



Aged 16 or 17?

Homeless or worried about becoming homeless?

Get in touch

- If you can't live at home because of difficult family relationships or you are "sofa surfing" because you can't live at home anymore, Camden Council can help you sort things out so you have somewhere to live.
- To get help, call the Children's Contact Service on **020 7974 3317**. Social workers will make arrangements to meet with you so we can assess your situation and decide on how we can help you; if you need somewhere to live immediately we can provide you with accommodation.
- If you already have a social worker or Family Support Worker, let them know what's happening so they can help you get the help you need.



What happens next

- A social worker will carry out an assessment of your circumstances to find out about your home life to get as much information about you and your family as possible.
- The assessment takes about 35 days and will look at your health, education and your relationship with your family. We will need to get information about you from lots of different people, like your GP and your school.
- During the assessment, a social worker will meet with you and your family and visit your home to see your parents and talk about the problems you have been having to see if they can be resolved.
- At the end of the assessment, we will make a decision about whether or not you can return home or whether we need to continue to provide you with a safe place to live.

Helping you stay at home

- For most young people, living at home with their family until they're ready to move into their own place is their best option and we will always look at whether this is right for you.
- Throughout the assessment, our specially trained mediators can help you and your parents talk through any problems and provide support so you can carry on living with your family.
- If we decide that you can return home, we can provide support and services to help you and your family overcome any difficulties you may be having.

If you can't stay at home

- First, we will look to see if another member of your family like your grandparents, aunts or uncles or a family friend can look after you with support from us. We may hold a Family Group Conference which is a meeting that helps you and your family to make these arrangements.
- If this isn't possible, you will need to become looked after and our Children Safeguarding Family Help (CSFH) team will provide you with accommodation. This will mean becoming **looked after** by Camden.

Being looked after

- If we provide you with accommodation, either as soon as you approach us or after the assessment, you will need to agree to become **looked after** by Camden.
- If you agree to become **looked after**, the council will be responsible for your care up to the age of 18 and will continue to support you after you leave care at 18 if you have been looked after for more than 13 weeks.

Being looked after (continued)

- We will put you in touch with an independent advocate from Action for Children who will explain your choices and help you to make a decision on agreeing to be **looked after**.
- When you are **looked after**, CSFH will:
 - o find you somewhere to live in supported living accommodation in our Young People's Housing Pathway
 - o support you financially (you won't be allowed to claim benefits until you're 18)
 - o make sure you look after your health
 - o make sure you are going to school, college or attending training or working
 - o help you learn the skills you will need to live independently.
- You will have an allocated social worker and a key worker from your supported accommodation to work with you and make sure you get the help and support you need to learn to live independently and make the most of educational, training and work opportunities as set out in your **pathway plan**.

If you choose not to become looked after

- You can only become **looked after** if you agree to this; **if you do not agree, CSFH will not be able to provide you with accommodation.** Instead, accommodation will be provided under the Housing Act 1996 and you will work with a housing support worker to develop a personalised housing plan to help you manage your tenancy.
- You will also have an allocated social worker who will work with your housing support worker to help you settle in to any accommodation and help you apply for benefits, develop skills to live independently and to carry on with your education, training or employment.
- If you choose not to become looked after and are provided with accommodation under the Housing Act 1996 instead, you will only qualify for limited support from CSFH once you are 18.



The London Advocacy Service is an independent advocacy service for young people who are in contact with Children's Social Services.

They can:

- tell you about your rights
- attend meetings with you
- talk to social services on your behalf
- help you write a complaint or make sure that your voice is heard

Contact the independent advocate service:

 **020 7254 9408**

 **London.Advocacy@actionforchildren.org.uk**

Please sign below to confirm that you understand the information you have been given:

Name:

Date: