

Advice Guide

# Leaving your family home at 18+

Leaving home is a big step, but moving out is easier if you make some plans first. Although leaving home will grant you more freedom, it also means you will have responsibilities that you have probably not had to deal with before.

The best way to leave home is after careful thought and planning. Leaving your parental home at a very young age, especially if you have nowhere to go, should be the very last option that you should consider as you may end up without any accommodation.

## **1. When can you leave home?**

Once you're over 16, you can choose to leave home if you want to. Don't rush out the door – living on your own can be really challenging. It can also be more difficult to get a place of your own before you're 18.

If you're under 16 and can no longer live at home, speak to someone who can help. You could contact [Childline](https://www.childline.gov.uk), 0800 1111, about any problems you're having with your parents or carers.

Your parents can't legally tell you to leave home until your 16th birthday.

## **2. What if I am having problems at home?**

There is help and support available. Try to find someone you trust to talk to such as friends, extended family such as an aunt or uncle, or a teacher at your school or college. If the situation becomes worse, see if there is a place you can go to for a night or two to let everyone cool down.

## **What support can the Council give?**

If you approach us because you are worried about being asked to leave home we will make some enquiries to confirm this. If we are then satisfied that you are threatened with homelessness, we will take reasonable steps to prevent your homelessness

Depending on your situation we may undertake any of the following actions to help support you:

1. Contact your family to assess exactly what the problems are at home so we can decide how we can help find a solution to keep you at home.
2. Come and see you and your parents at home to seek a solution and help you all to put together a written agreement to resolve the problems at home.
3. Arrange an appointment for you and your parents to come into the office and help you all to put together a written agreement to resolve the problems at home.

4. If there is a solution, we will prepare a 'Future Behaviour Agreement' to be agreed on by you and your parents.
5. Ask your parents if - as a result of your commitment to sort out the problem - they would be prepared to stop or delay any action to exclude you to give you some time to demonstrate that you can keep to what has been agreed.
6. Work to identify the problems at home and write or email your parents with a 'formal offer' to resolve those problems.
7. Help you to all to find a solution and then help your parents to put together a written licence agreement where they agree to give you permission to carry on occupying their home in return for you following their reasonable rules.
8. Look at supporting you to move to alternative accommodation with extended family or friends. We may be able to offer some financial help to support a move including help to find somewhere to rent.
9. Seek to provide you with some support to help you with the problems that are impacting on your behaviour and causing your parents to want you to leave.
10. If you have a support worker we will make an urgent appointment for you to see them so they can provide you with help to try and deal with the problems that have led to your parents wanting you to leave.
11. We will provide you and your family with a clear factsheet about what your chances are of being offered Social Housing if you were to be made homeless compared to you remaining at home for now with priority for your housing problems reflected in the Band awarded to you on the Council's Housing Register.
12. Issue you and your parents a 'Help Pack' containing a series of actions we think you should take together to try and resolve the problem yourself so you are all able to try and find a way of making things work better at home.

If, despite our help, these problems cannot be sorted out we will work with you all to try to help you plan a move into accommodation with extended family or friends. If everyone agrees that the long-term solution would be for you to move out, we can support any move to accommodation with extended family or friends and may be able to offer some financial help to find somewhere to rent.

If the issues you are having at home are to do with financial problems or as a result of tensions caused by overcrowding we might be able to assist your family with either some short term financial help or, pay for a one off item or arrange debt and money management help for your family to reduce the financial pressures. We might also explore whether we can offer a deposit Bond or rent in advance to allow you to plan a move to other accommodation.

# What do I need to consider before I move out?

## Finances

Before signing into a tenancy you will probably be asked to secure the tenancy with a deposit and/or rent in advance and you may be asked to cover the cost of credit checks. You will need to make sure you have saved enough to cover this or maybe you have a family member or friend who can help you.

Many private landlords will only rent to a young person if they have a guarantor. A guarantor is someone, usually a parent, who will have to pay the rent if you don't.

You will need to ensure you have enough money to pay your rent and cover the cost of your utilities and food. If you are working you should ensure that your wage covers all of this.

If you are not working or need additional help as your wage is low you might be able to claim additional support through [universal credit](#) to help you pay your rent. In limited circumstances you may have to claim [housing benefit](#) instead to help cover your rent.

Use [EntitledTo's benefits calculator](#) to see what you could be eligible for.

## Furniture

Not all tenancies are furnished so you may also need to find furniture. You could ask your friends and family if they have things like furniture and household items going spare. You could also try:

- Second hand and charity shops
- jumble sales
- placing ads in shop windows
- websites such as Gumtree and Freecycle

You could also contact the council or your local Citizens Advice for the details of any organisations that could help you with furniture.

## Making a homeless application

If you contact us because you have been asked to leave home and you have no other accommodation available to you then we will make inquiries into:

- whether you are eligible for assistance
- and, if you are eligible, what duties we may owe you

Initially we will need to speak to family and friends, where appropriate, to see if you are homeless or if you have any alternative accommodation you can access, even if it's short term.

If there is no one who can provide accommodation to you then we will make inquiries to see if we have reason to believe you have 'priority need' and if we need to find some emergency temporary accommodation for you.

It is important to be aware that not everyone who is homeless will be given temporary emergency accommodation with us.

## **Which people have an automatic priority need?**

- pregnant women, or any person who resides with a pregnant woman
- households with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside
- all 16 and 17 year olds, provided they are not a 'relevant child' (relevant children remain the responsibility of social services) or a child in need to whom a local authority owes a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989
- all 18 to 20 year olds (other than 'relevant students'), who 'at any time after reaching the age of sixteen, but while still under eighteen' were, but are no longer, looked after, accommodated or fostered
- any person who has lost their accommodation as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster
- a person who is homeless as a result of domestic abuse

## **Which people are in priority need if they are vulnerable?**

A person has a priority need if the authority is satisfied that they are vulnerable as a result of:

- old age, mental illness or disability, physical disability or other special reason
- having been looked after, accommodated or fostered and is aged 21 or over (other than 'relevant students')
- having been a member of Her Majesty's regular naval, military or air forces
- having served a custodial sentence, been committed for contempt of court or similar offence, or been remanded in custody
- having had to leave accommodation because of violence or threats of violence from another person that are likely to be carried out

A household member of a person who is vulnerable because of old age, mental illness, physical disability or other special reason also has a priority need. For example, if an application is made by a person whose partner is vulnerable due to a disability, the applicant is in priority need.

The local authority must determine whether, if the applicant became homeless, they would be significantly more vulnerable than an ordinary person would be if they became homeless.

If we cannot help you with emergency accommodation as you do not meet the priority need threshold we will still take reasonable steps to help you secure suitable accommodation.

## What other support can I get?

There are lots of agencies which support young people with a range of issues including housing, jobs and career advice, finances, drug and alcohol issues, personal health and safety and much more.

Seeking support when you face important decisions will mean that you are less likely to do something on the spur of the moment which you later regret. Sharing others' experiences will also really help to prepare you for the unforeseen consequences of any actions you may take.

- [Devon Children and Families Partnership](#). The Devon Safeguarding Children Board aims to help people like you and your friends stay safe at home, at school and out and about. Contact 0345 155 1071
- [Careers South West](#) Learning and work options. Contact 01392 203603
- [Centrepoin](#)t provide a range of housing advice for homeless young people
- [Talk to Frank](#) for advice and information on drugs and their effects
- [Victim Support](#) offer advice and support to victims of crime
- [Shelter](#) offer advice and support relating to housing and homelessness

## Other Devon Local Authority Contact Details

The following local authority areas are supported by Devon County Council:

- [East Devon District Council](#)
- [Exeter City Council](#)
- [Mid Devon District Council](#)
- [North Devon District Council](#)
- [South Hams District Council](#)
- [Teignbridge District Council](#)
- [Torrige District Council](#)
- [West Devon Borough Council](#)

These are Devon Unitary Authorities and provide their own support

- [Plymouth City Council](#)
- [Torbay Council](#)

## **Contacts details for Exeter City Council's Housing Solutions Service**

**Online:** [Contacting us for housing advice - Exeter City Council](#)

**Address:** Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter EX1 1JN

**Tel:** 01392 265726

**If you are homeless outside of normal office hours  
(Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, excluding bank holidays)  
or at the weekend then please contact**

**Exeter City Council's Out Of Hours Number:-**

**01392 265147 for assistance**

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