



Blenheim Gardens RMO Guidance Leaflet

Facts about homelessness

in partnership with



Advice for homeless people and those threatened by homelessness is available from Lambeth's Housing Services Unit. We will do everything we can to prevent you becoming homeless and to help you find housing which meets your needs.

The help the council has to provide to homeless people is set out in the Housing Act 1996 (part V11) and it states that the council must advise and help anyone who is homeless or in danger of becoming homeless.

The level of assistance we can give you depends on your personal circumstances. Although we will provide information and advice to all homeless people, we cannot not accept a full housing duty to you if you are not eligible, if you made yourself intentionally homeless, if you are not in priority need, or you have a local connection elsewhere and don't have one in Lambeth.

Homelessness

The law says you are homeless if you meet any of the following conditions:

- You have nowhere to live.
- You have been living somewhere, but you have no legal right to stay there and have been told to leave.
- You have somewhere to live, but cannot get into it.
- You have somewhere to live, but someone else who lives there has been violent towards you, or is likely to be violent towards you.
- Your home is a caravan, or a houseboat and you have nowhere to legally park it, or moor it.
- You have somewhere to live, but nowhere for the people who normally live with you.
- You have been made homeless as a result of an emergency, such as fire, flood or some other disaster.

We will consider you to be threatened with homelessness if you are likely to become homeless within the next 28 days.

This may be because:

- You have been taken to court by your landlord and the court has said you must leave.
- You have been living with friends or relatives who have told you to leave.

Eligibility

Certain people are not eligible for assistance under the homelessness legislation, for example, because you do not usually live in the UK or are subject to some form of immigration control.

You are likely to be eligible for assistance if:

- You usually live in the UK and are not subject to any form of immigration control.
- You usually live in the UK and are subject to immigration control, but your right to stay here is not subject to any time limit or condition(s).
- You have been given refugee status, or exceptional leave to remain here, as a result of an application for asylum.
- You are an asylum seeker who applied at port of entry when you first came to the UK and have not yet received a decision on your asylum application.
- You are an asylum seeker, who applied for asylum prior to 5th February 1996.

If you are not eligible under the above criteria you may still be entitled to help from Social Services.

Priority need

You will be considered to be in priority need if you, or someone who normally lives with you, meet any of the following criteria:

Please turn over...

- You are pregnant.
- You have dependent children (under 16 or 17-19 who are in full time education) who normally live with you.
- You are homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster.
- You are aged 16 or 17, not living with your parent or guardian, and not already being assisted by social services.
- You are under 21 and were in care when you were 16 or 17.
- You are vulnerable.

You might be considered vulnerable if you, or someone who normally lives with you, are less able to fend for yourself, and as a result would be more likely to suffer harm due to homelessness. Some things that are taken into account when assessing vulnerability are:

- Your age.
- Your physical or mental health or disability status.
- Whether you are at risk of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out.
- Any time spent in care.
- Any time spent in the armed forces.
- Any time spent in prison.
- Any other special reasons that make you less able to fend for yourself.

Local connection

To have a local connection you, or someone who normally lives with you, must meet one of the following:

- You have lived in the borough for six out of the last 12 months, with the exception of interim or temporary accommodation provided to you by another local authority.

- You have lived in the borough for three out of the last five years, with the exception of interim or temporary accommodation provided to you by another local authority.
- You have permanent employment in the borough.
- You have a close relative who has lived in the borough for the last five years. Close relatives include parents, children, brothers or sisters.
- There may be other exceptional circumstances which the council will accept as a local connection.

We may refer you to another council and ask them to assist you, if:

- You have no local connection with Lambeth, but do have a local connection with the other council.
- You made a homeless application to another borough in the last five years and were placed in Lambeth by that borough.

Under such circumstances we have to make sure that the other council has agreed to help you before asking you to go there. While these arrangements are being made, we will offer you interim accommodation if this is required. (Interim accommodation is accommodation provided whilst we are carrying out our enquiries).

We will not ask you to return to an area where you have experienced, or are likely to experience, violence.

If you have no connection with any area, we may still have a duty to house you or help you to obtain accommodation.

Intentional homelessness

If you are intentionally homeless then you will be entitled to advice and assistance to help to prevent you from losing your home (if you have one). If you are already homeless then you may be entitled to accommodation for a reasonable period of time, usually 28 days, while you find accommodation of your own. You may be considered intentionally homeless if:

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- You have deliberately done something, or failed to do something, that you knew would result in your losing your accommodation.
- In order to receive assistance under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 you have entered into an arrangement that requires you to leave your accommodation.

We are unlikely to consider you intentionally homeless if we decide that:

- It was not reasonable for you to continue to occupy your accommodation.
- You left your accommodation because of violence or fear of violence.
- Your accommodation went with your job and you lost it through no fault of your own.

Advice on homelessness

Lambeth's Housing Services unit provides advice and assistance to people with housing problems. Our aim is to prevent homelessness by giving advice and intervention. This includes advice to private sector tenants on issues such as rent arrears, disrepair and landlord/tenant disputes. We also advise owner-occupiers on issues such as mortgage arrears or service charge problems.

We work closely with private sector landlords and tenants to maintain successful tenancies by providing an early and rapid response to their housing problems. This includes liaising with the Housing Benefit department to resolve problems with claims, dealing with mortgage lenders and providing practical advice and assistance where required.

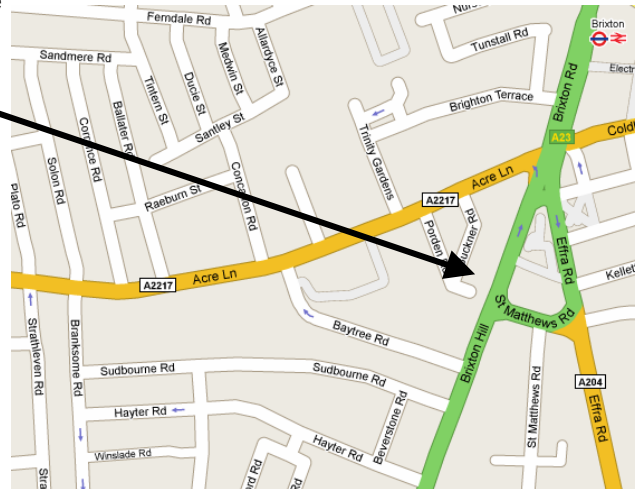
Who is eligible?

- Private sector tenants
- Private sector leaseholders
- Housing association tenants
- Freeholders

What can I expect from housing advice?

- Advice on a range of issues, including rent and mortgage arrears, disrepair and eviction proceedings
- Advice and information relevant to your circumstances that will help you to keep your home
- Liaison with benefit agencies, in particular assistance with communication between the Housing Benefit department and individual private sector landlords or managing agents to ensure prompt assessment and payment of claims
- Comprehensive advice to owner-occupiers and long leaseholders, especially those on low incomes, on all aspects of service charge problems, mortgage arrears, multiple debt and income maximisation
- Negotiation with banks, building societies and other lending institutions in order to prevent homelessness
- Representation of clients at formal hearings

Where to find the Homeless Person's Unit
Lambeth Housing Services Unit
2 - 7 Town Hall Parade
London SW2 1RP



Please turn over...

Blenheim Gardens RMO is able to advise on most housing advice issues. If you have any housing related issues that you would like to discuss, please contact the estate office either in person or via email as listed below.

Please note that Blenheim Gardens' staff is not authorised to assess your eligibility for housing or to process homeless housing applications.

Ways to contact us:

Blenheim Gardens RMO
24 Prague Place
London SW2 5ED

Phone: 020 7926 0158
Website: www.bgrmo.org.uk
Email: blenheimgardens@lambeth.gov.uk

If you would like this information in large print, Braille, or in another format or language, please contact us on 020 7926 0158.

Español: *Si desea esta información en otro idioma, rogamos nos llame al 020 7926 0158.*

Français: *Si vous souhaitez ces informations dans une autre langue veuillez nous contacter au 020 7926 0158.*

Português: *Se desejar esta informação noutra idioma é favor telefonar para 020 7926 0158.*

Twi: *Se wope saa nkaeboy yi wo kasa foforo mu a fre 020 7926 0158.*

Yoruba: *Tí ẹ ba fẹ ìmoràn yìí, ní èdè Òmíràn, ẹjọ, ẹ kàn wà l'ágogo 020 7926 0158.*

