

Housing Needs and Assessments



The Triage team is the ‘front door’ into the Homelessness and Housing Needs service which is responsible for fulfilling the council’s statutory duties under the Homeless Reduction Act (HRA).

The team acts as the first point of contact for all incoming referrals into the service, including

- liaising directly with Access Croydon, Contact Centre and various other internal services such as Social Services and Family Justice Centre
- Dealing with referrals from external agencies such as CRISIS/Shelter, prison and probation services, hospitals and mental health services.
- Triaging all customer’s online applications for homeless assistance and managing the appointment system for the Singles, Relief and Prevention teams
- Dealing with ‘duty to refer’ cases referred under the statutory duty public bodies and referrals made by other Local Authorities.



Residents who present as homeless or threatened with homelessness are advised to complete the self-help tool which is accessible via the Croydon Council website. This captures information about the household, their circumstances and offers an appointment with the Housing needs and assessment team.

Referrals are made by email to:

HSG-HousingNeeds&AssessmentsReferrals@croydon.gov.uk



The Prevention Team work with residents who are threatened with homelessness and may have received a notice to leave their property. The team intervene as early as possible by negotiating with the landlord where possible, and by working with residents to help them find alternative accommodation if they are unable to help them to remain in their property.

The Team provides general housing advice and also check that notices served are valid and have been served in accordance with housing legislation. They work on a Personal Housing Plan (PHP) with the household.

The Prevention Team also helps residents to assess their financial circumstance to find affordable sustainable accommodation and often assists residents to apply for help with deposit and rent in advance.



The team work with customers and encourage them to take ownership of their situation and to actively choose to find their own accommodation. The team present residents visual images of their journey and also explain the eviction process, this has been found to have a big impact, and help people make informed choices.

Housing needs officers speak to & negotiate with parents/relative/friends to keep their children/friends at their home to allow for them to have more choice through looking in the private sector with support from officers to find their own housing.

Some landlords have extended the tenancy and kept tenants on after they have paid off some rent arrears, or pointed out the flaws in the eviction process. Some of this negotiation has happened on the eve of eviction itself!

A number of people have been re-instated in their property after an illegal eviction from their landlord, following advice from our Tenancy Relations Officer.



The Relief team are responsible for providing assistance under the Housing Act where homelessness cannot be prevented. The team deal households with dependent children and some of the teams key responsibilities are:

- Investigating the circumstances which led to the customer losing their home.
- Providing the relief duty – this is achieved by working with the customer on an action plan (PHP) to assist them to find alternative accommodation and working with them on any issues that will resolve their homelessness and allow them to sustain a tenancy e.g. debt or other advice, budgeting, referrals for employment and training, and signposting to other relevant services.
- Where needed, they can authorise emergency accommodation placement for homeless households.
- Making decisions under the Housing Act on what, if any duty is owed if the customer is unable to relieve their homelessness with our assistance.



The team receive cases from the Prevention Team where the customer has not been able to remain in their current home or have failed to find alternative accommodation.

We also receive referrals from Family Justice Centre, Social Services and the Police, often dealing with complex cases.

We will interview any customer who is homeless using the action plan (PHP) in order to provide a holistic response to their needs and provide the tools needed to provide stability and improve their options.





Drop In Zone (16-21)

Provides a single place for young people and their families to access help and support.

We work in partnership with:

- youth workers
- Schools/colleges
- the police
- voluntary services
- social workers and health
- Leaving care services

Singles

We carry out statutory assessments and work in partnership trying to prevent and relieve homelessness.

- Our housing needs officers assessing whether a client may have support needs and work with supported housing providers to find suitable placements
- Some of the team work with specific partners and clients:- Probation, SLAM, Verified Rough Sleepers (VRS) and clients with complex needs. We also work with providers with sustaining tenancies and move-on options



Council tenants

COUNCIL
**COMMISSIONING
FRAMEWORK**
2019 - 2023

Partnerships

Adult health and social care

Advice and support for adult health and social care

Children looked after and care leavers



Community and safety

> Domestic abuse



Croydon Reach

The Bed and Breakfast Interventions Team encourage customers in emergency accommodation to look for their own accommodation in the private sector

- Assist with budgeting
- Maximise Income through employment and benefits
- Complete Housing Discretionary Payments for rent in advance and deposits
- Negotiate rents and payments with Landlords
- Offer links and guidance on looking for and securing private rented accommodation
- Explain the other housing pathways to long term accommodation
- Referrals can be made via email BBInterventions@Croydon.gov.uk



The Homeless Emergency Accommodation Team oversee and administer the placements of households and individuals who require emergency accommodation under the Homelessness legislation. The HEAT team are also responsible for;

- Central procurement of accommodation units for Adult Social Services, Children's Social Services and No Recourse to Public Funds Teams
- Negotiating rates in line with the Pan London Agreement
- Managing emergency accommodation providers
- Ensuring supply meets demand



Referrals for the HEAT team are made through the Triage Team and Single Homeless Hub

Referrals from Adult Social Services , Children's Social Services, NRPF and Tenancy are made directly to the HEAT

HEAT@Croydon.gov.uk

There are currently 617 households in Emergency Accommodation - down **257 in 18 months!**

There are currently 5 households in Shared Accommodation (shared facilities, kitchen and bathroom) – down **103 in 18 months!**



The Reviews Team undertake all statutory review requests made as a result of formal Housing Act 1996 Part VII/Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (Homelessness legislation) decisions issued on behalf of the council by the Prevention, Single Homelessness Service and Relief Teams.

The team ensure the law and guidance has been followed in reaching decisions – such as whether an applicant is eligible, homeless, in priority need or is intentionally homeless – and assess whether the decision is reasonable in Housing Act terms and meets the relevant legal test(s).

In addition, we are responsible for undertaking statutory reviews of the suitability of accommodation offered in discharge of the council's Homelessness duties; again, in accordance with the relevant legal test(s) and guidance.

Reviews Officers feed back guidance and good practice to the casework teams and also contribute to the training of officers in the wider service.



Sometimes, an applicant will lodge an appeal against our review decision and the team deals with the administration of this process, firstly by assessing the merits of the challenge and deciding whether to defend the appeal and then responding to any interim challenge. We also directly instruct legal representatives and work in liaison with them in regard to each stage of the appeal process; to include any interim Judicial Review challenges pending appeal – for example, in regard to accommodation pending an appeal hearing - and as necessary, attendance at court with our instructed barrister.



The CSW & Hostels Team manage the Council's 8 Hostels and CSW (Concord, Sycamore & Windsor House) have 338 self contained units.

These units are all in borough. Some of the hostel sites provide a specialist supportive accommodation for households in small HMOs with shared facilities. The CSW units provide general needs self contained temporary accommodation.

There are site managers and 2 handypersons who work across these sites, and deal with all aspects of the day to day management of the units and some minor repairs and void works.



The HI Team procure and manage various schemes that either provide longer-term temporary accommodation or housing solutions in the private rented sector. The current schemes they operate/access are:

- Croylease
- PLA
- CroyBond
- GRS (Guaranteed Rent Scheme)
- Capital Letters
- Real Lettings/St Mungos
- Notting Hill Genesis

The team often discharge the councils homelessness duties by way of a private rented sector offer.



Housing Register (waiting for offers)

	TOTAL	1-bed*	2-bed*	3-bed*	4-bed	5-bed	6*-bed+
Band 1A	117	86	20	9	2	0	0
Applications							
Band 1T	397	198	120	50	20	5	4
Applications							
Band 2A	2670	976	1154	384	109	34	13
Applications							
Band 2T	151	7	24	38	57	17	8
Applications							
Band 3A	2717	839	1252	440	147	27	12
Applications							
Band 3T	204	60	44	35	45	16	4
Applications							
Total Applicants	6,256 applications	2,166	2,614	956	380	99	41





Financial Year (April – March)	Total LBC / HA split:	Sheltered	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed+
2018 - 2019	778 LBC: 516 HA: 262	132	255	242	135	14
2019 - 2020	819 LBC: 481 HA: 338	169	297	198	141	14
2020 – 2021	562 LBC: 361 HA: 201	126	164	170	94	8

