
Information guide for People Living with HIV applying for or living in Temporary Accommodation

 **PositiveEast**



**This is a self-help
guide and not legal
advice. It should be
used as an addition
to already available
information about
Temporary
Accommodation.**

Prepared by Positive East
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Applying as Homeless (getting Temporary Accommodation)

Applying to a local council for housing can be very stressful and worrying given the complexity of the process and issues about living with HIV.

Therefore, we encourage you to always seek advice from organisations like Positive East and other housing advice specialist agencies such as Shelter UK for advice and guidance.

It is important that you put together key documents that you will need to support your application and these include:

- **Proof that you are homeless, e.g. an eviction notice.**
- **Proof that you are eligible to access public housing/funds. This includes your British passport or e-visa share code.**
- **Evidence that you are in priority need. There are several different ways you can show this, e.g. having young children, being pregnant or evidence of domestic abuse. Having a serious health condition (being HIV positive in itself is not likely to enable you to qualify)***

***If you are using your health to demonstrate that you have priority need, you will need to provide supporting evidence, e.g. a letter from your HIV Doctor. This will need to describe your medical conditions, medications and how your conditions impact on your ability to live independently and well. The letter should also set out what type of accommodation would best suit your health needs, e.g. you have poor mobility and would need a place with a lift or to be on the ground floor.**

- Evidence that shows you have a local connection. For example, you have lived in the area for a period of time with the council you are applying to. You can show this with a council tax bill, tenancy agreement, utility bills or a letter from someone who may have been housing you.
- If you are applying as a family unit, your evidence should include appropriate supporting information for all family members included in the application.

If you're not sure about your eligibility for housing because of your immigration status, we advise that you speak to Positive East and discuss your situation and seek advice before applying.



Medical Letter from your HIV Doctor

A letter from your HIV Doctor is really important in demonstrating your unique needs and to make sure you are placed in housing that meets your health needs.

We believe it is best to have a discussion with your doctor and talk to them about how your physical and mental health is affected by the housing you are allocated. For example, do you have poor mobility which would make using stairs difficult or are incontinent and need regular access to a toilet?

This will help the Doctor write a supporting letter highlighting these issues, so that the allocation officers understand your unique needs.



Attending the Homeless Person Unit

You may be able to make an appointment to be seen by a housing officer or you may have to drop in and wait. Remember to bring all your documentation with you.

Share your HIV status, together with other medical conditions you may have to the housing officer. It is important to highlight that you have health needs and if the interview is in a public space you can request a private space where you can talk freely.

Explain in detail what type of Temporary Accommodation you require and the reasons for this. For example, highlight your mobility issues which may mean you can't climb stairs or mental health issues which means your social support networks are very important.

Remember to ask for a copy of your assessment notes.



**If you are allocated
Temporary Accommodation
and you believe it is not
suitable, please still accept it,
move in and then challenge
any decision when you are in
the accommodation.**

**Don't decline what you may
consider an unsuitable
Temporary Accommodation
offer as this may give the
council reasons to discharge
their duty and consider you
intentionally homeless.**

Types of Temporary Accommodation

Expect to be allocated one of the following:

- Room in a shared house.
- Flat or house from a private landlord hostel, refuge or other housing with support.
- Short term council or housing association tenancy.

Please note that in some cases, your Temporary Accommodation maybe outside the borough to which you are applying.



Temporary Accommodation is not suitable

Do remember that Temporary Accommodation may not be perfect or to your liking and that these are not good enough reasons to be moved to different accommodation.

However, it is right to raise a concern if there is an issue with the accommodation that is causing your health and wellbeing to get worse.

For example:

- People have found out in your shared accommodation that you are living with HIV and they have started to harass you.
- Your mobility has become worse because of a condition that you have developed and you can no longer climb stairs.

It is also right to raise:

- Disrepair issues such as damp and mould, or if there is something wrong with the facilities such as in the kitchen, bathroom or toilet.
- If you have mice, rats or insect infestations in the property.

If you wish, you can also come and talk to us or other agencies to help you raise issues on your behalf



Top tips while living in Temporary Accommodation

We are clear HIV stigma and discrimination should be challenged and no-one should have to experience it. However, we are offering some practical advice in these top tips, based on experience, to keep you safe. If you do experience HIV Stigma and/or discrimination please discuss it with us or your healthcare professionals.

- Avoid discussing your HIV status with other residents.
- When making personal calls to medical professionals or support workers, be mindful of who is around you and may overhear your conversations.
- Don't dispose of medicine bottles or labels into shared bins.
- Opt for no physical letters from health agencies to be sent to your address (for example, you can opt for email only).

- If you share computers in Temporary Accommodation make sure you are not being overlooked, use private browsing, or clear your browsing history, when visiting HIV related websites. Always make sure you are properly logged out. You can always use facilities at Positive East or in a local Library.

And always remember:

- Temporary accommodation is not really temporary, and you may be living there for several years, so it is very important you know this as you move in.
- Make sure that you read all letters from the council and DWP and if you need help in responding to them talk to our advice team for support.
- Make sure that your applications to the DWP and other agencies are up to date including any change of address.
- Make a budget plan (including rent payments, service charges, council tax and other living expenses).



Further information and support:

You can contact Positive East for help
around your housing.

Tel: 020 7791 2855 Monday to Friday
10am to 5pm

Email: talktome@positiveeast.org.uk

Website: positiveeast.org.uk



Shelter UK website also has very helpful
information on homelessness:



Temporary housing when
homeless - Shelter England

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