

Advice for people leaving hospital



Homelessness advice and assistance

If you are homeless now or are due to leave hospital in the next 8 weeks and don't have anywhere to stay on discharge, the Council has a legal duty to provide you with advice and assistance. You can apply to any council for help but it's usually best to apply to an area where you have a local connection because you live there or you have close family in the area.

Your hospital also has a duty to let the Council know before your discharge if they believe you may be homeless or at risk of homelessness and you have asked to be referred to us. This is called the duty to refer. You should tell the nursing staff about your situation as soon as possible.

The Council will assess your housing needs and give you a personal housing plan which will set out the steps that you and the Council will take to help find you suitable accommodation.

If you are homeless through no fault of your own, eligible for assistance and in priority need, the Council has a legal duty to provide you with long-term accommodation. You may have priority need if you are vulnerable due to a period in hospital for mental health treatment or treatment for a physical disability. This means that you would find it harder to cope with being homeless than other people in the same situation.

Contact the Council as soon as possible to discuss your housing options. You can do so via our online [Housing Assistance Referral Portal](#) (see our Housing Advice and Homelessness Support pages at www.north-herts.gov.uk) or you can call us on 01462 474000.

Access to social housing

If your home is no longer suitable for your needs, for example because you are no longer able to manage stairs, and you need help to resolve your housing situation, you can register for social housing in the district.

To qualify for social housing in North Herts, you must have a local connection to the district, which will usually be because you have lived here for some time or because your immediate family lives in the area. For full details about how to apply for social housing in North Herts, visit our webpages at www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/housing/find-home.

You should be aware that social housing in the district is in high demand and you may have to wait some time before you are housed, depending upon your housing priority. If you are over 55 and have a support need, you can apply for sheltered accommodation which usually becomes available more quickly.

Support in your own home

Alternatively, your home may be able to be adapted to suit your needs, for example with the installation of a stair lift or with improvements to access. Help with home adaptations is available from Hertfordshire County Council through their home improvement agency. Your hospital should be able to refer you; otherwise Herts Homes Improvement Agency can be contacted on 01438 843467 or 01438 843948 or via email, hia@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

Hertfordshire County Council can also provide care at home to help you with daily living tasks such as washing and dressing. Your hospital should refer you to the most appropriate social care team to assess your needs.