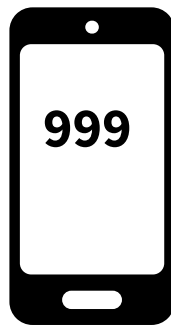
Gambling services

If you are struggling to control the amount of money you spend on gambling, you can call GamCare on 0808 8020 133, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are many different ways you can talk to someone at GamCare, visit their website at [GamCare - The leading provider of support for anyone affected by problem gambling in Great Britain](#) and select the option that best suits you.

Domestic violence and/or abuse services

If you are in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for the police. If you can't speak and are calling on a mobile press 55 to have your call transferred to the police. Pressing 55 only works on mobiles and does not allow police to track your location. If you are in danger and unable to talk, listen to the questions from the operator and, if you can, respond by coughing or tapping on the handset.

Visit the Government website for more information on how to get help [Domestic abuse: how to get help - GOV.UK](#)



Useful Links



Links to support available

SHELTER

[Homelessness advice - Shelter England](#)

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU (CAB)

[If you're offered housing because you're homeless - Citizens Advice](#)

LAW STOP

[Homelessness | Lawstop](#)

ENTITLED TO

[Benefits Calculator - entitledto - independent | accurate | reliable](#)

MONEY HELPER

[Free and impartial help with money, backed by the government | MoneyHelper](#)

GOV.UK

[Help if you're homeless or about to become homeless - GOV.UK](#)

[Universal Credit: detailed information for claimants - GOV.UK](#)

[Apply for a Universal Credit advance or hardship payment: Help with job expenses - GOV.UK](#)