

research
in practice

A brief guide to...
housing,
wellbeing and
adult social care

www.researchinpractice.org.uk

How... *can housing support your wellbeing?*

- > Accessible, well-maintained and secure housing positively impacts wellbeing and enables people with care and support needs to live well and safely, with maximum independence.
- > When people feel secure in their housing they can 'put down roots', plan ahead and connect with their local communities.
- > Well-designed and maintained housing and neighbourhoods promote safer communities.
- > Affordable housing, alongside managing rent and utility bill costs, can reduce anxiety.



What... *the law says*

Housing and social care law and services are complex. Two of the main pieces of legislation are described below.

Care Act 2014

- > A care and support needs assessment, plan or review should look at the suitability of your accommodation.
- > Housing staff have a duty to pass information on to social services, and work in partnership with them, where they believe an adult or child may be at risk of abuse.
- > The council must provide advice on relevant housing and services which meet care and support needs.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

- > Public sector workers from social, health and criminal justice services have a duty to refer you (with your consent) to the council's homelessness/housing options team if you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- > If you are homeless or at risk of homelessness the council should conduct an assessment and develop a personal housing plan with you.
- > One of the act's main aims is to encourage different services to work together to identify, prevent and respond to homelessness.

What... are my rights?

This section explains some of your basic rights and options, and where you might go to get more information if you are facing different types of housing problems. You can talk to adult social care and/or housing workers in your local authority about any of these options. There are other organisations listed in this guide that may be able to offer you additional advice, advocacy or support.

It is (or will be) difficult for me to live independently in my home.

In this situation you could try to adapt your home or find alternative accommodation.

'Adapting' your current home

could range from adding a small piece of equipment or technology right through to a major structural change, with the aim of improving your independence, confidence and privacy. Depending on your circumstances and the cost and type of adaptation, you may be able to get some or all of this funded by your local authority, landlord (housing association or council-owned) or the NHS. A guide by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (see link on next page) contains a section on adaptations, including tips and advice from people who have been through the process.

Renting from a private landlord, housing association or the council.

Housing association/council properties are in very short supply in some areas. You may have a very long wait if you are not awarded the highest priority (and, even if you are, it can still be a lengthy process in some areas). However, it is worth asking your council for advice about what is available, including private rented accommodation.

Specialist and supported housing.

There are a wide range of options for people who need short-term or long-term support and care. This could include:

- > **sheltered and extra care housing for older people**
- > **supported living schemes**
- > **hostels or refuges for people experiencing homelessness.**

Adult social care and/or your council's housing department should be able to explain what's available in your area, whether or not you might be eligible for it and how you can apply.

What if...

poor housing is impacting on my health?

If you rent your property, it is your landlord's responsibility to make sure it is of a decent standard and that repairs are done properly and promptly. Shelter provides information about your rights at: england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/repairs

If you own your property and are older, disabled and/or have care and support needs, you may be able to obtain help to access grants and get the work done from your local (not-for-profit) Home Improvement Agency. Search here to find out if there is one in your local area: www.findmyhia.org.uk

Whether you own or rent, you can find out if you might be eligible for an energy efficiency grant at: www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator

I am worried about becoming homeless?

If you are already homeless or are likely to become homeless within the next eight weeks, your council must look at your situation and give you a personal housing plan. This will probably contain actions for both you and the council to take to help you keep your home, or find somewhere else to live.

Shelter provides online advice and personalised advice by phone or in person: www.shelter.org.uk

Citizens Advice also offers advice on a range of housing-related topics: www.citizensadvice.org.uk



Equality and Human Rights Commission guide to accessible and adaptable housing: www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/housing-and-disabled-people-your-rights-england_0.pdf

FirstStop has a range of handy factsheets, as well as a searchable database of sheltered and extra care housing: www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk

Scope provide helpful information for disabled people who require housing adaptations to live more independently: www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/home-adaptations

Age UK offer housing advice: www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/housing-options

Practical advice

Ask for help as early as possible, especially if you do not feel safe at home or are at risk of losing your home.

If you need to find a more accessible or supported home, or to access the local lettings system, ask adult social care services for assistance. If you have a disability this is a 'reasonable adjustment' under the *Equality Act 2010*.

If you do not receive good service, put your complaint in writing. The organisations listed in this guide may be able to support and advocate for you. A professional adviser, friend, your local MP (Member of Parliament) or local councillor may also be able to help.

If you're unhappy with a local authority decision relating to social care, you have a right to challenge it.

How do...

I know if things are working well?

You feel like staff from different teams talk to each other.

You have all the information you need, including details about the progress of your enquiries.

You receive consistent information and advice.

You feel aware of your options and how decisions are made.



research in practice

Ensuring that your housing and wellbeing needs are being met is part of the support you should receive from adult social care services.

This guide aims to:

- > help you identify your housing options as early as possible
- > explain how housing and social care services should be working together.

This guide has been produced by Research in Practice. We are a charity that uses evidence from research, expertise and people's experience to help understand adult social care and to improve how it works.

Adults, carers and their advocates can find more information on assessments in the **Good Assessment Practitioners' Handbook**

Author: Imogen Blood

www.researchinpractice.org.uk

June 2023 (2nd edition, first published September 2019)

Dartington
Trust

