

Housing



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

The Homelessness Pathway
Your journey from homelessness to
your own home



In partnership with:



Contents

1. About the Homelessness Pathway
2. Where it starts - Your referral to the Access Panel
3. The Homelessness Pathway
4. Stage 1: Intensive Support
5. Stage 2: Life Skills
6. Stage 3: Approaching Independence
7. The final stage - Your referral to the Move On Panel
8. Floating Support
9. What we expect from you
10. Complaints and Appeals
11. Frequently Asked Questions
12. Useful Contacts

About the Homelessness Pathway

The Homelessness Pathway is funded by Reading Borough Council and is designed to help you develop the skills and confidence you need to move from being homeless to living independently in your own home.

The Pathway offers three stages of accommodation with different types of support.

Your support worker will work with you at each stage to help you progress at a pace that suits you - we aim to move you through to the next stage of the Pathway as soon as you are ready. The journey is different for everyone - if your needs increase we may help you move to a stage with a higher level of support.

We will involve you in any decisions about the support you receive and your progress along the pathway.

Where it starts: Your referral to the Access Panel

Your support worker (*probation officer, social worker, outreach worker or other professional working with you*) will complete a **Common Assessment Form (CAF)** with you to refer you to the Access Panel.

The multi-agency Access Panel will look at your referral and **decide if the Homelessness Pathway is right for you** at their next weekly meeting.

If your homelessness can be prevented or you don't have support needs the Panel will refer you to the Housing Advice Service or a floating support service.

You can't refer yourself to the panel. Call the Housing Advice Service on 0118 937 2165 if you don't have a worker to refer you.



If the Homelessness Pathway is right for you the Panel will refer you to a housing provider - the stage you start on the Pathway depends upon your individual support needs - *see page 4*
We may invite you for an interview or assessment.

We may need to share information about you with other housing providers and support agencies - we will ask you to give your consent for this when you are referred.



Overview of the Homelessness Pathway

The Panel will decide where you start - the journey on the Homelessness Pathway is different for everyone and will be tailored to your individual needs

Stage 1 INTENSIVE SUPPORT

- A housing related support plan (agreed with you)
- 24/7 on-site support
- Help to access community drug and alcohol treatment (*if appropriate*)

Stage 2 LIFE SKILLS

- Starting education training or employment
- Dealing with debts
- Preparing for less support
- Addressing longer term health concerns
- Developing hobbies and interests

Stage 3 INDEPENDENT LIVING WITH SUPPORT

- Building your independent living skills
- Preparing for your own tenancy
- Saving for a deposit
- Getting careers advice

Final Stage INDEPENDENCE *(with optional floating support)*

- Understanding your tenancy agreement
- Knowing how to pay rent and bills
- Arranging gas, electricity and water services
- Finding low cost furniture

Stage 1: Intensive Support

SUPPORT - Your housing provider will:



- Give you time to settle in
- Work with you to develop a support plan focussing on the support you want and need - *you must be honest about your debts and other issues in order to get the right support*
- Meet with you regularly and review your progress
- Work closely with any other support services you receive
- Help you resolve or reduce any offending behaviour

HOUSING: We will refer you to a specialist supported housing provider with staff available to support you 24/7. This accommodation is provided by Hamble Court (Riverside ECHG) or Willow House (Salvation Army).



At the end of Stage 1 you will have...

- ✓ Opened a bank account
- ✓ Been given help to apply for Benefits
- ✓ Learnt to budget and which bills must be paid first
- ✓ Started paying off any arrears you owe



- ✓ Registered with a GP
If you have drug/alcohol problems you will also have received:
- ✓ advice on blood borne viruses, safe injecting and needle disposal
- ✓ help to link in and engage with drug and alcohol services

- ✓ Had the chance to get involved in meaningful activities like volunteering, gardening or education which could help when you apply for jobs

You are now ready for Stage 2

Stage 2: Life Skills

SUPPORT: Your support worker will:



- Meet with you regularly (at times agreed with you)
- Work with you to develop a support plan which focuses on developing the practical skills you need to live on your own - like cooking, shopping and healthy eating
- Help you find training and education which could help you meet your goals

You will continue to receive any other community support services you need.

HOUSING: When you are ready to move to stage 2 you will move to a smaller hostel with staff on site during the day (*Waylen Street (BCHA), Garner House (Stonham)*) or a shared house provided by Ability or Launchpad.



This accommodation does not offer 24/7 support but you will still have regular meetings with a support worker.

You will either be given a Licence or Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) - a legal contract between you and your housing provider.

At the end of Stage 2 you will have ...

- ✓ Registered to vote
- ✓ Developed hobbies and interests
- ✓ Had the chance to access training, education and/or employment
- ✓ Dealt with any outstanding debts
- ✓ Developed the skills to budget and pay your rent

- ✓ Registered with a dentist
- ✓ Addressed longer term health concerns
- ✓ Learnt to shop, cook and eat healthily
- ✓ Been referred for counselling (if you want it)
- ✓ Been stable in treatment and getting close to achieving your recovery goals

You are now ready for Stage 3

Stage 3: Approaching Independence

SUPPORT:

We will provide a minimum of 1 hour of individual support every 2 weeks. The support you receive will help you focus on:



- developing the skills and knowledge you already have to get you completely ready to live independently
- opportunities to take part in a variety of activities to develop your skills and confidence

HOUSING:

When you are nearly ready to live independently you will move to accommodation provided by Launchpad or at Solent Court (Riverside ECHG)



This type of accommodation is closer to independent living but you will have a small amount of support

At the end of Stage 3 you will have ...

- ✓ Opened a Credit Union account
- ✓ Saved towards a deposit
- ✓ Had the chance to get involved with peer mentoring or volunteering
- ✓ Been given careers advice
- ✓ Worked towards training or employment
- ✓ Built up your confidence to manage your own tenancy



You are now ready to move on to Independent Living

The final stage: Your referral to the Move On Options Panel (MOOP)

Your Review

When you are ready to move on your support worker will update your **Common Assessment Form (CAF)** with you to record the progress you have made and confirm you are ready to live independently.

They will refer your CAF to the **MOOP**.

MOOP

The Panel will:

- review your completed CAF and
- ask your support worker to describe the skills you have developed to manage a tenancy on your own

They will then decide the best way forward for you.

Option 1:

The Panel may refer you to the Deposit Guarantee Scheme to help you find private rented accommodation.

OR

Option 2:

Advice and support to bid for accommodation through Homechoice. This will depend on your individual circumstances.



You will be offered support to help you set up as a tenant, complete your paperwork and sort out important services (gas, electricity and water)

Floating Support

This service offers a worker who will support you in your home (or somewhere you choose) to help you manage your tenancy and develop or (continue to develop) the skills you need to live independently in the community.

We may offer Floating Support:

- to prevent you from becoming homeless - this could include negotiating with your landlord or your family, helping you pay your rent and managing guests
- to help you settle into your new home when you first move in (this could be for things like getting involved in the community)

Your Support Plan

We will work with you to develop a plan to set goals focusing on the things you currently need support with.

When you have completed your support plan you should have all the skills you need to manage your tenancy.

Your plan could include help with:

- ✓ Maintaining your tenancy/finding a more suitable home
- ✓ Form filling
- ✓ Managing money and applying for benefits
- ✓ Finding other support services in the community
- ✓ Accessing education, training and/or work
- ✓ Taking part in leisure activities
- ✓ Getting involved with your local community
- ✓ Staying safe
- ✓ Staying healthy (physically and mentally)

The Homelessness Pathway - What we expect from you

Working with us

The Homelessness Pathway is an opportunity for you to get the support you need to move towards getting your own home and living independently.

To be successful you **MUST** commit to working with the support we provide to you.

We can offer flexibility about how your support is provided - for example:

- We will give you some choice about where and when you meet with your key worker
- You can engage informally (not in set appointments) with team members at your accommodation through group activities.

Drugs

Housing providers do not encourage the use of illegal drugs and always work within the law.

If you use drugs your support worker will help you to access:

- community treatment services to help you reduce the amount you use and support you in your recovery journey
- advice and support on safer injecting and harm

reduction and provide sharps bins to keep you and other residents safe

If you bring illegal drugs into your supported accommodation your housing provider will discuss this with you.

They will:

- take action if they receive complaints about drug related anti social behaviour around your accommodation or neighbourhood
- involve the Police if they suspect you of being involved with dealing drugs - this could put your housing at risk

Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

ASB is any behaviour which is likely to cause "harassment, alarm or distress to others" - like street drinking, begging, drug taking and noise.

Your housing provider will not tolerate ASB. They work closely with other agencies like the Police and have clear procedures to deal with ASB.

If they receive complaints about you they will offer support to help you stop your anti social behaviour. If you do not co-operate with them you could face legal action.

Rent and Service Charge

You MUST pay rent wherever you live.

You may get Housing Benefit to help towards your rent - this is paid straight to your housing provider.

Tell your housing provider if you start work - your Housing Benefit may be reduced and you may need support to ensure you can pay your rent.

You may also have to pay Service Charges (to pay for gas, electricity, water and sometimes meals) - you will be given as much choice as possible about how you pay.

If you get behind with your rent or service charges your support worker will work with you to:

- agree a repayment plan so you can pay off a small amount of what you owe each week
- help you manage your money and set a budget so you can reduce the risk of problems again

If you don't pay your rent or service charges you could lose your accommodation.

What you can expect from us

We will provide trained and knowledgeable staff who will:

- Be non-judgemental
- Treat you with respect
- Encourage you to get involved in decisions about how your service is run

Complaints and Appeals

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the services you receive from your housing/floating support provider please let them know. They should tell you about their complaints process when you start working with them. You can also complain directly to Reading Borough Council - *see page 12 for contact details*

Appeals

If you are served Notice to leave your Pathway accommodation and you feel the reasons are unfair you have the right to appeal. Your support worker will explain the process.

We will support you to try to prevent you from becoming homeless however you must take responsibility for changing your behaviour.

Frequently Asked Questions

When will I move in?

This depends on the accommodation available and if we need to interview you. We do have a waiting list so you should still try and find your own accommodation.

What should I do while I'm waiting?

- Let the support worker that referred you to the Panel know about any change in your circumstances (*for example: if you lose your accommodation or have a new contact number*) so we can get hold of you quickly.
- Keep on working with all the other services that support you.

What Stage will I enter the Pathway?

This depends on your individual support needs - everyone is different.

What if I don't agree with the Panel's decision?

Ask the support worker who referred you to request a review. The Access Panel will consider your reasons and look at your situation again.

Useful Contacts

Housing Advice Service

☎ 0118 937 2165

✉ housing.advice@reading.gov.uk

Housing Complaints - Reading Borough Council

☎ 0118 937 2905

✉ housing.complaints@reading.gov.uk

This information can be made available in alternative formats (such as Braille, audio tape and other languages) on request - contact the Housing Advice Service