

## Homeless prevention

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### **Housing options people who are homeless and have mental health issues**

Housing authorities have a duty ([section 179](#)) to provide advisory services free of charge to people in their district. The service must be designed to meet the needs of certain groups, which include people suffering from a mental illness or impairment.

North Somerset Council recognises that having a mental illness can be a reason for finding it difficult to cope with housing problems, leading to homelessness. Being homeless can also make mental health problems worse.

Homelessness and mental health can be linked. In doing this, if you are not in contact with any services, we can make referrals for you and this may be needed for them to do an assessment for us. The homeless prevention team work closely with mental health services based in North Somerset. Your GP can refer you or you can self refer to the Primary Care Liaison Service for further assessment and assistance (01934 836406). Once you have had an assessment, it would be decided by the PCLS team the best course of action for you.

## Keeping your tenancy

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If you have housing, you may have to take steps to make sure that this will not be put at risk because you are in hospital for treatment and we can help you to do this. We may need to ask your permission to contact any mental health or support services that you are already involved with. This allows us to discuss with you what support can be put in place to prevent you becoming homeless and maintain your tenancy.

## Applying as homeless

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If you have housing, you may have to take steps to make sure that this will not be put at risk because you are in hospital for treatment and we can help you to do this. You should be referred to homelessness services as soon as this is known, and we can contact you and if necessary visit you to take an application from you.

As part of our assessment we will give you a personal housing plan that records steps you and the council must take. This could be to stop you becoming homeless or find somewhere else for you to live. You can get help with your application if you have special needs. For example, you can request to bring a support worker or advocate to your assessment meeting.

Working with anyone supporting you will allow us to complete an assessment of your priority, and it can also help us to find appropriate pathways and to find you a home. It will also help us to decide if we have a duty to provide you with emergency accommodation should you become homeless.

### **Housing options for help if you are homeless and have a mental health problem**

We will continue to work with you to look at other options even if you are homeless.

## Vulnerability

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If you are currently experiencing a mental health problem, North Somerset Council will consider whether this means that you are vulnerable and therefore in “priority need” for accommodation if you are homeless. This will be determined by your personal circumstances, and in doing this we will take into account:

- what support you have access to
- how well you cope with your mental ill-health, regardless of your housing situation
- whether you have been in hospital for any mental health problems, either voluntarily or by being detained

## Supported accommodation

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There are some supported housing projects in North Somerset who offer a housing related support service to enable people with mental health problems to live independently and manage their tenancies. They offer a range of support including money, debt or arrears management; support with welfare benefits; finding training, education or work, and support around social isolation. Also you will be offered support in developing life skills or social skills and helping people with their emotional and mental health issues. Your homeless prevention officer can refer you to these schemes.

## Contact us

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Phone 01934 426330 or email [Housing.advice@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Housing.advice@n-somerset.gov.uk). You can also send the team a message through your Homechoice account and receive replies.

## Still need help?

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**Rethink** – <https://www.rethink.org/living-with-mental-illness/housing/housing-options/homelessness>

**Mind** - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/housing/#.WxZmibeWxDR>

**Shelter** -

[http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/homelessness/your\\_situation/disabilities\\_and\\_health\\_conditions\\_help\\_if\\_youre\\_homeless](http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/your_situation/disabilities_and_health_conditions_help_if_youre_homeless)