

A hand holding a set of keys against a blue background. At the top, there is a white silhouette of a house roof. The text 'Homelessness matters' is written in white, with 'matters' underlined in blue. The hand is holding a set of keys, including a large key with a logo on it.

# Homelessness matters

**Worried about  
being homeless?**

**We can help ...**



**PERTH &  
KINROSS  
COUNCIL**

**Housing &  
Community Care**

# Homeless Service Standards

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## We will:

- *give you free advice, information and assistance to find somewhere to live;*
- *treat you with consideration and respect the confidentiality of your situation;*
- *offer an emergency service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;*
- *offer you temporary accommodation if you have nowhere to stay tonight;*
- *offer you a same day appointment with a Homeless Advice Officer if you contact us during office hours to say you are homeless;*
- *offer you an appointment within 3 working days if you are threatened with homelessness;*
- *hold homeless interviews in a private room;*
- *offer you the choice of an interview with a male or a female Homeless Advice Officer;*
- *explain that you can choose to be accompanied by a friend, relative or representative in your homeless advice interview;*
- *arrange a translation and/or interpreting service for you if English is not your first language;*
- *arrange assistance if you have hearing, sight, speech or other communication difficulties;*
- *not discriminate against you because of your race, ethnicity, religion, social background, marital status, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation;*
- *aim to reach a decision on your application within 28 calendar days of your homeless interview;*
- *keep you informed of progress on your application;*
- *advise you of your right to request a review of our decision;*
- *aim to respond to any review requests within 14 calendar days of receiving them.*

# Contents

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I'm worried that I might lose my home. What should I do?	4
What should I do if I don't have anywhere to stay tonight?	4
What can you do to help?	4
What happens in a homeless advice interview?	5
Do I need to bring anything to the interview?	6
What happens next?	6
Who else will you contact to get information about my application?	6
How will I find out the decision?	7
What happens if I'm not accepted as homeless?	7
What happens if I am considered to be homeless?	7
How long will it take before I'm offered a permanent home?	8
What if I don't agree with the decision the Council makes?	8
What if my circumstances change and I no longer need help?	8
What kind of temporary accommodation might I be offered?	9
How much will it cost?	10
Will I get any help to pay?	10
What if I'm not happy with the accommodation you offer?	10
What happens to my furniture and belongings?	10
What will happen to my pets?	10
This sounds like the kind of help I am looking for. What should I do now?	11

## **I'm worried that I might lose my home. What should I do?**

Get in touch with the Housing Advice Centre by coming in to 10-16 York Place, Perth, or by phoning 01738 474500 between 8.45 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday. You could also speak to staff at your local area housing office.

If you think you might become homeless we will offer you an appointment within three working days for you to sit down and discuss your situation with a trained Homeless Advice Officer. Same day interviews can be arranged if you don't have anywhere to stay tonight. The interview is free and confidential.

## **What should I do if I don't have anywhere to stay tonight?**

Contact us straight away. If it's between 8.45 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday, you can come in to the Housing Advice Centre, 10-16 York Place, Perth, or phone 01738 474500. When the Centre is closed you can contact the duty team at Greyfriars House, 55 Princes Street, Perth or call the freephone telephone number 0800 917 0708, and someone will talk to you about what we can do to help.

You will either be offered a homeless advice interview on the same day, or if the Centre is closed for the day duty staff will make an emergency assessment of your situation, and find you temporary accommodation for the night. We can also provide transport if you need it. If you contact us out of hours, a homeless advice interview with a Homeless Advice Officer will be arranged for the next working day.

## **What can you do to help?**

What we can do depends on your individual circumstances, but we can offer information and advice, accommodation, and support.

We may be able to:

- prevent you losing your home;*
- help you find other accommodation;*
- offer you somewhere to stay;*
- put you in contact with other people who could help you.*

## What happens in a homeless advice interview?

You and a Homeless Advice Officer will meet in a private room. You can bring a friend, relative or representative with you if you want.

The point of the meeting is to look at your situation, and how we can help you avoid becoming homeless. You will also complete a homeless application form with a trained Homeless Advice Officer. The Officer will explain what happens next, including:

- *how we consider homeless applications;*
- *how long it will take to make a decision;*
- *what the possible decisions are, and what they mean for you;*
- *your legal rights under homeless legislation, including your rights to an appeal or review, your rights to temporary accommodation if you have nowhere else to stay, and what happens to your furniture, pets, etc while you are homeless.*

The information you give during the interview, including details about how you became homeless or threatened with homelessness, will be used by the Homeless Advice Officer to make a decision about what duties the Council has towards you under homeless legislation. Our legal duties to you will depend on your individual circumstances.

## Do I need to bring anything to the interview?

To help the Homeless Advice Officer make a decision on your application they will need to see evidence of your circumstances. If you bring everything they need to the homeless advice interview it will let us assess your application as quickly as possible. Please bring:

- *a copy of your current tenancy agreement, rent book etc;*
- *proof of identity, such as your birth certificate, passport, or a document confirming your National Insurance number;*
- *details of your income, including benefits, bank statements and wage slips etc;*
- *if your home is to be sold then confirmation of the sale of the property;*
- *if your home is being repossessed then the court summons for repossession;*

- *if you're presenting as a household with children, then your children's birth certificates and confirmation of custody arrangements (if applicable);*
- *if you are pregnant, your maternity certificate (MATB1);*
- *if your current tenancy is ending then any documentation relating to the tenancy and the ending of it. This may include: a copy of your lease or contract (if tied accommodation), legal Notice to Quit (NTQ), AT5, AT6 or Section 33 notice.*

## **What happens next?**

Your application will be assessed against the homeless legislation and the Scottish Government's Code of Guidance on Homelessness, to make a decision on what support and help we can offer you.

These say that we must consider:

- *whether you are homeless or threatened with homelessness;*
- *whether you are intentionally homeless;*
- *whether you have a local connection with the Perth and Kinross area.*

Your application will be assessed within 28 days of the date of the interview, although this may be delayed if we don't have all the information we need.

## **Who else will you contact to get information about my application?**

We will only contact people and agencies who can provide relevant information we need to consider your application, such as:

- *other Council departments, including Community Care, Education & Children's Services, Welfare Rights, Housing Benefit, and Council Tax;*
- *your landlord;*
- *mortgage lenders;*
- *police;*
- *solicitors;*
- *healthcare professionals;*
- *support services.*

We will only contact these people where it is relevant to your application, and you will be asked for your consent before any contact is made.

## How will I find out the decision?

By law we have to give you the decision in writing, so a letter will normally be sent to the address you have given us at your interview. However, if a letter isn't the best way to communicate with you, or if you would prefer the information in another language or format (such as large print, Braille, MOON, or on audio CD) then please let us know at your advice interview and we'll also give you the decision and reasons in the way which best suits you.

We will tell you our decision on each of the three questions we looked at:

- *whether you are homeless or threatened with homelessness;*
- *whether you are intentionally homeless;*
- *whether you have a local connection with the Perth and Kinross area.*

We will also explain the reasons for that decision, and what assistance the Council can offer you.

## What happens if I'm not accepted as homeless?

If after considering your application we decide that you are not homeless under the terms of the legislation, or that you are intentionally homeless, it means that we do not have a duty to offer you a permanent house. If we placed you in temporary accommodation while your application was considered we will give you reasonable notice to leave, and offer you advice and assistance to find somewhere else to stay.

## What happens if I am considered to be homeless?

If you are not homeless due to your own actions, and do have a local connection in the area, we will make a reasonable offer of permanent accommodation. In the meantime, you will either be entitled to stay in temporary accommodation if we have already placed you there, or you will be offered temporary accommodation if you need somewhere to stay in the meantime.

## **How long will it take before I'm offered a permanent home?**

We have a limited number of houses available to offer you in the area, although you will be eligible for appropriate vacancies in both Council houses and local Housing Association properties. The amount of time it takes before you are made an offer of housing varies, and will depend on the number of vacancies of the size and type you need.

## **What if I don't agree with the decision the Council makes?**

Under the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 we have a legal duty to review our decision if you ask us to. You can ask us to review the decision on what duties we owe to you if you are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, and any decision to refer you to another local authority. You have 21 days from the date of your decision letter to ask us for a review. The review will be undertaken by a senior member of staff who wasn't involved in the original decision. You can ask for a review by visiting or writing to us at the Housing Advice Centre, Housing & Community Care, Perth & Kinross Council, 10-16 York Place, PERTH PH2 8EP, by emailing [housingadvicecentre@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvicecentre@pkc.gov.uk) or by phoning 01738 474500.

## **What if my circumstances change and I no longer need help?**

You might not need our help for lots of different reasons. You may find your own accommodation, or decide to remain where you are, or you may have reunited with your partner or spouse.

Whatever the reason, if you decide not to go ahead with your homeless application, just let us know. You can re-apply at any time if you need our help again.

If your circumstances change in any other way, eg contact details, who will be moving with you, income etc, please let us know as soon as possible.

# More About Temporary Accommodation

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## What kind of temporary accommodation might I be offered?

The Council may offer temporary accommodation in a number of ways:

- **Self-contained properties** - which have been set aside for temporary accommodation, ranging from single person properties to larger family sized housing.
- **Private sector leasing** - where the Council leases properties from private landlords for three to five years, and sub-lets them to homeless customers.
- **Greyfriars House** - a 27-bedroomed hostel for single households in the centre of Perth. Residents get their own bedroom and share kitchen, bathroom, laundry and lounge facilities.
- **Rio** - a family support house for up to eight families with children, or a pregnant woman. All rooms are en suite, and there's a large shared dining kitchen, laundry facilities, shared lounge and children's playroom. Rio is set within its own grounds.
- **Bed and breakfast** - we try to minimise the use of B&B accommodation wherever possible, and will only offer this type of accommodation when there are no alternatives. However, if you contact us out of hours needing somewhere to stay that night you are most likely to be offered a room at Greyfriars House or a B&B.
- **Supported accommodation (voluntary sector)** - we work with a range of voluntary agencies to offer supported accommodation to people who might benefit from it. This includes Skinnergate and Anchor House. Specialist accommodation for young people is also available at Wellbank House.

## **How much will it cost?**

Rent and support charges will vary depending on the type of temporary accommodation you have. However, temporary accommodation charges tend to be higher than mainstream Council rents because they include the actual rent of the accommodation, repairs and maintenance, and the provision of support, advice and assistance.

You will be told the costs before signing an occupancy agreement for the temporary accommodation.

## **Will I get any help to pay?**

If you receive any state benefits, most or all of the accommodation charge will be covered by housing benefit. We can help you to make a housing benefit application if you need it.

## **What if I'm not happy with the accommodation you offer?**

You have a right to request a review of our offer of accommodation if you feel it isn't suitable. Please request a review within 21 days of the offer of accommodation. The review will be undertaken by a senior member of staff who wasn't involved in the original decision. You can ask for a review by visiting or writing to us at the Housing Advice Centre, Housing & Community Care, Perth & Kinross Council, 10-16 York Place, PERTH PH2 8EP, by emailing [housingadvicecentre@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvicecentre@pkc.gov.uk) or by phoning 01738 474500. Until the review is completed you can continue to stay in the temporary accommodation offered.

## **What happens to my furniture and belongings?**

If you can't make your own arrangements to store your possessions we can help. We can arrange for your belongings to be uplifted and stored while you are in temporary accommodation. We will ask you to pay towards the cost of this service, although the charge will vary depending on the amount of furniture which needs to be stored.

## What will happen to my pets?

Pets are not allowed in either of our hostels, or in B&Bs. We can help you to arrange kennels for your pets if you can't find someone to look after them, but you will have to pay the full costs for this.

If you are offered a self-contained flat, or a private sector property, you might be able to keep your pets. However, you need written permission to do so and your occupancy agreement will detail the arrangements. The member of staff offering you temporary accommodation will be able to give you more information about this.

## This sounds like the kind of help I am looking for. What should I do now?

Between 8.45 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday, you can contact:

Housing Advice Centre  
Housing & Community Care  
Perth & Kinross Council  
10-16 York Place  
PERTH  
PH2 8EP

Tel 01738 474500

You can also speak to staff at your local area housing office.

In an emergency, when offices are closed, you can contact the duty team at:

Greyfriars House  
55 Princes Street  
PERTH  
PH2 8LJ

Freephone 0800 917 0708

The Council intends to provide the best services possible. Sometimes, things may go wrong and if this happens we want to learn from our mistakes and improve the services we provide. If you wish to make a complaint please ask for a copy of our complaints leaflet from any Council office, or by calling the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You also have the right to make a complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman at:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman  
4 Melville Street  
EDINBURGH  
EH3 7NS

Tel 0800 377 7330 (freephone)  
Text 0790 049 4372  
Fax 0800 377 7331  
Email [ask@spsos.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsos.org.uk)



If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.



Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility