# YOUR GUIDE TO TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

## Circumstances for temporary accommodation

* homeless
* eligible for assistance
* in priority need

## What is emergency/temporary accommodation?

Temporary housing could be a:

* room in a shared house
* flat or house from a private landlord
* short term council property
* hostel, refuge or other housing with support

## Why is my temporary accommodation not in Gravesham?

The council has temporary accommodation in various locations. Although we do have temporary accommodation within Gravesham the demand for this is very high and therefore, we have to find accommodation in other areas.

## What happens if I refuse an offer of temporary accommodation?

We will discuss offers of temporary accommodation with you and listen to your concerns. However, if we still think the accommodation is suitable for your needs, we will expect you to accept the offer.

However, if the Council believes that the accommodation, we have offered is suitable, and we don’t accept your reasons for refusing it, we may discharge our duty to provide you with emergency accommodation and no further offers of accommodation will be made.

## How many times will I have to move homes before I am permanently rehoused?

Whilst you are waiting to be rehoused you can expect to remain in your present temporary accommodation. Unless we have agreed to move you or if you have approached us for a move out of temporary accommodation.

## What happens if I leave goods behind in my temporary accommodation?

If you are unable to move all your belongings from your accommodation by midday on the day your placements comes to an end you must contact the Temporary Accommodation Team at TA@gravesham.gov.uk or phone 01474 337759.

## Why is my licence agreement important?

When you move into temporary accommodation, you will receive a licence agreement.

It is important that you read the information provided to you and if you require help please speak to the temporary accommodation team. If you breach the conditions of your licence agreement, you will be evicted.

This can happen if:

* you do not pay your rent.
* you sub-let the property.
* you allowed the condition of the property to deteriorate.
* you have caused a nuisance or annoyance.

If this happens, it is unlikely that we will give you another home and you will have to find somewhere to live yourself.

## How long will I be in temporary accommodation?

The length of time you spend in temporary accommodation will depend on how long it takes you to secure long-term accommodation. To find long-term accommodation, you can:

* Bid on the housing register

To bid for any social housing properties you must be on the housing register. If you are eligible, you’ll need to log on regularly to bid for suitable properties via Kent Homechoice. For more information and to find out if you are eligible visit <https://www.kenthomechoice.org.uk/content/housing-options>.

* Find privately rented sector accommodation (PRS)

Private rented sector accommodation will often be the quickest route to resolve your housing issues. If you find private rented sector accommodation, please contact your homeless officer and our GBC lettings team via gbclettings@gravesham.gov.uk or call 01474 337759 as soon as possible.

## Will I be moved into accommodation that is not shared?

This will depend on your circumstances. The council where possible will try to avoid placing families with children into shared accommodation. If this happens the council will aim to move you to more suitable housing at the earliest opportunity however this can take up to six weeks depending on availability.

## How long will I be outside of the borough for?

Gravesham Borough Council aim to accommodate all households within the borough where it is safe do so dependent on such accommodation being available. However, some households may be housed outside of Gravesham.

## Who should I contact if there is a problem with my accommodation?

If you have any issues or difficulties contacting your landlord, please contact the Temporary Accommodation Team on TA@gravesham.gov.uk or phone 01474 337759.

## Will my temporary accommodation be furnished?

This will depend on the type of accommodation that has been secured for example Bed & Breakfast accommodation and hostels are furnished with beds, wardrobes, fridges and cooking facilities. However self-contained accommodation may not be furnished but cookers and fridges could be provided. It is your responsibility to make your own arrangements to furnish the property to your requirements.

## Do I have to pay for temporary accommodation?

Yes. None of the temporary accommodation provided is free. You will be expected to pay a weekly charge.

If you are on a low income, you will need to claim Housing Benefit. The rental liability for the property will be equivalent of the local housing allowance rate therefore if Housing Benefit does not cover this cost, you will be liable for the shortfall.

If you fail to provide information for housing benefit to proceed an application or you do not make regular payments, you could lose your accommodation.

## How do I pay my rent?

Once you have signed up for your temporary accommodation, you will issued a letter within 1 week of your placement. This letter will include a barcode and the various payment options available to you if Housing Benefit does not cover the full rent for your accommodation.

## I have rent arrears

If you are struggling to pay your rent and are worried that you are unable to meet your payments, you must resolve this as soon as possible. You can contact our Temporary Accommodation Team immediately at TA@gravesham.gov.uk

## Can I still get housing benefit if I am in receipt of Universal Credit?

Yes. If you are living in an area where you need to claim Universal Credit, you should claim the Standard Allowance. If you are a family, claim the Children’s Allowance.

When making the Universal Credit claim, make sure you say you are living in temporary accommodation.

## How can I provide the requested information to housing benefit?

You can email the requested documents to the Temporary Accommodation Team at TA@gravesham.gov.uk or bring it in person to Civic Centre, Windmill Street, Gravesend, DA12 1AU.

## Do you evict people for rent arrears?

Unfortunately, yes, but only as a last resort and if we see you are not taking action to clear your arrears.

If you are evicted, you will have to find your own accommodation. Contact us early to prevent eviction from happening.

## Problems with your accommodation

If you are placed into nightly paid emergency accommodation the managing agent is responsible for the day-to-day management of your accommodation.

Please contact the managing agent if you have a problem such as:

* something in the property needs repairing

When should you contact the Temporary Accommodation Team:

* If you feel that the letting agent has not dealt with your query properly
* If you wish to complain about a member of the letting agent's staff

Please contact Temporary Accommodation Team on TA@gravesham.gov.uk or phone 01474 337759 without delay.

## Moving on from temporary accommodation

You will need to vacate the temporary accommodation provided if:

* Our homelessness enquiries show that the council has no duty to continue accommodating you.
* You accept a property via private sector with the assistances from Landlord Liaison Team.
* Find your own alternative accommodation.
* You accept an offer of permanent accommodation from the Council’s Homechoice scheme.
* You lose the accommodation because we have evidence that you are in breach of your tenancy agreement.
* If you refuse an offer of permanent accommodation which is suitable for your needs