



# Temporary Accommodation Policy

Last reviewed May 2021

# 1.0 Temporary accommodation policy overview

This policy is managed and adhered to by the housing service. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with government legislation, guidance and good practice.

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## 1.1 Introduction

At Dacorum Borough Council (DBC), we encourage Dacorum residents to approach us as early as possible if they are threatened with homelessness or are concerned about their housing situation. We will do our best to help you find somewhere settled to call home. However, in cases where we are unable to prevent homelessness (and you are found to be eligible and in priority need), we may need to move you in to temporary accommodation whilst we continue to work on your case.

If you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, you should make contact with us as soon as possible via our [Moving with Dacorum](#) online [Triage Assessment form](#), or by emailing [homelessprevention@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:homelessprevention@dacorum.gov.uk). You can also call us on **01442 228 000** and ask for 'homeless prevention,' or if you become homeless outside of normal working hours and cannot make your own arrangements, please call the emergency homeless line on **0800 018 6050**.

## 1.2 Aim(s) of the policy:

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide suitable and effectively managed temporary accommodation to those who need it;
- Ensure we have a clear and consistent approach to offering temporary accommodation in Dacorum; and
- Support people who have become homeless to move in to an appropriate, settled home.

## 1.3 Links to Council's corporate aims

- This policy supports the council's corporate priorities which are set out in '[Delivering for Dacorum – Corporate Plan 2020-2025](#)'

## 1.4 Equality and diversity

The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services and has procedures in place to ensure that all service-users are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

## 1.5 Policy Statement(s)

We will ensure that all households moving into temporary accommodation will be placed in a property which is suitable to their needs (see 2.1).

Residents living in our temporary accommodation must adhere to their license agreement (see 2.2)

We will manage temporary accommodation effectively, ensuring the health and safety of residents, staff and any other visitors to the property is a priority (see 2.2).

We will provide support to residents of temporary accommodation to help them in achieving a successful move on to a more secure home (see 2.3).

We will endeavour to make placements within the Borough, but where this is not possible/appropriate we may place households outside the Borough (see 2.4).

When necessary and/or appropriate, we will discharge our temporary accommodation duty or proceed with eviction action (see 2.5).

*The Council is required to respond to any local or national restrictions imposed by central government. The administration of this and other Council policies could, therefore, be impacted by a pandemic or other emergency for the period that such restrictions are in operation.*

## 2.0 Temporary accommodation policy detail



### 2.1) Suitability of accommodation

Referrals for temporary accommodation come via the homeless prevention team. Households are assessed as to whether they are eligible, homeless and in priority need. If approved, the household will be allocated a temporary accommodation property.

When a household is identified as being in need of temporary accommodation, we will work to ensure that they are placed in a property which is considered to be most suitable to their needs. This may be a room in shared accommodation, a bedsit, flat or house.

We aim to avoid using bed & breakfast accommodation as much as possible and will not place 16 and 17 year olds here under any circumstances. We will only place households in a bed & breakfast in the case of a severe emergency and we will ensure they remain there no longer than six weeks.

We work in partnership with neighbouring local authorities to access suitable and safe temporary accommodation when we need it, therefore in some instances, temporary accommodation offered may not be within the borough Dacorum.

We will not place sufferers of domestic abuse into a temporary accommodation property and in the first instance will place them into an appropriate Refuge. If, later in the process, the resident wishes to apply for housing in Dacorum then written confirmation that they are safe in the borough will be required from all relevant services (e.g. police, social services, Independent Domestic Violence Advisor etc.) before placement is considered.

There is a right of appeal for residents of temporary accommodation if they consider their accommodation to be unsuitable for their or a member of their household's needs. To request an appeal in this instance, please email [homelessprevention@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:homelessprevention@dacorum.gov.uk)

### 2.2) Management and safety in temporary accommodation

All of our temporary accommodation properties are managed by our Temporary Accommodation Officers. They carry out randomised weekly and monthly checks which consist of:

- Estate inspections of outside areas;
- Internal communal area checks;
- Room / property inspections; and
- Health & safety checks e.g. fire alarm.

All of our multi-occupancy temporary accommodation sites have CCTV in place monitoring both external areas around the building, as well as internal communal areas e.g. corridors between rooms. This CCTV is monitored by community control operatives who will notify the housing service of any issues that may arise or in the case of an emergency, alert the police.

Residents of temporary accommodation must adhere to their licence agreement. This includes paying weekly rent, appropriately maintaining their property and not engaging in anti-social behaviour. If residents do not adhere to licence agreements, they will be issued with a warning letter. On the third consecutive warning for rent arrears or anti-social behaviour, the household will be issued with a 28-day notice to leave the property.

We are not required to go to court to seek possession of a temporary accommodation property. We may also use immediate eviction powers in cases of serious anti-social behaviour or in situations where it is believed that other residents, members of the public, a contractor or our staff are at serious risk of harm.

Tenants may be able to keep a domestic pet in temporary accommodation; this will be at the discretion of the Temporary Accommodation Officer. Pets cannot be kept in emergency accommodation such as a hostel, bed and breakfast or hotel.

## 2.0 Temporary accommodation policy detail (continued)

### 2.3) Support for residents

The main aim of temporary accommodation is to provide short-term, emergency housing for those who need it. We ensure that support is available to our temporary accommodation residents throughout their stay, which will help them to achieve a prompt and successful move into a more permanent home.

Each resident is allocated a Welfare and Sustainment Officer who will work with them to ensure their licence conditions are met and to draw up a support plan. Support plans are tailored and specific to individual households and can involve a variety of stages, including (but not limited to):

- Support with finding employment (e.g. attending job centre appointments with residents if required or helping residents to access education to improve employment prospects);
- Support to ensure that any children within the household are able to maintain school attendance;
- Help in applying for benefits that the household may be entitled to;
- Support around health and wellbeing (e.g. working with the resident to register at and/or attend appointments where required at a GP surgery, dentist etc.);
- Referrals to other agencies and organisations if needed (e.g. for support with mental health or substance misuse).

- Help with the housing application process (including advice and signposting if a negative decision is made);
- Support to source furniture and white goods where needed;
- An invitation to a Tenancy Sustainment Information (TSI) session, which aim to manage resident expectations and provide guidance about maintaining a successful tenancy); and
- 'DOT' pre-tenancy training

If a temporary accommodation resident does not engage (or if the support is not needed) then there may be occasions where some of the above points are not covered.

We will liaise with other professionals and support agencies when providing support to a household in temporary accommodation e.g. health visitors or representatives from local children's centres to monitor the wellbeing of any children and offer advice regarding schools and local playgroups.

If a positive decision is made following a housing application in some cases, the Welfare and Sustainment Officer will continue to offer support to the household for six months once they have moved into their new home. This support will include ensuring benefits are in place, offering advice and guidance around maintaining a tenancy and generally monitoring property condition.

### 2.4) Out of Area Accommodation

DBC will place households in temporary accommodation that it considers suitable, and will endeavour to make placements within the borough. However, this is not always possible, so in the few cases where we cannot provide accommodation in the borough we will look outside Dacorum for suitable

temporary accommodation.

Under some circumstances, it is not in an applicant's interest to be accommodated in or close to the borough. These include cases where the applicant is fleeing domestic violence or other violence.

We take into consideration the needs of the family, especially if the placement would cause hardship or welfare problems for children. We also offer support to any placement made outside the borough. If the household is placed in temporary accommodation outside the borough, they will not necessarily stay there for the duration of the homeless application. This will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

### 2.5) Discharge of duty and eviction

In the event of a positive decision following a homelessness application and the resident is waiting to be housed, they must continue to adhere to their licence agreement. If the licence agreement is not adhered to, we may take action that can lead to discharge of duty and ultimately an intentionally homeless decision.

If a negative homelessness decision is made following an application, the household will be required to move out of their temporary accommodation property. If a review of the decision has been requested, then the household can also request to remain in their property while this review takes place. Approval for the household to remain will be agreed at the discretion of the Temporary Accommodation team.

If a resident is found to not be occupying their allocated temporary accommodation property as their main residence, then we will take action towards eviction. If we offer suitable temporary accommodation and it is turned down by the household, then we will discharge our temporary accommodation duty.

## 3.0 Links to other corporate documents

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and other documents:

- Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025
- Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 2024
- Allocations Policy
- No Second Night Out Policy
- Licence Agreement

## 4.0 Legislation

The legislation listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1996
- Housing Act 2004
- Localism Act 2011
- Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2012
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017