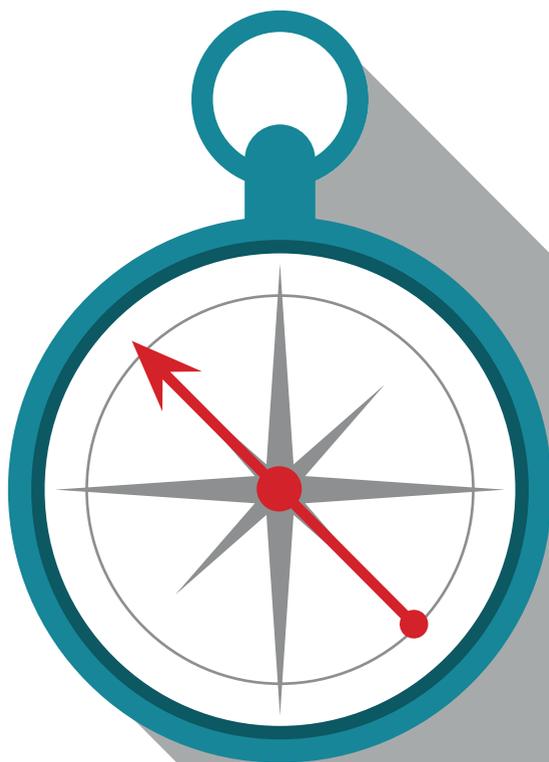


Here to help

Your guide to homelessness services



A message from the Homeless Prevention Team

We know that being homeless or at risk of homelessness is a worrying and stressful time.

We are here to listen to you and do our best to help and support you.

Please read this booklet to help you understand the process of working with us.

If you have any worries or questions, just ask us, we're happy to help.

Your Homeless Prevention Officer's name is:



What can the Homeless Prevention Team do to help me?

- The law on homelessness in Wales changed on April 27 2015.

If you are at risk of homelessness you now have the right to be assisted at an earlier stage, and we are able to assist in different ways than before. This means that we can help you if you are at risk of being homeless within 56 days.

- In order to assist you, we need to ensure that you are 'eligible'. If you live in the UK, are a British citizen and have not recently spent time living in other countries you will almost certainly be eligible. Please ask a member of staff for more information about the eligibility test.
- While working with you we will inform you in writing of any decision we make about your case.



First step - What do I need to do?

The assessment is the first step in the journey for everyone we help. We need to understand your situation to be able to help you.

- To begin with, we will listen to you and find out all the information we need to know about your situation.
- We will make an assessment of your situation and we will work with you to identify what steps need to be taken to solve your housing problem.
- We may need you to go away and bring back any items of paperwork. To be able to help you, we need you to be open and honest with us and help us by giving information we ask for. We will also be open and honest with you, and we will treat you with respect. We will also keep you informed about how your case is going.
- If you have any particular needs you think we should be aware of (for example debt, learning difficulties, mental health problems or anything that you think is important) please don't be afraid to mention it to a member of staff.



What steps will you take to help prevent me becoming homeless?

The next step after the assessment depends on your situation. If you are at risk of homelessness, it might be that the best way to help you is to assist you to stay in your home. However you won't be forced to stay if it isn't the right option.

- We will try to prevent you becoming homeless by helping you to remain in your own home where possible. If this is not possible we will help you find somewhere else to live that suits your needs.
- We will work with you to draw up a Housing and Support Plan which will include all the steps that need to be taken to solve your housing problem. Then we will help you put the Plan into action.
- We may not be able to identify all the steps for the Housing and Support Plan straight away. If we cannot draw up the Housing and Support Plan immediately, we promise to get back to you within 10 days of your appointment with us.

- The exact steps in the Housing and Support Plan will depend on your situation. Your Plan may include actions such as talking to your landlord to try to sort out any problems; mediation to resolve family arguments; help with start-up costs for a new tenancy; or referral to support services.
- If you need somewhere else to live, we may look at whether there is private rented accommodation that is suitable and affordable for you.
- We will ensure that your accommodation is likely to be available for you for at least six months.



What if I am homeless right now?

The next step after the assessment depends on your situation. If we agree that you are homeless we will work with you to find you somewhere suitable to live that you can afford.

- We will help you find somewhere else to live that suits your needs. To do this, we will work with you to put together a Housing and Support Plan. As part of the Plan, we may include looking at suitable and affordable private rented accommodation. We will ensure that the accommodation is likely to be available to you for at least six months.
- If you need somewhere to stay immediately, we will need to consider whether you qualify for temporary accommodation. We will provide temporary accommodation to you if we think you might be in a 'priority need group'.
- 'Priority need groups' are certain groups of people who according to the law have a particular need for assistance. Please ask a member of staff if you would like to know what the groups are.

- Please note that prison leavers are no longer a priority need group. However prison leavers may be considered priority need under another priority need category.
- We might refer you to another council to help you if you have a local connection to that area and none in Denbighshire County Council. For us to do this, you need to fit the referral criteria. Please ask a member of staff if you have any questions about this.



What if the Housing and Support Plan doesn't solve my housing problem?

If we haven't been able to find a home after 56 days, we might have a duty to offer you temporary accommodation. Our ability to do this depends on your situation.

- If you become homeless, the law states that we have up to 56 days to work with you to help solve your housing problem. If, together, we are not successful in doing this, we will consider what else can be done.
- You may have a right to accommodation if you fall into a 'priority need group'. This may be in the private rented sector or social housing. We will ensure that you can remain in the accommodation for at least six months.

People in priority need groups do not automatically get social housing after April 27 2015.

Please be aware that social housing is in very high demand at the moment.

What if I want a second opinion?

- If you do not agree with what we have done, you have the right to ask for a review of the steps we have taken. Before you do this you may wish to speak to Shelter Cymru or Citizens Advice, who will give you free, independent advice on the best course of action.

Shelter Cymru - 0345 075 5005

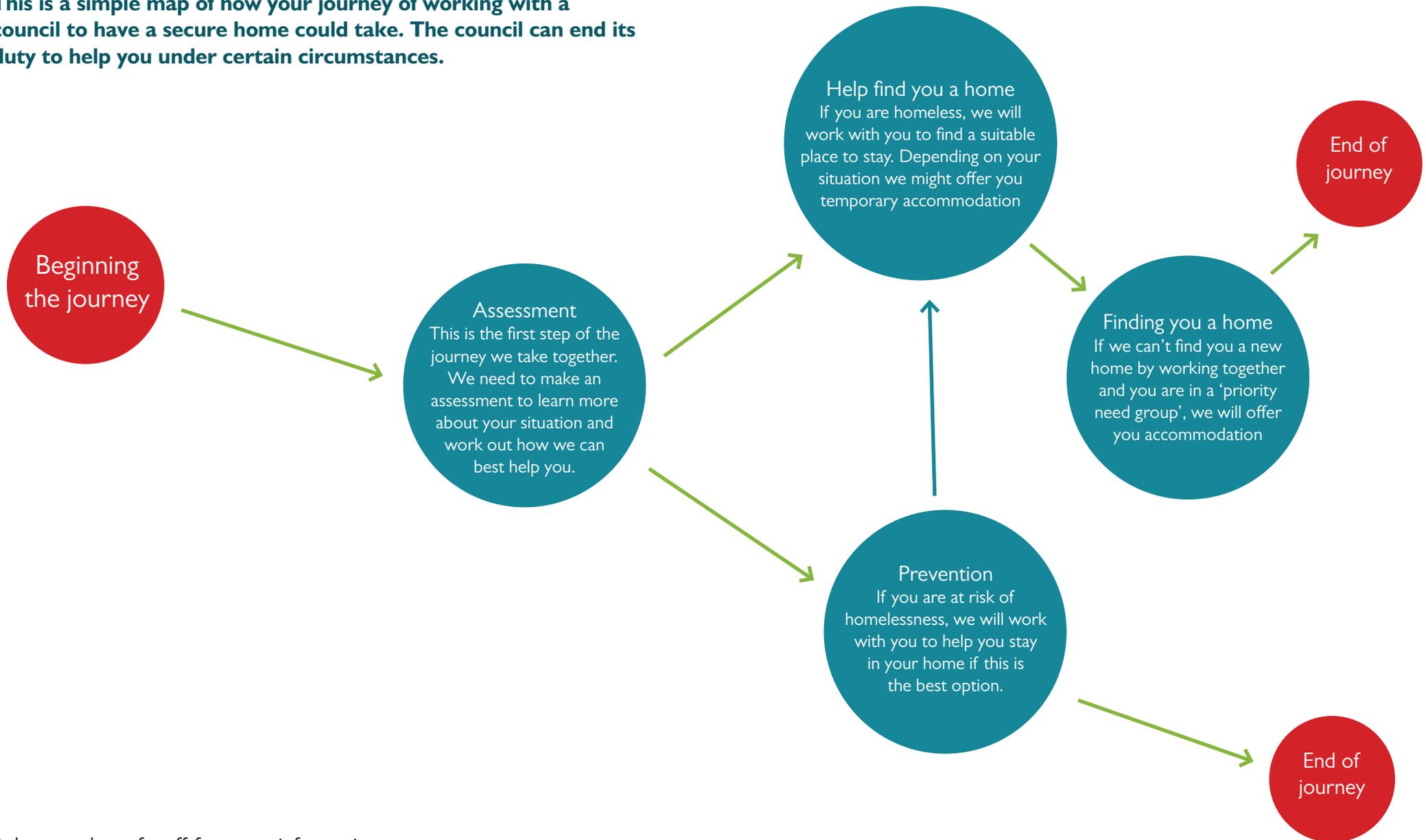
Citizens Advice Bureau - 03444 77 20 20

- If you reject an offer of accommodation we have made, this will in most cases end our duty to help you. Please take independent legal advice before rejecting any offers of accommodation.
- We might also end our duty to help you if we feel you haven't been cooperating with us, for example if you make no effort to complete a task you agreed to do.

We are always interested to hear about ways we can improve our services. Please ask to speak with a manager who would be happy to listen to your feedback.

Our journey together

This is a simple map of how your journey of working with a council to have a secure home could take. The council can end its duty to help you under certain circumstances.



Ask a member of staff for more information.

