



# Are you homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?

for the South Oxfordshire and  
Vale of White Horse Districts



Listening Learning Leading



[www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)



If you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless you should contact us as soon as you can. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 means that we have duties to try and prevent or relieve (end) homelessness.

## **Prevention Duty**

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance if you are at risk of homelessness and are eligible for assistance, meaning you have the right to claim benefits in the UK.

The prevention duty means that we must take reasonable steps to help prevent you from becoming homeless. This duty lasts for 56 days from the first date you report to us.

## **Relief Duty**

If we cannot prevent you from becoming homeless during the prevention duty period, we are then legally obliged to try to help you find accommodation within a further 56 days. We may have a duty to provide emergency accommodation if you may be in “priority need”.

The priority need categories are:

- You have dependent children living with you
- You are pregnant
- You are 16 or 17 years old
- You are a care leaver aged between 18 to 20
- You are vulnerable as a result of old age; physical or learning disabilities; mental health problems; fleeing domestic abuse or time spent in prison, care or the armed forces
- Homeless due to an emergency such as fire or flood.



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## Getting in touch

When you get in touch with us about your risk of becoming homeless we will ask you to provide the following information:

- Proof of identity for everyone in your household
- Proof of income
- Evidence of homelessness or your risk of homelessness

## Personal Housing Plan

We will allocate a housing officer to your case who will work with you on your personal housing plan. First, we will complete a detailed assessment of your housing situation, your support needs and the type of accommodation you require.

Then you will be offered some housing options which you need to explore to help you to resolve your situation.

## If you are still homeless

If you are still homeless or in emergency accommodation after both the prevention duty and relief duty periods, we will make a decision on whether we owe you any further housing duty. We will usually only accept the main housing duty if you:

- Meet a priority need
- Are not intentionally homeless
- Have a local connection to our district

If you do not meet a priority need or are intentionally homeless we may only have to offer you advice and assistance.





If we accept the main housing duty towards you, we may only secure accommodation for a period of 12 months.

## **Refusal to cooperate**

If we think you are deliberately or unreasonably refusing to cooperate with steps agreed in your personal housing plan, we can end any prevention or relief help. We will tell you before we do this and if you disagree with our decision you have the right to ask for a review.

## **If you disagree**

If you are not happy with a decision we have made you can ask us to look at it again. This includes reviewing the steps that we think are reasonable to prevent or relieve your homelessness or a decision that you have deliberately or unreasonably refused to cooperate over your personal housing plan.

We also have more specialised information on our website for people with specific circumstances which has led to the risk of homelessness, such as:

- Suffering domestic abuse
- Suffering a mental health illness or impairment
- Leaving care
- Leaving prison
- Leaving hospital
- Leaving the Armed Forces
- Street homelessness



## Our contact details

Call our housing team on 01235 422452 or email [housing@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:housing@southandvale.gov.uk) .

## Online assistance

You can receive online housing assistance, tailored to your circumstances, by completing our self-help housing options tool:

Vale of White Horse District Council:  
<http://www.whitehorsehomechoice.org.uk/>

South Oxfordshire District Council:  
<https://www.southoxfordshirehomechoice.org.uk/>

You may also be asked to complete the online assessment to help our team ensure you receive the best housing advice available.

**Our service promise** – all emails will receive a response within one working day.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils  
135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Abingdon, OX14 4SB

Our office hours are 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on a Friday

