

# OUR POLICY FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK MARCH 2026

## Key Terms:

<b>We / The Council</b>	The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.
<b>You</b>	Someone (or a household) who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.
<b>TA</b>	Temporary accommodation for homeless households.
<b>B&amp;B</b>	Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
<b>Nightly Paid</b>	Accommodation that we pay for at a nightly rate, which will include cooking and bathing facilities.
<b>Our Strategy</b>	The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029.
<b>HCoG</b>	Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities – MHCLG.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As a council, we published our Strategy – "[Ending Homelessness, Person by Person](#)" at the end of 2024. Our strategy aims to prevent homelessness wherever possible – but at least for now, we acknowledge that there are times where homelessness cannot be prevented.
- 1.2 If you are homeless, we may owe you a duty to provide temporary accommodation. We do not owe this duty to everyone – this policy outlines:
- The circumstances under which we will provide accommodation,
  - The type of accommodation we will aim to provide,
  - The process we will follow when we offer you temporary accommodation, and whilst you are in temporary accommodation.

## 2. LEGAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of our legal duties to households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, we will:
- **Provide accommodation** to some people who are homeless – we call these Statutory placements<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Typically under [The Housing Act 1996, Section 188](#), but other sections apply.

- **Consider providing accommodation** to other people who are homeless – we call these Discretionary placements<sup>2</sup>.

2.2 Our duties are laid out under:

- Section 188, 190 and 193 of the [Housing Act 1996](#)
- [The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#) – particularly chapters 15, 16 and 17.

2.3 We are also required to publish a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy every five years. [Our most recent strategy](#) (p.19) includes commitments to:

- Ensure that people who are homeless are placed into suitable, cost-effective accommodation where necessary.
- Avoid and reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast and nightly-paid accommodation.
- Ensure that support is provided to overcome barriers to accessing (and sustaining) emergency accommodation.

### 3. PRINCIPLES FOR PROCURING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

3.1 **Ensuring suitability for the greatest number of applicants.** We have a legal duty to ensure accommodation is suitable for the needs of homeless households. [Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance](#) sets out the principles we will work towards, but these include ensuring that temporary accommodation is:

- Of an appropriate **size/layout** (17.4)
- **In a suitable location** based on your circumstances (17.4)
- Appropriate for your **medical needs** (17.5)
- Of an appropriate **standard** (17.11)
- Appropriate for **the length of your stay**. HCoG 17.7 states “accommodation that is suitable for a short period, for example accommodation used to discharge an interim duty pending inquiries under [section 188](#) [relief duty], may not necessarily be suitable for a longer period, for example to discharge a duty under [section 193\(2\)](#) [main duty].”

Therefore, we will procure accommodation that is suitable for the greatest number of applicants, to minimise the number of bespoke placements made outside of these plans. This includes ensuring that we procure a range of accommodation options for single households according to their needs.

3.2 **Ensuring a good standard of accommodation.** We will work with relevant internal and external partners (such as the council’s Housing Standards team and the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service) to ensure accommodation is of a safe standard. Where we procure privately rented accommodation, we will ensure that properties meet the standards laid out in the council’s [“Amenity & Space Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation”](#) document and its [“Standards for Private Rented Single Family Dwellings”](#) document.

3.3 **Prioritising procurement ‘within district’.** From time to time, we will be unable to place someone within the borough of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk. This might be due to:

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<sup>2</sup> Typically under the Housing Act 1996, Part 7

- the risk of a household staying within the area (for example, because of threats of violence or domestic abuse)
- existing TA providers being unable to accommodate (for instance, because of risk factors such as an arson conviction, or because of a previous eviction)
- exceptional demand on existing B&B and TA providers (for instance, because of a local music concert)

However, we will prioritise procuring accommodation within district – as well as being in line with government guidance, it is likeliest to be suitable for the greatest number of applicants.

### 3.4 **Minimising the use of nightly-paid accommodation – with B&B as a last resort.**

We also have a duty to make the best use of public funds. Nightly-paid accommodation is an expensive and unsustainable option for the council, and B&B accommodation lacks the basic facilities (such as cooking) necessary for ongoing daily living. Our strategy (p.19) commits to avoiding and reducing the use of nightly-paid and B&B accommodation – additionally we commit to:

- Avoiding placing you in continuous B&B accommodation for more than six weeks if you have children.
- Avoiding use of B&B accommodation if we owe a ‘main’ housing duty<sup>3</sup> to you.

3.5 **Making appropriate use of shared accommodation.** Accommodation with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities *may* be suitable for some homeless applicants. However, this will depend on factors including your household size, the length of your stay, your medical needs and the support you may require. We will invest prudently in procuring shared accommodation, based on demand.

3.6 **Taking opportunities to invest.** We have been proactive over the last five years in investing in suitable temporary accommodation for homeless households. We have been successful in bidding for central government grants to add to our own investment. We will continue to seek opportunities to invest in good-quality accommodation that reduces cost to the borough, helps us fulfil our legal duties and aligns with our strategy. We will continue to make best use of data and forecasting methods to ensure that our accommodation needs are met.

3.7 **Listening to people who are using (or who have used) temporary accommodation.** One of the values of the strategy is empowerment: “we will enable people to engage in, shape, and benefit fully from the services they use” (p.11). This policy was developed following an engagement exercise with current and former residents of temporary accommodation.

## 4. **GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR OFFERING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

4.1 **Prevention first.** Homelessness can be a traumatic and unsettling experience. We will work with you to avoid you becoming homeless – and avoid the need to use temporary accommodation – where possible. Our strategy (p.14-17) sets out what we will do to prioritise homelessness prevention. Currently, we commission a range of services to support this aim, including Shelter, Citizens Advice and SHPS.

4.2 **Early planning.** If we cannot prevent your homelessness, we will work with you towards planning your move to temporary accommodation. This will include an

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<sup>3</sup> [Housing Act 1996, Section 193\(2\)](#)

assessment of any risk factors, to ensure a safe placement. Much of our accommodation is unfurnished, so you will be expected to plan accordingly. There may be grants and interest-free loans available to support you with the cost of furnishing the accommodation – speak to us for further advice.

- 4.3 **Affordability.** You may be required to contribute towards the cost your temporary accommodation depending on your financial circumstances. Please note that travel and food costs are not covered by the council, but we will work with you to ensure that the temporary accommodation is affordable, including completing an affordability assessment with you.
- 4.4 **If you are placed outside of the district,** we will work to ensure you are able to return to the district as soon as safe accommodation is available. We will prioritise returning people to the district based on their personal circumstances and the impact that living outside of the borough is having on them.
- 4.5 **Pets.** We recognise the importance of pets to some homeless applicants and will always consider carefully this aspect of your life when making a placement and when procuring accommodation. However, it will not always be possible to make provision for pets in temporary accommodation<sup>4</sup>. We will discuss the options available to you sensitively, including charities who may be able to support you in the interim.
- 4.6 **Joint working.** Where possible, we will work jointly with other agencies who may be supporting you, towards planning and managing your temporary accommodation stay. In some circumstances, we may refer you to our commissioned Intensive Support Service to help you manage your placement. We will obtain consent from you before doing so.
- 4.7 **Suitability.** Ultimately, our primary aim is to ensure that your accommodation is suitable, as outlined in 3.1 above. If you have any concerns about the suitability of your offer of accommodation, then please contact your housing options officer. You can also obtain independent advice from Shelter by calling 0344 515 1558.

## 5. PEOPLE SLEEPING ROUGH

- 5.1 **If you are sleeping rough,** we (and the partner agencies we commission) will always work with you towards you finding safe, sustainable accommodation. However, we may not always offer immediate accommodation to you – the support available will depend on your circumstances.
- 5.2 **We will always assess you** in line with housing law. If we have “reason to believe” that you have a priority need, are homeless and eligible for assistance, then we will accommodate you while we make enquiries (HCoG 15.4 and 15.5)
- 5.3 **If you are sleeping rough** (or likely to sleep rough) and not in priority need then we will use a tool developed by the government to help determine the level of risk faced by people sleeping rough. We will ask a series of questions based on your current and past circumstances and will use this to determine whether to make a discretionary offer of interim accommodation.

Discretionary placements will be made for an initial period of seven days, to give you a chance to begin working towards finding longer-term accommodation. Discretionary

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<sup>4</sup> We will accept pets that are trained to assist with your medical needs such as trained [Assistance Dogs](#).

placements will only be extended where you can demonstrate that you are working with us (and/or partners) and making progress towards ending your homelessness.

5.4 **In severe weather**, we may trigger Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) and offer interim accommodation to everyone sleeping rough. The decision to trigger SWEP is made by the council's Senior Housing Manager and is communicated to the outreach team so that they can advise anyone sleeping rough that there is accommodation available. SWEP may be triggered in the following situations (determined on a case-by-case basis):

- During a period of cold, stormy or snowy weather
- During periods of extreme heat
- In all cases, when an amber weather warning has been issued
- In all cases, when the nightly temperature is forecast to fall below zero on two or more successive nights

SWEP placements will continue for as long as the severe weather continues. In the event that severe weather ends on a weekend (or bank holiday) morning, we will extend any SWEP placements until the following working day.

5.5 **If we make a 'discretionary' or SWEP offer** (as described in 5.3 and 5.4), then we will need to have reason to believe that you are sleeping rough (or likely to sleep rough). **IMPORTANT:** we will not require people sleeping rough to be seen 'bedded down' but we will need to have 'reason to believe' someone is sleeping rough (or likely to sleep rough) before making a placement. This could include intelligence relating to your history, evidence of rough sleeping at a particular site, or information gathered from our commissioned outreach service. We will not take a 'blanket' approach but will treat each case on its merits

5.6 **If you are aware of someone who is sleeping rough**, please report via [the Streetlink website](#) or app. All referrals are sent to our outreach team, who will attempt to locate and support the person sleeping rough.

## 6. DOMESTIC ABUSE

6.1 **If you are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse** and are homeless because of this, we may offer you temporary accommodation. We commit to supporting you in a way that reflects the difficulty, sensitivity and potential risk of your situation. ([HCoG chapter 21](#) sets out the approach we aim to take, in supporting people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse).

6.2 **We will always prioritise safety**, throughout the process of supporting people experiencing domestic abuse. This includes:

- Contributing to the local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) for high-risk cases ([HCoG 21.12](#))
- Completing and submitting DASH assessments to support with the process of assessment, whilst continuing to use "professional judgement" if there are areas of concern identified (HCoG 21.21)
- Treating each case on its merits and avoiding a "blanket approach" to our support.

6.3 **Temporary accommodation may be offered outside of district** where we are unable to maintain your safety within the district. We will consider your household's

circumstances, but we will always prioritise your safety. Where there is a conflict of opinions from agencies, the offer made will be the lowest-risk option of accommodation available.

## 7. CARE LEAVERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

7.1 **If you are 16 or 17 years old** and are homeless, you should contact the [Norfolk County Council Children's Advice and Duty service \(CADS\)](#) on 0344 800 8021. We may not have a duty to house 16- or 17-year-olds, but we will work with Norfolk County Council under [a jointly agreed 'protocol' \(arrangement\)](#).

7.2 We recognise that people leaving care may face additional barriers in finding and sustaining accommodation. Our commitments to care leavers are outlined in the emerging "Joint protocol for the provision of accommodation for care leavers in Norfolk" (produced by Norfolk County Council) but they include

- Contributing to a joint Transitional Panel, chaired by Norfolk County Council
- Carrying out a Joint Planning Meeting with you and your personal adviser

7.3 **If you are due to leave care** and are concerned about becoming homeless then talk to your personal adviser as early as possible.

## 8. PEOPLE LEAVING PRISON

8.1 We also recognise that people leaving prison may face additional barriers in finding and sustaining accommodation. We also recognise the importance of safe, suitable accommodation in helping prison leavers to rehabilitate.

8.2 As part of our response, we aim to work with people before they leave prison and to plan for their release. This includes attending a weekly Criminal Justice Collaboration meeting, chaired by Probation Services.

8.3 **If you are homeless on leaving prison**, we will assess and accommodate you in line with the principles set out in section 4 above.

## 9. PEOPLE LEAVING HOSPITAL

9.1 We also recognise that people leaving hospital may face additional risk in terms of accessing temporary accommodation, which can be crucial to their recovery.

9.2 **If you are about to leave hospital** and you may be homeless upon discharge, we will aim to work with you before you leave and will support discussions through the District Direct service and multi-agency meetings. A referral form is available [on our website](#).

## 10. MANAGING OTHER RISKS

10.1 There may be other risks associated with your placement in temporary accommodation. These could include risks to you (for example, because of your safety in a certain area or around another person) or could be due to risks associated with you (for example, because of your previous or current behaviour).

10.2 There may also be other restrictions on the accommodation available to you, such as bail or licence conditions.

- 10.3 In all cases, the principles laid out in section 3.1 apply. We will endeavour to obtain the most suitable accommodation possible for your temporary accommodation stay, based on your circumstances and the accommodation available.
- 10.4 To ensure your safety, and the safety of other residents and staff, we will need to disclose any risks to accommodation providers. We will seek your consent before disclosure and referral. If we are unable to disclose risks, we may not be able to provide safe accommodation
- 10.5 We have a public duty to balance your need for accommodation (and our legal duty to you) with our wider duty of care to the public and to other residents of TA. There may be very rare occasions where, due to the level of risk involved, we may not be able to make an immediate placement of accommodation.
- 10.6 In such circumstances, we will approach other councils in the county and region to ask whether they have any accommodation available that would be suitable for your needs. We will review your situation daily with a view to accommodating you as soon as possible Our duty to you remains in place whilst we make enquiries.

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