

# Do you have a place you can call home?

This booklet gives you advice on your choices and the help and support you can receive if you are 16–17 years old and homeless or at threat of homelessness.



Lambeth

# Am I homeless?

**You do not have to be living on the streets to be considered homeless. If your home is not suitable for you to live in or you do not have the legal right to stay where you live, you can be considered as homeless.**

## **What happens if you have nowhere to stay on the night you ask for help?**

You will be provided with suitable emergency accommodation until an assessment has been carried out.

## **Am I homeless if I live with friends?**

This would depend on whether there is suitable accommodation there for you and it is a stable living arrangement. If it is, you may still be able to get some support from the council and other services to meet your needs.

## **Does it matter that I moved into Lambeth and have not always lived here?**

It does not matter that you were not brought up or lived in Lambeth during your childhood as long as you are now living in Lambeth. You can still get the support and services required from Lambeth Council.

## **How is a decision made about the support I may be able to get?**

If you are aged between 16–21 and are homeless or at risk of homelessness, you can get housing advice and support from the Young People's Housing Advice Team. The aim of the Young People's Housing Advice Team is to help you to stay safely at home where possible and provide you with the support you need to be able to do this.

If you are 16 or 17 years old and are homeless or at threat of becoming homeless, Lambeth Council must make an assessment to understand your circumstances and your needs. This will help to make a decision on what support you will be offered.

# How The Young People's Housing Advice Service can help you

## When you contact the Young People's Housing Advice Team, the following things will happen:

- The service will carry out a short assessment of your housing situation. This will involve contacting your family and any professionals that work with you.
- The service will arrange a meeting at your home, if deemed safe, with you and your family, to identify the problems and try and find solutions together.
- If the Young People's Housing Advice Team has been through these steps with you and is unable to prevent you from becoming homeless, they will look at other housing options. Their number is **020 7926 4200**.

You will be interviewed by a Housing Officer and Social Worker who will also assess whether you are a 'child in need', in need of accommodation. Emergency accommodation will be provided, if necessary. If you stay in this accommodation for more than 24 hours, you will automatically become a 'child looked after'.

If you are offered accommodation by the Young People's Housing Advice Team, this is most likely to be shared hostel-style schemes but could also be with a foster carer or family hosts in the community.

If you are not at immediate risk of homelessness, support from Early Help services may be available to prevent you from becoming homeless and work with you and your family to support you staying at home.

## What is an assessment?

An assessment is carried out by a Social Worker, and maybe someone from the housing team, to look at your individual circumstances and the needs you have. Your views and wishes will form part of the assessment and the Social Worker may also speak to your friends and family to understand things from their view.



## What are the decisions that can be made after an assessment?

Lambeth Council's children's services will make a decision as to the support you will be offered following on from the assessment. There are a number of decisions that can be made.

You may become 'looked after' by Lambeth Council (definition below) if one or more of the below applies:

- No one has parental responsibility for you.
- You are a lost or abandoned young person.
- The person who has been caring for you cannot provide suitable care and housing for you.
- You are 16–17 years old and it has been determined that you cannot remain in your family home and have no other accommodation available to you, in which case children services would provide you with the accommodation.

## Are you a 'child in need'?

A decision will be taken to see whether you are classed as a 'child in need' by a Social Worker. A 'child in need' is a child or young person under 18 that will need help and support to keep a good standard of health and development (including the impact of being homeless may have on you) or a child or young person who has a disability.

## What is a 'child looked after'?

If you are 16–17 and the assessment shows that you should become a 'child looked after' by Lambeth Council:

- Lambeth Children's Services will provide you with accommodation in a placement that meets your assessed needs. For example, it could be:
  - With foster carers in a foster care placement
  - In a residential children's home
  - In supported housing

– In supported lodgings with host families

- You will receive services from Lambeth Children’s Services and will have an allocated Social Worker who will work with you to develop a care plan
- You will receive support for matters such as money, budgeting, education, accessing health services and learning to live independently in the community.
- You will receive weekly financial support from children’s services.
- If you remain ‘looked after’ (accommodated by the council) for more than 13 weeks while aged 16–17, at the age of 18 you will become a care leaver.
- If you become a care leaver at 18 you will have a Personal Advisor. Their role is to provide you with support and advice and together

you will develop a Pathway Plan looking at all aspects of your life. These services will be provided until you are at least 21 and in some circumstances until you are 25. Please search for our ‘local offer’ online at [Support for care leavers | Lambeth Council](#) (or scan the QR code) which provides more detail as to how care leavers in Lambeth are supported.



### **What if I do not want to become looked after?\***

- If you decide you do not want to become ‘looked after’, you will have 10 days to seek independent advice, and following an explanation and understanding that choice, you will be supported

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\* Lambeth Council may override your decision to not be ‘looked after’ if the assessment finds that your welfare and safety would be seriously threatened if you are not ‘looked after’



For more detailed information please scan the QR code:





by Lambeth Council's Housing Department who will provide you with accommodation that meets your needs and prevents you from being homeless. It may be in supported housing. This means that accommodation is provided alongside key work support, to help you live as independently as possible in the community.

- You will sign a licence agreement with your landlord and will be responsible for making sure you comply with its terms, including paying rent.
- We will work with you to assess and identify your support and accommodation needs and develop a personalised housing plan which you are required to engage with to ensure you are provided the right support to manage your tenancy.
- You will have a support worker who will help you with money, budgeting, education, training, employment, accessing health services and learning to live independently in the community.
- When you are able to live independently and confidently, we will assist you in finding your own accommodation.
- You can request a new child and family assessment if you believe your circumstances have changed and you need social work support.
- You can change your mind and opt to become a 'child looked after' any time before your 18th birthday.
- Please note that you will not be entitled to the leaving care services which we have described above unless you have been a 'child looked after' for 13 weeks while you are 16–17.

# How to get help

## The best way to access the Young People's Housing Advice Team is

- by emailing the Team on [Youngpersonservice@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:Youngpersonservice@lambeth.gov.uk)
- by telephone **020 7926 4200**
- via the website [www.lambeth.gov.uk](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk), or
- through filling out a housing advice query online <https://housingadvice.lambeth.gov.uk/QuestionnaireStart.aspx?qid=734> or scan the QR code



You can also call or email the service to get more information or book an appointment to discuss your situation. [helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk)

## You can also contact the following external organisations:

You can also speak to someone who is an independent advocate (a person not employed by Lambeth) about any decision that is made.

**Always Heard** is an advocacy service run by Coram Voice.

You can contact them

- via phone on **0808 800 5792**
- email [help@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:help@coramvoice.org.uk) or
- online <https://coramvoice.org.uk/young-peoples-zone/always-heard>

**St Giles** may also be able to provide independent support to you and you can email them at [info@stgilestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@stgilestrust.org.uk)

**Lambeth's emergency social care contact is  
020 7926 5555**

# What if I am not happy with a decision made?

If you are not happy with the decision that has been made or the support you have been offered, you can make a complaint to Lambeth Children's Social Care by

- calling **020 7926 9777** or
- scanning the QR code:



If you would like this information in large print or in another language, please contact us on

**0207 926 5263**

or by writing to:

Lambeth Children's Services,  
London Borough of Lambeth, Civic Centre 2nd Floor,  
6 Brixton Hill, Brixton, London SW2 1EG