



- *Are you homeless or sofa surfing?*
- *Is someone threatening to kick you out?*
- *Do you feel unsafe at home?*

...we're here to help



● *I'm aged
16-17 and
homeless, can
you help
me?*

This guide explains what happens if you are 16 – 17 and you think that you will become homeless, or if you already have nowhere safe to sleep.

Suffolk County Council Children and Young People's Services and the Housing Services at the District and Borough Councils (these are East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk and Babergh Council and West Suffolk Council) are the main sources of support for homeless young people.



We have a duty to keep you safe from harm.



Right now you're probably not in the place that you want to be. We understand and we know this can be really difficult. We want to help you feel secure in a place you can call home. We've produced this guide to explain what help is available to you and what your options will be. We also know you are different from any other person so what you want will be individual to you.

We understand that this is a confusing situation and it may be hard to take everything in. That's why it is important to keep talking to the people who will be trying to help you get through this. They want you to get the support you need. Talking to them is also the only way to make sure that what you want is clearly understood, and your wishes and feelings will be heard.

● *I don't have a roof over my head, so you have to house me, right?*

Yes, that's correct, it is our duty to make sure you are in safe accommodation. You can contact the County Council or your local Council and say that you are homeless (and let them know your situation).

If you have nowhere safe to stay, we will work together to find you some emergency accommodation. If you're not at home but staying in temporary accommodation that is safe (perhaps with other relations or at the house of a friend), we can support you. We may ask you to stay there for a bit longer, while we look into how we can help you.

The important point for us - is to know that you are safe. Once that's arranged it is our responsibility to find out why this has happened, and to work with you, and others including your family and professionals.

● **If you need emergency accommodation now please call 0808 800 4005 and talk to Customer First.**

During evenings or at weekends this number will be staffed by the Emergency Duty Team, so someone will be able to help you.

● *What is emergency accommodation?*

Examples of emergency accommodation include beds in specialist accommodation for young people, 'crash-pad' facilities with 24 hour support or an emergency placement with a foster family. We will work with you to find the best available solution.

You should not be placed in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation, or in an adult night shelter.

● *I think that I might soon become homeless, who can help me?*

You can contact Suffolk County Council's Children and Young People's Service, or you can contact the Housing Service at your local Council.


You will find their contact details at the end of this leaflet. The services will talk to each other and agree who is in the best position to work with you and your family to prevent you from becoming homeless.

● *How do you decide where I will live? What do you actually do to help me?*

Depending on your situation and the decision made about the support you need, the Housing Service or Children and Young People's Services will carry out an assessment.

This involves them speaking to each other, about how best to help you, and what options to offer. They will ask questions about what you want to happen, your home life, things that matter to you like education/college and why things have come to this point. They will also talk to the other people in your life so that they get a complete picture.

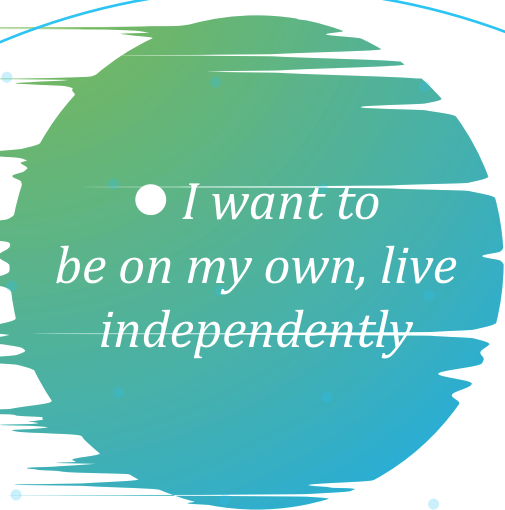
They will try to get this done as quickly as possible, but this may take a bit of time. It's about making sure that the right options are offered to you. The focus will be to support you to live safely - with people who can meet your needs. This may be for an initial period whilst other plans are being made.



For most young people the best people to look after them are their parents/carers or other members of their family. If we can help a young person and their family work out their difficulties, then it may be possible for them to return and remain at home.

What we offer will depend on the assessment, your views and information from your family. We will also consider your support needs, education, family and friends' network and wellbeing etc.

When the assessment is completed and we understand what's been happening, Children and Young People's Services and the Housing Service will advise what we can offer to you at this stage. You will need to make a decision based on these options - but with each choice there will be advantages and disadvantages. We will do our best to make sure that what you're offered does work for you but we cannot guarantee that you will get everything that you want.



● *I want to
be on my own, live
independently*

At 16/17 years there are limited options for independent living for many reasons including the shortage in housing. We can explain this to you in more detail. It is our duty to find a safe and appropriate place for you to go, and that includes staying with your family.


This is a list of the possible outcomes:

- Living at home or with a family member
- Come into care – become a child in care, which means that Suffolk County Council Children’s Social Care Service will become responsible for you instead of your birth family
- Accommodation arranged for you by the local housing department
- Semi-independent living, also known as housing related support

● *I don't like the options you've given me, I'm thinking of turning them down*

Before you make any final decisions about the accommodation you've been offered there are some points you should think about.

- A social worker will be completing the assessment with you, so if at any point you are unhappy with the options you should let them know.
- If you decide that you do not want to come into care, you will be turning down access to assistance and support, from Suffolk County Council's Children and Young People's Leaving Care Service, which may last till your 25th birthday.
- If you don't want to come into care but Children's Social Care Services are still concerned that your current situation is unsafe, or you're at risk of getting caught up in harmful activities, they have a duty to continue working with you. They won't walk away, they will still be involved in your life and with your family.
- It's always sensible to get advice before making a decision, this includes accessing independent advice. For example you may want to talk to an independent advisor. An advisor is someone who can help you understand what is happening, and help you express your views and wishes. Contact details for advisory support are at the end of this leaflet.



● *Once
I'm settled,
will it be
permanent?*

Our job is to make sure that you are safe, and you don't keep moving or changing your carers.

However, things change in life, relationships improve, and it may be that the difficulties at home get sorted out. As a result, you may want to go back home. That's okay you can change your mind and return home, if it is considered safe for you to do so.

There may also be situations when the option we offered may need to change but we will always discuss this with you and offer you the assistance that you need.

● *Next steps - who to contact for help*

These are the contact details of the services that can help you.

- **East Suffolk Council**, Housing Needs,
Telephone: 0333 016 2000
www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice/homelessness-advice-and-prevention/
- **Ipswich Borough Council**, Housing Services, 3E Grafton House,
15-17 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2DE.
Telephone: 01473 433033
www.ipswich.gov.uk/services/homelessness
- **Mid Suffolk and Babergh Council**, Endeavour House, 8 Russell
Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX.
Telephone: 0300 1234000
www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/homeless-advice/
- **West Suffolk Council Housing Options Team**,
Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU.
Telephone: 01284 763233
www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/find_a_home/
- **Suffolk County Council Children's Social Care**
(Customer First contact centre)
Telephone 0808 800 4005
(free from landlines and most mobiles)
- **Shelter** – Get help:
https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help
- **Citizens Advice** – housing support:
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing
- **CFSS Homeless Advice** on 01473 233994 9am to 5pm
to talk to an Independent Advisor.