

## Bristol City Council Homelessness Prevention Service

This is a pack to help you and the parent(s) / carer(s) or other family you live with. It contains practical ideas to help you all to try and work out a solution so you don't have to leave home.

Go through the actions set out in this pack and record what you have done.

**Show your relatives this Help Pack. Sit down together and talk so that everyone is clear about what the problems are. Talk through what can be done to find a way forward to resolve the problem. Use the actions set out in this pack to help you.**

It is important that you all talk things through as quickly as possible. This could be straight away or, if your relatives are very busy or too upset about the problem, it might be better to arrange a meeting with them at a later date. Please don't leave it too long to sit down and talk to your relatives.



## SECTION 1

**Sit down with your relatives and start by writing down what each of you thinks the problems in the household are. When you are writing down what you think the problems are, try to use language that is respectful, and try to think about things from the other person's point of view.**

**Everyone in the household should be part of this process.**

Below are some **examples** of what some of the problems **might** be:

- Not paying anything towards the rent or household bills
- Not contributing to running of the home, e.g: helping with household tasks
- Not keeping bedrooms and the home clean and tidy
- Not following house rules – *be specific*
- Causing rows in the family – *give reasons for the rows*
- Behaviour which is a nuisance to the other household members or neighbours
- Inviting visitors to the home without permission
- There was an unacceptable incident
- There are no rows – it's just time for you to leave
- There are too many people in the home
- Your relatives don't listen to you when you speak
- Your relatives don't let you do things that you think are reasonable
- There are financial problems at home
- Other reasons – *be specific*

### Trying to find a solution

**Try to have a discussion with your relatives about these problems. If there is some agreement about a way forward, write them down.**

Below are some examples of solutions to the types of things that cause tensions at home. Be as specific as you can when you write down these new agreements. Some of these examples might not work for you; try to make your new agreements specific to your own situation:

1. I will pay [**£xxx.00**] per week towards my keep.
2. I will make a non-financial contribution to the running of the home, e.g. by helping with household tasks (*Be as specific as you can – e.g.: I will do the washing up after every meal*).

3. I will keep my room and the home clean
4. I will not smoke, drink or take drugs in the home
5. I will not behave in a way that causes a nuisance. I will not engage in any criminal behaviour.
6. I will treat the other household members with respect and not argue with them.
7. I will not bring my friends to the home without permission
8. I will cooperate with any support if it is offered to me and my family
9. I will not cause or take part in any anti-social behaviour in the area that we live or in any other named area.
10. I will try to find somewhere else to live within the next three months / six months / 12 months *(be specific and remember the Council might be able to help you with this)*

**When you have written down what needs to change, it would be a really good idea to put these into a written agreement.**

Written agreements can help everyone involved to be very clear about what the new actions / behaviour are. We suggest that you put these into **A Contract for Future Occupation**.

## **SECTION 2**

**Looking for somewhere else to live with a private landlord or with extended family or friends.**

**How to work out where you can afford to rent**

### **1. Start to look at where you can afford to rent in case the above actions don't work**

Given the very small amount of social housing available, you will almost certainly have to consider renting from a landlord in the private rented sector.

- Complete the form, **How Much Rent Can I Afford** (below) so you know exactly where you can afford to look for accommodation
- If you have relatives or close friends in any other towns or areas, look at these areas too

**2. Go to the Where Can I Afford to Live** page on the BBC website:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23234033>

1. Select the **Rent** icon
2. Select the number of bedrooms you need and then look at the map. It will tell you where in the country might be affordable for you
3. Think about any towns or cities that you might be interested to live in.
4. If you will be relying on Housing Benefit to help with rent, you will need to find out the local housing allowance (LHA) benefit rent figure for the area you might want to live in. To do this, **open a new window on your browser** and go to the Valuation Office Agency website. **Don't close down the BBC website page as you will need to return to this later**

<https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx>.

5. This website will let you know the likely **weekly** amount of benefit you might be able to get for the size of the household you want to rent.
6. Take this weekly amount and multiply it by 52, then divide by 12 to give you a monthly benefit rent figure.
7. Go back to the BBC website. Put the monthly figure you have been given into the box on the BBC website where it asks you how much you can pay monthly.
8. You will be shown on the map the areas that might be affordable for you if you are relying on benefit to pay your rent. When you click on areas that might be affordable for you, it will give you more information.

## SECTION 3

**Do everything you can to try to find accommodation with other relatives and friends**

### **1. Make a list of all your relatives or friends**

To increase your chances of finding somewhere, make a list of all your relatives or friends, wherever they live

2. Explain to the people on your list that you need to find somewhere to live and ask them if you can stay with them for a while.

### **3. Tell any friends that they would be able to charge a rent if they let a room to you. Make sure you have shown any friends the Lodgers Pack**

- This is an option only where it is a room in a friend's home and **not in the home of a relative.**

- If the friend is on benefits, this may affect this – we can advise you on this.
- If they are not a relative, and you would have your own room in their home, tell them they would be able to charge rent and, as long as you qualified for benefit to help meet your housing costs, you would be able to pay them the local housing allowance rate set out above.

**4. Ask any friends or relatives if there is anything else you could possibly do around the home to help them.**

Think of anything else you could offer to do around the home to help them. This could be odd jobs, help with the garden or babysitting.

## **SECTION 4**

### **Look for a room to rent either in a landlord's home or in a shared house**

#### **1. Look on the internet**

Look at the following websites that advertise house shares and homes to rent. Look every day, preferably early in the morning. If you see something that you think is suitable, **get in touch with the landlord immediately**

<http://www.spareroom.co.uk>;

<http://loot.com/category/property/rooms-shares/>

<http://www.rightmove.co.uk>;

<https://www.gumtree.com/property-to-share>

<http://property.adzuna.co.uk/to-rent> - (Tip- search for ' DSS accepted')

<http://www.zoopla.co.uk/to-rent/>

<http://www.dssmove.co.uk/>

<http://www.dsslocal.com/dsslocal/index.html>

#### **2. Try to find a friend to partner up with who is also looking for accommodation and willing to share a room.**

It might be easier to find a room to share for two people than to find a room on your own. Two people may be more able to cover the rent charged for a room in a shared house.

**3. Check notice boards in supermarkets, small shops, newsagents, and libraries.**

These often have adverts for rooms to rent put there by landlords

**4. Advertise that you need a room to rent.**

These adverts are sometimes free or cost very little. If you use social media, let your contacts know that you are looking for a place

**5. Check the local newspapers every week.**

Copies of the local free and paid for newspapers are available for you to read at local libraries and they often advertise properties on their internet pages.

**SECTION 5**

**Register on the Council's HomeChoice scheme if you haven't already done so**

**1. To register you will need to complete a form online**

- Your chances of being offered a social housing are **very low**. Don't just register and assume that you will be offered a home as this is very unlikely. You are much more likely to find a private room to rent.
- You must register online here: <https://www.homechoicebristol.co.uk/>

**2. When you are registered onto HomeChoice Bristol, choose realistic areas or amend your areas of choice to improve your chances of being offered social housing**

If you qualify for the register or are already on the register, you should amend your areas of choice to improve your chances of being offered a social housing home. We can advise you of what these areas are if you haven't already been told or have forgotten.

## SECTION 6 – TEMPLATES AND FORMS

Example of a *Contract for Future Occupation* between the relative and the person at risk of being excluded, setting out the terms under which they will be given permission to continue to live at home.

### CONTRACT FOR FUTURE OCCUPATION

THIS AGREEMENT is made on [*date*]

BETWEEN [*name and address of Parent/Parents/relative*] AND [*name of individual*]

The [*name of individual*] AGREES the following in respect of their future conduct

**The agreements below are examples. Add / delete as appropriate to your own situation:**

- 1) I will make a non-financial contribution to the running of the home by e.g. – helping with household tasks (it is best to be as specific as you can)
- 2) I will keep my room and the home clean
- 3) I will not smoke, drink or take drugs in the home
- 4) I will not cause or permit any behaviour that is a nuisance to the parent/s/relative or neighbours and not to engage in activities which are criminal.
- 5) I will not act in a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to anyone living in the same home as me.
- 6) I will not bring visitors to the home without permission
- 7) I will cooperate with any support provided to myself and my family (list any support provided by the council or another agency or charity if this has been set up).
- 8) I will not take part in any anti social behaviour on the estate that I live or in any other named area.

(Add point 9 below if rent is required to be paid)

I will pay rent or a weekly contribution to the running of the home of £xx.00 per week.

Add more detail if required -

This will cover the following items (*list e.g. – room, food, contribution to utilities, washing*).

This will be paid every *put in the day of the week it is to be paid*.

**Breach**

If [*name of individual*] does anything which he/she has agreed not to do under this contract the following actions will occur:

Unless there is a very serious incident all parties agree to follow the procedure set out below:

- a) Where the person/s who has granted permission for the person to carry on living at home if they sign this agreement has a concern they will sit down and discuss that concern. Where there is no improvement they will issue a verbal warning.
- b) Where there is no improvement in behaviour or the incident is considered by the person/s to be more serious a written warning will be given.
- c) At any time either party named in this agreement can ask to call a meeting to discuss any problems or concerns.
- d) Where the situation may lead to the person/s who has been granted permission to carry on living at home being asked to leave either party may call on help from any agency who have agreed to support them or can contact the Council Housing Options Team by telephone or e-mail (for the Council to insert here the name and contact details of the case officer that dealt with the case or any specialist officer), or contact any agency providing support to see what help can be given.
- e) Finally if the situation cannot be resolved a written note will be given to the person named giving reasonable notice that they must leave the property and by when.

**DECLARATION**

I confirm that I understand the meaning of this agreement and that the consequences of breach of the contract have been explained to me.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

[*Signature of individual*]

DATE.....

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ Parent

[*Signature of parent/s/relative*]

DATE.....

WITNESSED

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ Officer

## How much Rent Can I Afford

<p><b>My current weekly income (from benefits / employment / other). List all income streams below:</b></p>     <p><b>TOTAL WEEKLY INCOME:</b></p>	<p>£</p>	
<p><b>The item I spend money on</b></p>	<p><b>What you think you spend on this item at the moment:</b></p> <p><b>weekly amount</b></p> <p>£</p>	<p><b>What you think you could reduce this figure to</b></p> <p><b>weekly amount</b></p> <p>£</p>
<p>Gas and electric</p>		
<p>Food</p>		
<p>Clothes and shoes</p> <p><i>(you might only buy clothes every month. If so, work out how much you spent on clothes and shoes the last month you bought some. Multiply this figure by 12 and then divide it by 52. This will give you the weekly amount)</i></p>		
<p>Water rate</p>		
<p>Council Tax cost</p> <p>Or, if you are on benefits, the weekly contribution you have to pay towards the Council Tax (if any).</p>		
<p>public transport costs</p>		
<p><b>OTHER WEEKLY COSTS</b></p>	<p>£</p>	<p>£</p>
<p>1. TV cable / Sky costs</p> <p>2. TV Licence</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Maintenance payments / CSA</li> <li>4. Travelling expenses for leisure</li> <li>5. Travelling and meal costs if working</li> <li>6. Child care costs</li> <li>7. School meal costs</li> <li>8. Car costs: insurance, road tax, petrol per week and annual general maintenance <i>(break down into a weekly estimated cost)</i></li> <li>9. Credit cards / catalogue / store card</li> <li>10. Toiletries</li> <li>11. Meals out</li> <li>12. Laundrette</li> <li>13. Mobile phone</li> <li>14. Mobile phone insurance</li> <li>15. Life insurance / private pension / endowment policy / health insurance</li> <li>16. Repayments on any finance or loans (money lenders or family or friends)</li> <li>17. Prescriptions, dentist and glasses costs</li> <li>18. Pension payments</li> <li>19. Pet costs</li> <li>20. Leisure expenditure such as the cost of trips to the cinema</li> <li>21. Alcohol</li> <li>22. Cigarettes</li> <li>23. Court fines</li> <li>24. Other <i>(please state)</i></li> </ul>		
<p><b>Final assessment</b></p>	<p><b>What I currently spend on everything above</b></p>	<p><b>What I could reduce this figure to</b></p>
<p><b>Totals and calculation of affordability</b> <i>(record this as a weekly amount)</i></p>	<p>£</p>	<p>£</p>