



Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy

October 2026



Executive Summary

This policy explains how Rushmoor Borough Council provides temporary accommodation to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It sets out:

- The legal duties the Council must follow
- The types of temporary accommodation available
- How placements are decided
- How suitability, affordability and accessibility are assessed.

The Council aims to provide safe, appropriate temporary housing while managing limited resources fairly.

This policy guides officers, partners, and stakeholders involved in housing services and Rushmoor residents. The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains compliant and effective.

1. Introduction

This policy explains how Rushmoor Borough Council ('the Council') people who need temporary accommodation while homelessness assessments are carried out or while they wait for an offer of settled accommodation.

There are times when people face emergencies that leave them without a home. In these situations, the council may have a legal duty to provide temporary accommodation to help them regain stability.

1.1 The Council's Statutory Duty

The Council must provide temporary accommodation in certain circumstances, as set out in the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities.

1.2 Demand and supply of temporary accommodation

Demand for temporary accommodation is high, and the Council has a limited amount of its own temporary accommodation stock. Temporary accommodation must therefore be allocated fairly and proportionately. This policy explains how decisions are made to ensure the placements are suitable and equitably.

1.3 The role of elected members

The policy has been approved by the Council's Cabinet with delegated authority given to the Executive Director of Operational Services to agree general updates. The Council's Housing Oversight Group provides member oversight to the implementation of the policy. Ward councillors may become involved in individual cases.

1.4 The role of council officers

Housing Options officers assess individual circumstances and cases and make decisions in line with this policy. When doing so officers are acting on behalf of 'the Council'.

2. Legal framework

2.1 The Council must comply with a range of legislation and guidance when making decisions about temporary accommodation, including:

- Sections 188, 193, 206, 208 and 210 of the Housing Act 1996.
- The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities.
- The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003.

- The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Localism Act 2011.
- Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989.
- Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004.
- Relevant case law.

- 2.2. Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996, Interim duty - The Council must provide temporary accommodation if it has reason to believe an applicant may be homeless, eligible and in priority need. This duty continues until a final decision is made.
- 2.3. Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996, Main housing duty - If the Council decides an applicant is homeless, eligible, in priority need and not intentionally homeless, and homelessness has not been prevented or relieved, it must secure suitable accommodation until the duty ends.
- 2.4. Section 206 of the Housing Act 1996, Suitability - Any accommodation provided under section 188 or 193, whether temporary or otherwise, must be suitable.
- 2.5. Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance - Sets out the factors local authorities should consider when deciding whether accommodation is suitable. These include the physical condition and standards of the accommodation, its size, affordability, location, facilities, and the individual needs and circumstances of the household.
- 2.6. Section 208 of the Housing Act 1996 Location - Requires that accommodation should be within Rushmoor where it is reasonably practicable. When accommodation is provided out of the area, the Council should notify the receiving local authority in whose area the accommodation is situated.
- 2.7. The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 - Requires that when deciding suitability, the Council must consider:
 - The distance of the accommodation from Rushmoor;
 - The level of any disruption to work, caring responsibilities or education;
 - Access to medical facilities and support.
 - Access to local services and transport.

- 2.8. The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 - Requires that households with children or pregnant women should only be housed in 'bed and breakfast' accommodation where no other accommodation is available, and for no longer than 6 weeks.
- 2.9. In line with Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 - the Council must safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 2.10. The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council must:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3. Offers of temporary accommodation

- 3.1. If the interim duty applies and the applicant has nowhere suitable to stay, the Council will offer temporary accommodation while enquiries continue.
- 3.1.1. Suitability will be assessed using the factors set out in section 5 of this policy.
- 3.1.2. If the applicant refuses the offer of temporary accommodation they will be asked to give their reasons. The Council will consider the reasons given. If the Council determines that the accommodation is unsuitable, the offer will be withdrawn and a further offer will be made.
- 3.1.3. If the Council reviews the applicants' reasons for refusal but considers the accommodation suitable and the applicant still refuses, the interim duty ends.
- 3.1.4. There is no statutory right to review the suitability of interim accommodation provided under the interim duty. However, the Council will consider any concerns raised.
- 3.2. If the main housing duty applies and the applicant has no suitable accommodation, the Council will offer temporary accommodation until a settled home is provided or the duty ends.
- 3.2.1. Suitability will be assessed using the factors set out in section 5 of this policy.
- 3.2.2. If the applicant refuses the offer of temporary accommodation, they will be asked to give their reasons. The Council will consider the reasons given. If the Council determines that the accommodation is unsuitable, the offer will be withdrawn and a further offer will be made.

3.2.3. If the Council reviews the applicants' reasons for refusal but considers the accommodation suitable and the applicant still refuses, the offer will be withdrawn and 'the main homelessness duty' will end.

3.2.4. Applicants have a statutory right to review suitability under the main duty.

3.3. Applicants being placed in temporary accommodation must sign an agreement setting out expectations while they are living in temporary accommodation.

3.4. If an applicant is asked to leave due to breaching the terms of the agreement the Council may treat this as refusing accommodation. The Council will consider the nature of the breach, warnings given and the applicant's personal circumstances. The consequences for refusing temporary accommodation are set out in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of this policy.

3.5. Applicants may be asked to move to alternative temporary accommodation for several reasons, such as to provide the most appropriate accommodation, or because an external provider has brought the provision to an end. Such requests will be treated as an offer of temporary accommodation as set out in Sections 3.1, 3.2 and 5 of this Policy.

4. Types of temporary accommodation

4.1. The Council uses a mix of accommodation types, some owned or managed directly and others provided by external partners.

4.2. The types of temporary accommodation available to the Council may include:

4.2.1. Self-contained, this may include privately owned leased accommodation.

4.2.2. Accommodation with shared facilities such as 'bed and breakfast' accommodation, nightly paid and hotels.

4.2.3. Hostel Accommodation, which could either be self-contained and/or accommodation with shared facilities.

4.3. Self-contained accommodation

4.3.1. Leased accommodation means privately owned separate and self-contained premises (flats, maisonettes and houses) which the Council has leased for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation.

4.3.2. Leased accommodation is provided unfurnished but some discretionary help is available for those households who are unable to source their own furniture and/or white goods (subject to an assessment by Housing Needs Advice & Support).

4.3.3. Leased accommodation is only usually provided for those in longer-term temporary accommodation in performance of the 'main housing duty'.

4.4 Accommodation with shared facilities such as 'Bed & Breakfast' and hotels

4.4.1. 'Bed and breakfast' accommodation means accommodation (whether or not breakfast is included) which is not separate and self-contained premises, and where one or more of the following amenities is shared by more than one household: a toilet, personal washing facilities, cooking facilities. This can take the form of a hotel or traditional 'bed and breakfast' setting and is usually not owned or managed by the Council.

4.4.2. Bed and breakfast accommodation can be provided to households in performance of either of the interim or main duties.

4.4.3. Bed and breakfast accommodation can offer residents limited space, privacy, and amenities such as cooking and laundry facilities. The Council aims to avoid the use of such accommodation where possible.

4.4.4. Bed and breakfast accommodation may be considered suitable if emergency accommodation is needed at very short notice or if there is simply no better alternative available.

4.4.5. Bed and breakfast accommodation should only be provided to households containing children or pregnant women as a very last resort. Where this is the case, the Council will move households into more suitable accommodation within six weeks.

4.5. Hostel accommodation

4.5.1. Hostel accommodation means accommodation which may or may not be self-contained. Self-contained accommodation may also include aspects of shared facilities, such as a laundry.

4.5.2. Hostel accommodation can be provided to households in performance of either the interim or main duties.

4.6. Costs

Applicants must pay a weekly charge for the use and occupation of the premises. Those on a low income may claim Housing Benefit to help pay all or some of the charge.

4.7 Security of Tenure

Temporary accommodation offers limited security of tenure. Depending on the accommodation offered, applicants will have either a licence to occupy or a non-secure tenancy and do not have rights such as right to buy or right to exchange.

5. Suitability of temporary accommodation

The Council aims to avoid out of the area placements and bed and breakfast placements for families wherever reasonably practicable. There will be occasions where it is not reasonably practicable and such placements are necessary. The factors below should be considered when decisions are made.

5.1. Assessments

Assessment of the suitability of temporary accommodation are made based on the individual circumstances relating to any given applicant and their household. The council's officers are experienced and have been trained in the legislation and assessment criteria, decision making is supported and recorded using a check list and casework notes. Assessments consider the applicability and significance of any of the below factors, as well as the competing demands for accommodation and the availability of accommodation at that time. The assessment is composite, in that it takes account of all the relevant factors and circumstances together for each case.

5.1.1. Overcrowding

The size and the number of bedrooms is considered. Due to high demand and a shortage of available accommodation households may be placed in smaller accommodation than would be suitable long-term.

5.1.2. Affordability

Any temporary accommodation provided should be affordable for the applicant. Affordability is determined by the Council, in consultation with the applicant.

5.1.3. Location

Wherever reasonably practicable, temporary accommodation will be provided in Rushmoor. It is recognised that the location of accommodation is of particular importance in cases of domestic abuse or when personal safety is at risk for other reasons. Accommodation provided out of the area will be as close to Rushmoor as can be found.

5.1.4 Disruption to employment

Account will be taken of any disruption to employment that would be caused by the location of the temporary accommodation.

5.1.5 Safeguarding children and minimising disruption to education

Account will be taken of the following:

- The need to promote the welfare of and safeguard children. This includes consideration of the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of children being placed in temporary accommodation.

- Disruption to education that would be caused by the location of the temporary accommodation, which includes but is not limited to the particular impact that might be felt around exam times. Any temporary accommodation provided out of the area in performance of the 'main housing duty' is likely to be for a very limited time until accommodation is found in Rushmoor. It would not usually be necessary, for example, for children to have to move school.
- Disruption to caring responsibilities that would be caused by the location of the temporary accommodation.
- The proximity and accessibility of any accommodation to medical facilities essential for wellbeing, and to transport, amenities and local services.

5.1.6. Health and support needs

Account will be taken of the following:

- Any health needs of the applicant or a member of their household should be considered when considering the suitability of any temporary accommodation. Any likely impact of the accommodation on those health needs would be relevant factors.
- Any support needs identified as part of the housing assessment would also be relevant considerations, including what the impact would be of any existing support being removed.
- Any information provided from health professionals, social care departments and other agencies will be considered.
- Provisions made for pets in the Renter's Rights Act for settled accommodation do not apply to temporary or emergency accommodation. This is because the accommodation is usually occupied on either a licence or non-secure tenancy. The Council's disability, health and support needs assessment include the need for an assistance animal. Generally, pets are only permitted in temporary accommodation when the accommodation provider allows it, where it is practical and reasonable in relation to the type of accommodation, health and safety considerations, and the needs of other residents. If a pet cannot be accommodated the Council will consider this as part of the overall suitability assessment however, this will not prevent an offer being made if the accommodation is suitable in all other respects.
- The proximity of existing family and community support networks and services recognising their important role for vulnerable households and individuals.

5.1.7. Expected length of occupation

The length of time any temporary accommodation is likely to be occupied is a relevant consideration. Accommodation that might not be considered reasonable to occupy indefinitely or for several years, may well be considered suitable for a number of days or weeks.

5.1.8. Availability of suitable temporary accommodation and local housing pressures

Account will also be taken of the following considerations.

- Housing conditions in Rushmoor and the surrounding area;
- The availability of suitable temporary accommodation locally;
- The resources available to the Council;
- Any general or acute difficulties in sourcing suitable accommodation locally;
- Competition demand for temporary accommodation including the needs of other households requiring accommodation and the severity of those needs.

5.2. The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Council will consider whether the applicant has any protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, how significant they are, and how they might affect the suitability of any temporary accommodation being offered.

5.3. Any other special reasons

Consideration will be given to any other special circumstances that apply to any given applicant or their household.

6. Challenges to the suitability of temporary accommodation

6.1. Initial offer reservations

The Council aims to offer suitable accommodation the first time it makes an offer. If applicants have any concerns about the suitability of accommodation they should speak with the officer managing their homelessness application in the first instance.

6.2. Review - interim duty

There is no statutory right to review the suitability of accommodation provided under the interim duty. If an applicant refuses a suitable offer of such accommodation, they may not be owed any further accommodation duty.

6.3. Review - main duty

The suitability of accommodation provided in performance of the main housing duty is subject to a statutory right to review. Applicants owed such a duty are advised in writing of this right and

how to exercise it. If an applicant refuses a suitable offer of such accommodation, they may not be owed any further accommodation duty under this section.

6.4. Review- policy monitoring

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Council's Housing Oversight Group through the review of the council's quarterly performance monitoring data on temporary accommodation placements.

6.5 Complaints

Customers can make a formal complaint about the service they receive from the Council at any time by using the Council's formal complaints process.