

SELF HELP PACK



Facing eviction from your family home

**North Herts District Council
Housing Options Team**

August 2018

This self help information pack is for you if you are having problems with your parent/s or other family you live with and you think that you might have to leave home. The pack contains practical ideas to help you to try and work out a solution so you don't have to leave home.

The Council's Housing Options team will also provide you with help and support. However, you will get the best outcome for yourself, and you will feel more in control of your situation, if you take an active role in researching your options and take what action you can. Please read through this pack carefully and work through the actions with your parents and/or family.

If you have not already been in touch with the Council, please contact us as soon as possible through our online [Housing Assistance Referral Portal](#)

(see our Housing Advice and Homelessness Support pages at www.north-herts.gov.uk)

or call us on 01462 474000

Talk to us as early as possible so that we can help you make plans for your future and explore all the options available to you. Don't leave it until you reach crisis point.

It's good to talk

Share this self help pack with your parents/family and show them any other information that we may have given you.

If you haven't already, you will need to sit down with your parents/family and talk honestly about the situation. This ensures that everyone is clear about the problems that you are all having and then, hopefully, you can move on to resolving them. You may find these ground rules helpful (and you may want to agree these, or other ground rules, before you sit down to talk):

- One person speaks at a time
- Listen respectfully, without interrupting
- Allow everyone the chance to speak
- Try to understand things from the other person's point of view
- Try to avoid blame and abusive language

If the discussion gets too heated, stop and try again at another time when everyone has calmed down. It may help if you have a family friend present who won't take sides and can help you all to sort things out in a positive way. It may also help if you and your parents/family write down your concerns and problems before you share them with each other.

Sometimes going to stay with a friend or another family member for a day or two can give everyone a chance to calm down and review the situation in a more positive way.

Would it help to talk through your problems with a trusted friend, colleague, teacher, doctor or an extended member of your family? It might also be useful to hear other people's stories. There are many national support groups, including some specifically for young people – make use of their freephone helplines and website resources. Details of some groups are included in this pack.

Sound familiar?

Being asked to leave the family home is a common cause of homelessness in North Herts. Here are some of the issues that we often come across which can cause problems in the family home:



Consider if any of these apply to you and how this is affecting you and the other members of your family.

Remember that it is normal for families to have problems from time to time; living together is difficult for any family and often requires negotiation and compromise. Once you have all talked through and acknowledged the problems that you are having, the next step is to try and agree some actions which will resolve these and allow you to continue living at home.

If you feel unsafe at home, for example because someone is being violent or abusive towards you, you must seek help straight away. Contact the police in an emergency; otherwise contact the Council's Housing Options team or one of the local or national support groups whose details are included in this pack.

Finding a solution

Depending on the problems you and your family are having, some of the following support might help get things back on track.

Mediation

If you are finding it difficult to talk together and not making any progress, you can ask your Housing Options Officer to talk to your parents/family about the problems that you are experiencing.

The Council might also be able to refer you to the Herts Young Homeless mediation service, a local independent charity which provides fair and unbiased support to help families resolve their arguments.

Find out more on the [Herts Young Homeless](http://www.hyh.org.uk) website (www.hyh.org.uk), or call them on 03333 202 384.

Money advice

There are many sources of help and information if you feel you need help sorting out your finances – be it budgeting, ensuring you are claiming the benefits you are entitled to or managing debt. As a first step, contact [Citizens Advice North Hertfordshire](#) based in Letchworth. There is a lot of useful information on their website or you can call them and arrange to see an advisor. See also the national [Citizens Advice](#) website which has many useful resources.

Citizens Advice North Hertfordshire:

www.northhertscab.org.uk



03444 111 444

Citizens Advice national website:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

[Money Advice Service](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk) (www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk). This is an independent organisation, set up by the government to provide free and impartial money advice. Call them on 0800 138 7777.

You might also want to ask your Housing Options Officer for a budget sheet which will help you understand what you are earning and how much you are spending. This will help you determine whether you could afford a place of your own or if you could contribute more to the family finances for example.

Extra support

If you feel that you and/or your family need some more intensive support, maybe over a few weeks or months, your Housing Options Officer may be able to refer you to work with a dedicated support worker (this is often called 'floating support'). The support worker can help you to find specialist support e.g. for drug or alcohol abuse or mental health problems or may just provide support and guidance on things like education and training, life skills and getting yourself back on track.

Putting it in writing

Once you have all agreed on a way forward that will mean you can stay living in the family home, it is a good idea to put this in writing so that everyone is clear about what has been agreed and about what will happen if the agreement is broken. You may want to do this in the form of a ***Promised Behaviour in the Future Agreement*** which is signed by you and your parents/family. Another way you can put things in writing is in the form of a ***Licence Agreement***, which sets out the terms upon which you can remain living in the family home.

It is useful to sit down together every so often – once a month for example – to check that the agreement is working for all sides and to discuss any concerns before they get too serious.

Examples of both agreements are included in this pack. Your Housing Options Officer can help you prepare an agreement if necessary.

Looking for somewhere else to live

If you are unable to resolve the problems you are having at home and need to look for somewhere else to live, it is best if you can do this in a planned way so that you do not face being made homeless.

The best way to do this is to join the Council's waiting list for [social housing](#), known as the Common Housing Register.

Did you know that most people who remain living in the family home will get the same, and sometimes higher, priority on the waiting list as people who are accepted by the Council as homeless?

For example if you live at home and you have a child of your own or if there is severe overcrowding in the family home.

The benefits if you join the Housing Register and remain living at home:

- ✓ full choice over the areas you wish to live in
- ✓ full choice over the properties you wish to bid for
- ✓ you may bid for (and refuse) as many properties as you like.

If the Council accepts you as homeless, **you will only be made one offer of social housing** as your housing situation has been accepted as being critical. If you haven't found a property within a month, the Council will start bidding on your behalf for any suitable properties within the district.



For more information on the Common Housing Register:
www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/housing/find-home/apply-social-housing

Other options

The demand for social housing in the district is high and we generally have in the region of 1,500-2,000 households on the waiting list.

You may therefore wish to consider other options including renting privately, either on your own or with friends, or finding lodgings. More information is in our "How to find accommodation" pack. The Council's Housing Options team will be happy to discuss your options with you.

EXAMPLE LICENCE AGREEMENT

1) The property address (hereafter the “Home”):

(Address) _____

2) The name(s) of the parent, parents or relative(s) that live in the property and have the right to decide who else will live in that property (hereafter the “Owner”):

(Name) _____

3) The name of the son, daughter or person who has been granted permission (a Licence) to live at the property (hereafter the “Licensee”):

(Name) _____

4) This is a periodic excluded licence where permission has been given by the Owner for the Licensee to live in their Home. The Owner can withdraw the permission (terminate the Licence) at any time and will give the Licensee a period of reasonable notice to leave.

5) Permission is given by the Owner for the Licensee to occupy the Home accommodation subject to the following conditions. The Licensee should note that if these are not complied with, the Owner reserves the right to withdraw the Licensee’s permission to live in the Home thereby terminating this Licence.

[Advice for the parent/s/relative completing this agreement - detail the actions or behaviour required of the Licensee in order for permission to be given to live or to continue to live, in the home. The following is illustrative only, try and be as specific as you can.]

6) The Licensee agrees to the following:

- a) There is no rent to be paid in return for that permission; or
- b) There is a rent, or a contribution to running of the Home, to be paid of £xx.00 per week to cover the following items (list e.g. – room, food, contribution to utilities, washing).
- c) To make any non-financial contribution to the running of the Home by e.g. – helping with household tasks.
- d) To keep their room and the Home clean
- e) Not to smoke, drink or take drugs in the Home
- f) Not to cause or permit any behaviour that is a nuisance to the Owner or neighbours and not to engage in activities which are criminal.

- g) Not to invite visitors to the Home without permission
- h) To cooperate with any support provided to the family by *[list any support provided by the council or another agency or charity if this has been set up]*.

7) The Owner agrees to:

- a) Discuss with the Licensee any issues of concern and both parties agree to try and resolve any problems that occur in a reasonable manner.
- b) *[Add in anything else the parent has agreed to do – could be ways they want to support the person or regular meetings to discuss things]*

8) How any breach of this Agreement will be dealt with:

Unless there is a very serious incident all parties agree to follow the procedure set out below:

- a) Where the Owner has a concern, they will initially discuss this with the Licensee. Where there is no improvement they will issue a verbal warning to the Licensee.
- b) Where there is no improvement in behaviour or the incident is considered by the Owner to be more serious, a written warning will be given.
- c) At any time either party named in this Agreement can ask to call a meeting to discuss any problems or concerns.
- d) Where the situation may lead to the Owner asking the Licensee to leave, either party may call on help from any agency who have agreed to provide support, the Council's Housing Options team or any other agency.
- e) If the event that the Owner wishes the Licensee to leave the Home, the Owner will put this in writing to the Licensee and give them reasonable notice to leave the property.

Signature of the Owner:

Date

Signature of the Licensee:

Date

EXAMPLE PROMISED BEHAVIOUR IN THE FUTURE AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT is made on the [date]

BETWEEN [name and address of parent/parents/relative] AND [name of individual]

The [name of individual] AGREES the following in respect of their future conduct:
[These are examples for illustration]

- 1) I will make a non financial contribution to the running of the home by e.g. – helping with household tasks [it is best to be as specific as you can]
- 2) I will keep my room and the home clean
- 3) I will not smoke, drink or take drugs in the home
- 4) I will not cause or permit any behaviour that is a nuisance to the parent/s/relative or neighbours and not to engage in activities which are criminal.
- 5) I will not act in a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to anyone living in the same home as me.
- 6) I will not bring visitors to the home without permission
- 7) I will cooperate with any support provided to myself and my family [list any support provided by the Council or another agency or charity if this has been set up].
- 8) I will not take part in any anti social behaviour in the area that I live or in any other named area.

[Add point 9 below if rent is required to be paid]

- 9) I will pay rent or a weekly contribution to the running of the home of £xx.00 per week.

[Add more detail if required]

This will cover the following items [list e.g. – room, food, contribution to utilities, washing].

This will be paid every [put in the day of the week it is to be paid].

BREACH

If [name of individual] does anything which he/she has agreed not to do under this contract the following actions will occur:

Unless there is a very serious incident all parties agree to follow the procedure set out below:

- a) Where the person/s who has granted permission for the person to carry on living at home if they sign this agreement has a concern, they will sit down and discuss that concern. Where there is no improvement they will issue a verbal warning.
- b) Where there is no improvement in behaviour or the incident is considered by the person/s to be more serious a written warning will be given.

- c) At any time either party named in this agreement can ask to call a meeting to discuss any problems or concerns.
- d) Where the situation may lead to the person/s who has been granted permission to carry on living at home being asked to leave, either party may call on help from any agency who have agreed to support them, the Council Housing Options Team or any other agency.
- e) Finally if the situation cannot be resolved, a written note will be given to the person named giving reasonable notice that they must leave the property and by when.

DECLARATION

I confirm that I understand the meaning of this agreement and that the consequences of breach of the contract have been explained to me.

SIGNED _____

[Signature of individual]

DATE

SIGNED _____ Parent / relative

[Signature of parent/s/relative]

DATE

WITNESSED

SIGNED _____ Officer

[Name of Council Housing Options Officer or support worker/agency]

DATE