

Why am I in Temporary Accommodation?

- The Council uses temporary accommodation while they carry out homelessness assessments.
- When the assessment is completed you will be told the outcome. If the Council decides there is a duty to find housing for you, you may stay in temporary accommodation until suitable housing is available.
- There is no limit on how long you might stay in temporary accommodation but it must be suitable for your needs and those of your family.
- You might be placed in a hotel or B&B accommodation. If you have children or are pregnant this shouldn't last for longer than six weeks except in an emergency.

For further information, see Westminster Council's FAQ's by scanning here:



How long will it take before I am permanently housed?

You will be waiting a long time to be permanently housed in social housing, because Westminster has a severe shortage of social housing. As of 2024 the average waiting time for a:

- 2 bed property = 10 years
- 3 bed property = 16 years
- 4 bedrooms or more = 19 years

Will my temporary accommodation be furnished?

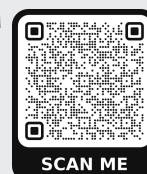
Temporary accommodation should be fully furnished but you may need to provide bedding and cooking utensils.

Why are some people housed outside of Westminster?

There is a real shortage of housing in Westminster. The Council will decide how to allocate temporary accommodation based on:

- What accommodation is available at the time.
- What the needs are of the different households who are looking for temporary accommodation at that time.

Depending on all of these points, the Council will make a decision about what they can offer you. You can find their Accommodation Placement Policy here:



*What should I do if my Temporary Accommodation is not suitable? *

All temporary accommodation offered should be suitable for your needs. This means it should be:

- In a good condition e.g. no mould
- The right size for your household
- In a location a commutable distance from school's, GP's etc.
- Fitted to your access needs

If the offered accommodation is not suitable you should:

- Contact Citizens Advice Westminster, The Cardinal Hume Centre (see overleaf), or a solicitor
- Follow the Council process for refusing or challenging an offer

IMPORTANT NOTE

You must seek advice before refusing an offer. This is because the Council reserves the right to terminate their housing duty, and may not offer you another offer of accommodation.

Who pays for my Temporary Accommodation?

- You are responsible for paying for your temporary accommodation
- The Council will tell you about the costs. If you are not working, or if you are on a low wage, you may need to claim Housing Benefit.
- You should claim Housing Benefit from Westminster even if your temporary accommodation is in another borough.

IMPORTANT – If there is a service charge, this is not covered by Housing Benefit. You will need to pay this.

For further information about paying your rent, scan here:



Who pays for my Council tax?

You need to contact the borough that your accommodation is in about this, and apply for Council Tax Support from them.

How do I report repairs?

Report all repairs to the owner of the property. Information about this should be provided by the Council in a welcome pack.

Emergency Out of Hours Contact:

0207 286 7412 | Monday to Friday | after 5:30 PM and on weekends, including bank holidays

Housing Solutions service:

hsscustomerservices@wcchss.org.uk
020 7641 1000

You don't have to go through it alone—support is available.

Experiencing homelessness can be very traumatic and isolating. You might be feeling quite anxious. This is totally understandable and normal.

Members of the Westminster Temporary Accommodation Action Group have put this guide together to try to make things a bit easier as you navigate temporary accommodation. Please note this is a guide and there are links to further information provided.

Co-produced by:



Temporary Accommodation (TA)

Useful stuff to know...



Physical & Mental Health support services

NHS Direct

Urgent medical advice if you're not sure what to do.

 **111**

Turning Point - Drug and Alcohol Wellbeing Service (DAWS)

Range of support options to support people, from clinical time limited support to a range of wellbeing activities

Drop In: Monday to Friday 9-5pm

 32a Wardour Street, W1D 6QR

 **0330 303 8080**

 daws@turning-point.co.uk

Change, Grow, Live

Free, confidential alcohol support service. Work with you to create a support plan to help you achieve your goals. Referral form online

 66 Lupus Street, Pimlico, SW1V 3EQ

 **0800 014 7440**

 thealcoholservice.info@cgl.org.uk

The Passage (Single people only)

Drop-in clinics at Resource Centre, with a registered GP, NHS Counsellor and podiatrist. The health team work closely with drug and alcohol services where they can refer for additional input, including referrals to detox and rehab.

 St Vincent's Centre, Carlisle Pl, SW1P 1NL

Monday-Friday/9am -12pm and 1-3:30pm

 **0300 999 3407**

Image Key:

Location 
Telephone number 
Email address 
Website 

Use your
phone
camera
to scan QR
Codes

Support & Advice

Asylum Aid

Provide support to those for whom English is not their first language. Can call or drop into meetings.

 advice@asylumaid.org.uk

 **020 7 354 9631**

 26 Westland Pl, London N1 7JH

The Cardinal Hume Centre

(For Families and Young People)

Help and support with income, housing, employment support, and education. Also has a family centre that offers a safe space for children to learn and play.

Welcome and Assessment Team:

 **020 7227 1673** Monday to Friday - 9am-3pm
(Drop in until 2pm)

 3-7 Arneway Street, Horseferry Road, SW1P 2BG

 Family Services: **020 7227 1677**

Citizens Advice Westminster

Provides free, confidential advice on anything from debt and benefits, family, immigration, housing, and homeless prevention.

Referral, Online Enquiry Form and Webchat

 Westminstercab.org.uk

 **08082787834**

Shelter

Housing and support service; over the phone, online and legal advice.

 Emergency Helpline: **0808 800 4444**

Online Webchat Mon-Friday, 8-6pm

SHP

Provides tailored support to help individuals manage tenancy, claim benefits, upskill daily living skills, access community support and ETE

 westminstersupport@shp.org.uk

 **0204 509 8419**

Unfold Charity

Women's Support Groups and mentoring for people in temporary accommodation. Support with food and clothing, and space for socialising and access to wellbeing activities.

 parents@unfold.org.uk

Z2K

Supports London residents under 65 who are in receipt of, or eligible for, Universal Credit, income related Job Seeker's Allowance or Employment Support Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit or PIP.

 Enquiry Line: **0207 259 0801**

(Tues and Thurs: 10-12pm and 2-4pm)

Food

The Abbey Centre - Community Pantry

Weekly subscription of £5. Register as online or at reception then contact via email or telephone

 34 Great Smith Street, Westminster, SW1P 3BU

 **020 7222 0303**

 pantry@theabbeycentre.org.uk

Hallfield Food Bank

No referral needed Tuesday 10 am; close time varies depending on goods available

 Pickering Hall, Hallfield Estate, W26HF

 info@hallfield.org.uk

Mary Smith's Pantry

£5 per visit with access to food, including fresh fruit and vegetables and store cupboard favourites.

Opening hours: the pantry is open Monday to Friday, 11am to 5pm

 131 Lupus Street, Pimlico, SW1W 8RT

North Paddington Food Bank

Referrals can be gained from support workers. If you do not have a support worker, referral partners are: Citizens Advice Westminster, Age UK Westminster (for over 50's), Asylum Aid (for recent migrants and asylum seekers), Shelter Westminster, and Cardinal Hume Centre (for families with children).

Food -Westbourne Park Pantry

 Near Royal Oak Tube station: Porchester Road, W2 5DX. Thurs | 1-3.30pm and 4-5.30pm. Phone lines open Mon- Fri | 11-4pm

 **07932 623443**

Scan here for interactive
map of food services in
Westminster:



Families

Abbey Community Association

Personalised advice and support service for residents.

 34 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BU

 **020 7222 0303**

 enquiries@theabbeycentre.org.uk

St Vincent's Family Project

Drop-In sessions for parents and children; weekly on Tues & Thurs | 10am-2:30pm.

Creche for children under 5; Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10am-12pm

 fs@svfp.org.uk

 **020 7654 5352**

Children's Services - Early Help

Refer yourself or a child by contacting:

 **020 7641 6000** 9am to 5pm weekdays

Home-Start Westminster & KCHF

Support families with a child under 5, or expecting a baby, living in Westminster.

 St Paul's Church Centre, Broadley Terrace, NW1 6LQ

 admin@hswestminster.co.uk

 **020 7724 1345**

The Space - Baby Bank

Monday 10-1pm. By appointment:

 babyspace@214space.org.uk

 **0800 047 8161**

 214 Freston Road, London, W10 6TT

Westminster Information Advice Support

Service (WIASS) - confidential service that provides information, advice and support to parents/carers of children and young people up to the age of 25 who have or may have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

 **020 8871 8065** (24hr answerphone)

 iass@westminster.gov.uk

Infant Feeding Support

Scan for timetable of drop ins:

 Queen's Park Children's Centre

 Bessborough Street Family Hub

 Church St Family Hub

 The Stowe Centre:

 **0208 200 2500**

