



Homelessness and Housing Options in Sandwell Pack



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Introduction



This information pack has been designed to help you explore your housing options. There are a lot of myths surrounding homelessness, council housing, private sector housing and temporary accommodation and this pack aims to address these myths and to help you understand your choices and what help is available to you.

What to do and what it means if I am at risk of or already homeless?

We understand this will be a stressful time. We want you to contact us as soon as possible. The best solution is for us to help keep you in your current home where possible. This will be less disruptive for you, your family and those people who support you. It will also cost you less in associated moving costs. This is always our preferred approach if there is time to prevent your homelessness.

Use of temporary accommodation

If we cannot help you stay where you are, we will work with you to secure alternative accommodation before you are made homeless from your current home. The last thing we want to do is to place you in emergency temporary accommodation (TA). The TA we have can include shared bathrooms and kitchens or no cooking facilities. If you are placed in these it will not be as comfortable as a more permanent home. There is little choice over the TA available and you could end up placed in a completely different area from where you live now.

It is important to point out that being in TA will not necessarily increase your chance of getting a council house as there are a lot of factors that influence your banding.

This is explained later in this pack.

How do I apply for council housing ?

Before considering applying for council housing there are some things you need to understand and there are criteria you will need to meet to be eligible.

To join the housing register you must:

- be aged 18 or over (16 or 17 in exceptional circumstances)
- be living in the UK legal

You also need to meet one of the following criteria:

- You are an existing Sandwell Council or housing association tenant living in Sandwell.
- You have lived in Sandwell for at least the past two years continuously and you do not own a property.
- You don't live in Sandwell and do not own a property but have a close family member (mother, father, brother, sister or adult child) who has lived in Sandwell for at least the past two years continuously.
- You are Armed Forces personnel and have served in the regular forces for two years prior to your application.
- You are a bereaved spouse or civil partner of someone serving in the regular forces where your partner's death is attributable to their service, and you can no longer live in Ministry of Defence accommodation.
- You are a seriously injured, ill or disabled current or former reservist whose injury, illness or disability is attributable to your service.
- You are a care leaver of Sandwell Children's Trust aged 25 or below.

There are a number of individuals who will not qualify to join our housing register. This includes individuals with more than 8 weeks rent arrears and no payment plan. More on who does not qualify can be read on the council's [allocations policy](#)



It is also very important you understand the likelihood of getting a council house and how long it may take. This understanding may influence your decision around your housing options. If you are at risk of or already homeless, it is not likely going to be a solution for you in the short term

This section covers some key numbers that will help you understand the likelihood of getting a council property:

Council Waiting List

We want you to be aware of the likely timescales of getting a council property. This may influence you in considering further housing options or accepting properties when offered.

It is becoming more common for the council to offer private rented sector properties when someone is homeless. Refusal of a reasonable offer will result in all support including emergency accommodation ending.



The table below shows the average waiting time for each property type and banding. This is across all bedrooms and it is therefore important to note that some properties will incur a larger waiting time than others, due to stock and demand.

This is subject to some conditions detailed below

| PROPERTY TYPE | Band 1 | Band 2 | Band 3 | Band 4 | Band 5 |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Bungalow** | 1 year and 6 months | 1 year and 5 months | 1 year and 7 months | / | 1 year and 10 months** |
| Flat | 10 months | 10 months | 11 months | 1 year and 3 months | 11 months |
| House | 1 year and 8 months | 2 years and 4 months | 6 years and 5 months | 8 years and 7 months | 9 years and 9 months* |
| Maisonette | 1 year and 3 months | 11 months | 1 year and 5 months | / | 2 years and 5 months |

Key

/ - Any property listed as /, relates to data not being available. A reason for this is in recent years no applicant of said banding being successful in the let of this particular property or no average wait time available.

* - A number of special cases were weighted within this average as there were few houses offered at band 5.

** - Bungalows are subject to age restrictions. Other restrictions may also be applicable from property to property. There are very few bungalows let last year. In Band 5 there were only 5 bungalows let which will affect this average.

Council Stock and Waiting List

The council owns 27869 properties of which 14756 are houses. These are council stock and **not** available lettings. Last year only 1321 properties of all types were let in the whole year. We have over 17000 people on the register

The registrations service see an average of 111 new applications per week, with over 17,000 households on the register. The housing register has increased by **180%** since 2020.



Given the fact we have **17,352** people on the register and only **1321** lettings in the last year, this significantly affects how many people bid on a property and how long it will take for you to get a council property.



There is a lot of demand for council housing and even if no new applicants came forward, **it would take just over 13 years to clear the current housing waiting list**. We see around 111 new applicants apply every week, so this number rarely reduces.

| Beds | Total |
|------|-------|
| 1 | 8084 |
| 2 | 5038 |
| 3 | 2769 |
| 4 | 1068 |
| 5 | 246 |
| 6 | 54 |
| 7 | 12 |
| 9 | 2 |
| 10 | 1 |

The number of bedrooms required by a household can have a significant impact on their position on the housing register. Large family households could face a longer wait time for housing allocation. The table shows the number of bedrooms that each applicant requires.

| | Total |
|--------|-------|
| Band 1 | 520 |
| Band 2 | 1422 |
| Band 3 | 2705 |
| Band 4 | 109 |
| Band 5 | 12518 |

The banding system is used to prioritise applicants on their level of housing need. The table shows the amount of applicants are currently on our waiting list for each of the bands.

Chances of getting a council property

The demand for council properties far outweighs the availability which means you are likely to wait some time before being offered a property. The facts below further explain the chances.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT YOUR CHANCES OF OBTAINING A COUNCIL PROPERTY



Large families – even in Band 2 will wait a few years to secure a council house



All council properties are in great demand however houses are in greater demand than flats



In some areas the applicants can wait longer than average for a property. Widening areas is important when bidding for council properties



1526 separate bids placed on a single address in Chillington Walk Rowley Regis

Following introduction of our auto-registration process you can apply online to join our register . Further detail can be seen on page <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/find-home/join-housing-register> on registering and direction to our allocation policy.

What other options are available to me?

We have explored how to apply for a council property, whether you are likely to be eligible and the likelihood of securing a property quickly.

To have the best chance of securing a new home, especially if you are at risk of or already homeless, we have provided some useful tips and advice for finding accommodation in Sandwell.

The information includes:

- What other housing options are available to you?
- What is available in Sandwell and how to access it?
- How we can help and offer advice so you can make the right decision for you?

If you are at risk of homelessness, the council will provide you with help and support to source accommodation; and by working together with your Housing Solutions Officer you will be able to explore your full housing options.

When beginning your search for alternative accommodation it is important to remember that there is a shortage of affordable accommodation both locally and nationally; therefore, it is important that you approach your search with an open mind.

You will greatly increase your chances of finding a suitable property by following the tips set out in this pack, creating a plan and keeping an open mind about your housing options.

Throughout this booklet we will refer to Private Rented Sector (PRS) properties, which mean properties that are owned by private individual(s) and rented out to single people and/or families. The term 'Social Rented Housing' refers to properties that are owned and rented out by housing associations or the council.

It is important that you keep this booklet as it contains useful information and will form part of your Housing Needs Assessment and Personal Housing Plan.

If you have any questions about the information in this booklet please contact Housing Solutions for further help and support please visit our website at: www.sandwell.gov.uk/housing or call us on 0121 368 1166 (option 2)

Private rented sector options



A Private Rented Sector property could be any type of residential property such as a house, flat, maisonette or bungalow. The property is owned by an individual or private company who then allows someone to live in it for a rental payment. In Sandwell we have a good supply of private rented properties.

It is often easier, quicker and more convenient to secure a private rented property rather than experiencing a long wait on the councils waiting list.

There are many factors to consider when searching for a new property, the main three are:

1. Affordability
2. Location
3. How you will find a property

Why Rent Privately?

Choice

- The private rented sector is growing which means there are additional properties to choose from in a wider range of areas. PRS availability exceeds social housing, increasing the chances of finding a suitable property

Flexibility

- Most private landlords are looking for long term tenants; however should circumstances change you will have the flexibility to surrender your tenancy with the appropriate notice provided to your landlord

Social Housing

- There is very limited number of properties available to rent from the council or from registered providers (housing associations) and there can often be a long wait on the housing register. Further information about availability of council housing can be found at the beginning of this information pack.

Deposits

Most Landlords or Estate Agents will require a deposit and a month's rent before you move into a property.

If you need help with a deposit, there are a couple of options which may be available to you:

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

Discretionary Housing Payment is a payment you may receive at the discretion of the local authority to help towards housing costs; however, you can only get it if you are entitled to Housing Benefit/Universal Credit (housing costs element). It is available to people who are not receiving enough to cover their rent.

It is also available for costs like a rent deposit, rent in advance or removal costs to help you move into a new home. DHP cannot be used to cover an increase in rent due to arrears or to make up the difference if an overpayment is being recovered.

For more information including how to apply please visit:

http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200154/housing_benefit/2170/problems_with_paying

You can apply for a DHP via the Sandwell Council Website and creating a My Sandwell Account.

<https://my.sandwell.gov.uk/ssauth/register>

Homeless Prevention Fund

You may be able to access the Homeless Prevention Fund if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Homeless Prevention Fund can assist with preventing your homelessness by helping you remain in your current accommodation, or with securing new accommodation for example by contributing towards a deposit. For further information about the Homeless Prevention Fund please speak to your Housing Solutions Officer.

Your landlord must put your deposit in a government-backed tenancy deposit scheme (TDP). In England your deposit can be registered with:

- Deposit Protection Service
- MyDeposits (including deposits that were held by Capita)
- Tenancy Deposit Scheme

If allocated to a homeless prevention officer, you will also be able to discuss this fund with them directly.

Affordability

When considering renting a property you will need to work out how much you can afford to spend on rent each month. If you are on a low income you may be entitled to financial help with your renting costs through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

The amount of Housing Benefit paid to private tenants is capped at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates; and your LHA rate is worked out against your bedroom allowance (see table below).

The following bedroom entitlement is based on Local Housing Allowance rates:

- Two people over 10/under 21 are expected to share a room if they are the same sex;
- Two people under 10 are expected to share a room regardless of their sex;
- You are entitled to one bedroom for each single person, or couple aged over 21.

The table below summarises current Local Housing Allowance room rates. Please note that this is the maximum amount of LHA you will get – your actual benefit may be less depending on the amount of money you have coming in and if other adults apart from your partner live with you.

| LHA weekly rate | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| Area | Shared room | 1 bedroom | 2 bedrooms | 3 bedrooms | 4 bedrooms |
| Birmingham | £78.61 | £159.95 | £172.60 | £189.86 | £253.15 |
| Black Country | £73.64 | £113.92 | £143.84 | £172.60 | £212.88 |
| LHA monthly rate | | | | | |
| Area | Shared room | 1 bedroom | 2 bedrooms | 3 bedrooms | 4 bedrooms |
| Birmingham | £341.58 | £695.02 | £749.99 | £824.99 | £1100.00 |
| Black Country | £319.98 | £495.01 | £625.02 | £749.99 | £925.01 |

These rates sometimes change so please follow the link below to see what the latest figures are <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx>



Remember, if you are struggling with a shortfall you can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment from the Housing Benefit department.

Other Costs

Your Housing Solutions Officer will complete an income and expenditure form with you which can be used to help you take control of your financial situation. Once you know where you're spending your money, you can start to alter and prioritise what you do with your money to enable you to stick within your means and budget effectively.

Renting a home involves more than just being able to pay your rent. Below is a list of the most common bills you should expect to pay as a tenant:

- Water bills (usually paid monthly)
- Service charges (in some properties – paid monthly or annually)
- Council Tax
- Gas and Electricity bills (either by a pre-payment meter, monthly by Direct debit)
- TV Licence – monthly or Direct Debit

Your Property Search

You can search for private rented properties and housing associations using your internet search engine (such as google).

You can also visit a Lettings Agents who advertise homes for rent on property websites and in their offices. Try the local high street in the area of Sandwell you would like to live for Estate/Letting Agents.

You can also try shop windows or noticeboards for rooms or properties to rent.

We are working closely with private landlords to find new alternative accommodation for those that approach us and have nowhere else to go. We have had a 100% success rate in sustained tenancies secured up to March 2024.



IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE COUNCIL CAN DISCHARGE ITS HOMELESSNESS DUTY TO YOU THROUGH THE OFFER OF A SUITABLE PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY AND WE WILL DO THIS WHERE IT IS APPROPRIATE.

Section 21

I am being evicted, what do I do?

If you live in a private rented property and your landlord has said you have to leave, in most cases they have to serve what is called a section 21 notice. This is the notice that can start the legal process to end an assured shorthold tenancy – which most people in a private rented property have.

It will set out your tenancy address, your name and should be signed and dated. The landlord cannot just send you a text, letter or email telling you that you have to leave and cannot specify just any date. They have to follow the rules set out below about your notice period.

Your landlord doesn't need to give a reason for wanting you to leave but they must follow certain rules if they want to give you a section 21.

For example, protect your deposit and give you a gas safety certificate.

Are the form and dates right?

Your section 21 notice must be on Form 6A.

Your notice will not be valid if:

- the notice period is less than 2 months
- you get the notice during the first 4 months of your original tenancy
- your landlord applies to court more than 6 months after giving you the notice

You do not have to leave by the date on the section 21 notice.



Your landlord has to apply to court to end your tenancy if you stay

There may be additional changes associated with remaining in the property. Support may be provided for such a change. This can be discussed further with your housing officer.

Please get in touch with us as soon as possible after receiving your notice. You can do so by calling 0121 368 1166 option 2 or referring directly to the service on <https://live.housingjigsaw.co.uk/>

Section 21

I haven't had a section 21

If you have not had a section 21 (or a section 8) from your landlord and they are asking you to leave, you must not leave the tenancy or hand the keys over unless you have somewhere else to go. If you do, you may be classed as intentionally homeless when you come to us for help.

Instead, contact your landlord or agent and advise them that they must follow the section 21 process and any notice aside from this is not valid. If the landlord or agent wants to speak to us about it, we have a team dedicated to helping landlords meet their requirements. Please pass on the mobile number to them 07586 622202.

It's an illegal eviction if you're forced to leave without the legal process being followed and we would advise you not to leave the property or hand the keys in before the date of the notice expiring. If you do, you could be making yourself intentionally homeless and may struggle to get further help.

If they attempt to carry out an illegal eviction, call the mobile number above and a member of the team will help by contacting the landlord – do not leave the property or hand over keys until you have spoken to us. If the landlord still proceeds with an illegal eviction, we will consider prosecuting them.

What happens if I do not leave by the section 21 notice date?

Your landlord can apply for a possession order if you stay past the date on the notice and in this case, the landlord will have to take the case to court. This will incur court costs but legally, you do not have to leave before the case has been seen.

There may not be a hearing if your landlord uses the 'accelerated procedure' so it's important to return a defence form should you not agree with the reasoning for eviction. The relevant defences are quite complex so we would advise seeking help from your local Citizens Advice or Shelter office if you need help with this.

The court can only stop an eviction if there's a problem with the section 21 notice

National government discussion on section 21

There are considerations by national government to abolish section 21 notices. The information supplied is correct at time of writing however should there be any changes to this your caseworker. You can also keep updated on <https://www.gov.uk/evicting-tenants/section-21-and-section-8-notices>

Section 8 of Housing Act 1988

A landlord will be able to use this ground for possession if you owe rent lawfully due of an amount equal to or more than :-

- 8 weeks rent if rent is payable weekly or fortnightly
- 2 months unpaid rent if rent is payable monthly

This ground can be used to claim possession of an assured short-hold tenancy including during a fixed term.

The landlord must serve a notice seeking possession and it must contain the correct information:-

- The landlord is seeking possession under ground 8
- The landlord will not start possession proceedings earlier than 2 weeks from the date the notice was served

A notice is valid for a period of 12 months from the date it has been served.

If you receive a Notice Seeking Possession from your landlord you do not have to leave the property. After the notice period has passed your landlord must apply to the Court to start a claim for possession of the property. The Court will decide whether to make a possession order requiring you to leave the property.

House Hunting Tips

Looking for private rented accommodation in Sandwell can seem quite daunting, so we have put together some tips below to help you with your search. Always bear in mind that landlords and lettings agents will be looking for reliable tenants; who will pay the rent on time and keep the property in good condition.

Reliable
To Pay Rent
on Time

Resilient
In your Search

Ready
To Move In

- Phoning landlords and lettings agents can be time consuming and it is likely you will need to make several calls before you will have properties to view.
- Wherever possible visit lettings agents in person; they are working on behalf of the landlord.
- Present yourself well and be prepared to tell them a little about yourself and show them any references you may have.
- Don't just contact one or two lettings agencies. Keep regular track of all the agencies that serve the areas you want to live in, and make sure you're checking local newspapers, websites, community noticeboards, shop windows etc. The wider your search is, the more likely you will be successful.
- When you have viewings of properties be on time, be friendly, look presentable and make sure you have your particular questions written down and ready to ask; also take ID with you such as a passport, driving licence or utility bill.
- If you have previous landlord references or something similar to show that you're a good tenant, make copies of them and provide them to landlords and agents.
- Before signing anything, always view a property and raise any questions or concerns you have, making sure these are answered.
- You should select as wider range of areas as possible when considering where you would like to live to give yourself a better chance of finding somewhere suitable. Consider areas on the outskirts of Birmingham that have good transport links.
- When your tenancy begins you should be provided with: a gas safety certificate, energy saving certificate, details of your deposit scheme and a copy of your tenancy agreement.
- Where possible pay your rent by card or bank transfer and clearly label the transaction. If you do not have access to this, your landlord should provide a rent book. Please ensure that payments are signed.



Owning Your Own Home

If you have savings or a suitable deposit, you should consider whether buying a property is an option for you. There is a range of support available to help people buy their own home through Help to Buy schemes.

If you can't quite afford the mortgage on 100% of a home, there are government schemes that can assist you. For example, 'Help to Buy: Shared Ownership' is a part-buy, part-rent scheme which allows you to buy a percentage of your home (between 25% and 75% of the home's value) and pay rent on the remaining share. You can then buy the rest of the new home if and when you want to.

You could buy a home through Shared Ownership in England if:

- your household earns £80,000 a year or less;
- you are a first-time buyer, you used to own a home but can't afford to buy one now, or you are an existing shared owner looking to move.

With 'Help to Buy: Shared Ownership' you can buy a newly built home or an existing one through resale programmes from housing associations. You'll need to take out a mortgage to pay for your share of the home's purchase price, or fund this through your savings.

An alternative scheme is 'Help to Buy: Equity Loan' which could be suitable for you if you want to own a newly built home in England. Through this scheme you could borrow up to 20% of the purchase price from the government and you'd only need a 5% deposit.

The link below will walk you through a number of simple questions/stages to help you review the best option for you if you are considering owning your own home:
<https://www.ownyourhome.gov.uk/>.

You may be able to get financial help from the government to buy a home.

These options include:

- Help with Savings through a help to buy ISA
- Assistance with a low interest equity loan
- Buying a home through shared ownership
- Buying your council or housing association property

More detailed information regarding these options is available at www.gov.uk/affordable-home-ownership-schemes

Coping with Mortgage Arrears

If you find yourself falling behind with your mortgage or you think you might have difficulty paying your mortgage because of a change in circumstances then you need to act quickly. Your mortgage is a 'priority' debt which means you should consider paying your mortgage before paying other 'non-priority' debts.

Changes such as:

- Illness
- Relationship breakdown
- Losing your job/Reduction in hours
- Reduction in your income may leave you struggling to pay your mortgage
- The first thing to do is speak to your lender. Your mortgage lender will have procedures for dealing with cases like yours.
- Negotiating with your lender
- Refer you to Money Advice
- Refer you to Welfare Rights
- Preparing for court
- What to do in court

DO NOT ignore mortgage arrears –

keep your lender informed and get some help.

Useful websites:

- www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
- www.direct.gov.uk

Standard Mortgage court process

The process:

Summons for Possession

This is the first stage in the repossession process. A date and time is given for the hearing. The basic details of the lenders claim are given. The papers are issued by the court, and include a reply form which can be completed and returned to the court. Shortly before the hearing, the defendant (borrower) will receive an affidavit (again sent by the court) in which the lender details the full particulars of their claim (amount outstanding, arrears, details of payments, interest rates etc.)

The Hearing

Mortgage possession hearings tend to be held in private. This means the only people present are the judge, the defendant and the plaintiff's solicitor. The hearing is taped and one of the following orders are made:

1. Adjournment

In most cases an adjournment will be for a 4 – 6-week period, with a new hearing set for the first available date after that time has lapsed. A judge will normally adjourn a case where one side (usually the defendant) is asking for information or time to negotiate with the other party

2. 28-day Possession Order

This is the usual outcome where the defendant does not turn up at the hearing or submit any kind of proposal to the court. If vacant possession has not been given to the plaintiff at the end of the 28 days, then they can

apply to the Court for a Bailiff's warrant.

3. 56-day Possession Order

Where the defendant has no long-term proposal for the court, but is asking for more time, or is perhaps hoping to sell then the court has the discretion to extend the time. Although the most usual is 56 days (2 months), they are sometimes prepared to give up to 6 months. At the end of the specified period if the

plaintiff has not given vacant possession then they can apply for a Bailiff's warrant.

4. Suspended Possession Order

This is the most common type of order made by the court at the hearing. Basically, the defendant puts a proposal to the plaintiff/court to make certain payments on a regular basis. The court orders that as long as these payments are made no further action can be taken by the plaintiff. If the defendant misses even one of the agreed payments, then the plaintiff has the right to apply to the court for a Bailiff's warrant.

5. Bailiffs Warrant/Warrant for Possession/Eviction Order

This is the stage at which someone could be forcibly removed from their home by the Court Bailiff.

Defendants are usually given about 14 days notice of the appointment.

Your parents or relatives have asked you to leave

If your parents or relatives have asked you to leave you should contact us as soon as possible.

We will contact your parents or relatives to ask them their side of the story. If you do not want us to contact your parents or relatives we will need to know why.

We can refer you to our mediation service. Our mediators have lots of experience of dealing with family relationships and they may be able to help you remain at home, or at least negotiate staying at home whilst you find somewhere else to live.

If you are aged between 18-25 years old and would benefit from supported housing we may be able to refer you to suitable accommodation. If you are aged 16 or 17 we may need to refer you to Children's Social Services for support and assistance.

Getting your first home is a big step and we know that if the move to your first home is planned you will be in a better position to enjoy it. We can give you advice on where best to find accommodation and how to get help with the costs of setting up and keeping a home.

Non-violent relationship breakdown housing advice

Housing rights in a relationship breakdown can be complicated and you may need to seek legal advice.

If you have a joint tenancy or own a property with your ex-partner you may still have rights to occupy the place you are living in together. Find a legal advisor in your area.

Where else can I go for housing help and advice?

There are several places you could visit:

Shelter has produced a guide for people who have experienced a relationship breakdown and what their housing rights are after splitting up. Shelter can also be contacted by telephone: 0344 515 1944.

Citizens Advice - for general and legal advice and help. Telephone: 08444 111 444.

Sandwell's Housing Solutions Service - If you've decided that you need to find a new home, our website has information helping you with the different options for looking for a new home. The Housing Solutions Service can also be telephoned on: 0121 368 1166.

Social Housing

In Sandwell there is a lack of social housing and a massive demand for social housing stock as mentioned in the first section of this pack. The social housing stock is made up of blend of council owned homes and homes provided by housing associations and registered providers.

You can contact housing associations directly as not all of their properties are allocated through the councils registration/Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

Housing Associations

Some housing association properties will be advertised through the current Choice Based Letting scheme. Customers can also approach registered social landlords directly to obtain advice about their own allocation policies.

What is a Housing Association?

They are non-profit making organisations that provide properties for rent. They work in partnership with the Council. They are sometimes called registered social landlords (RSL's).

What type of home do they provide?

Housing Associations can provide a range of rented accommodation from apartments for single people to large family homes, sheltered housing for older people may also be available.

How much rent do Housing Associations charge?

Rent levels are dependent on the property type and location. Housing benefit is available in the same way as for council tenants.

What type of agreement will I have with a Housing Association?

Housing association tenants will normally have assured tenancy agreements which have very similar terms and conditions to the secure tenancies offered by Sandwell Council. The one main difference is that most assured tenants do not have the right to buy the property they are living in.

New tenants may be given an introductory tenancy.

Supported Housing

Supported housing exists to ensure those with support needs can lead a healthy and fulfilling life within their own home and community. While the services range widely, they all play a crucial role in providing a safe and secure home with support for people to live independently.

This includes:

- Providing the support older people need to maintain their independence.
- Working with homeless people with complex and multiple needs to help them make the transition from life on the street to a having a settled home, education, training or employment.
- Supporting people with mental health needs to stabilise their lives, recover and live more independently.
- Supporting ex-servicemen and women to find a stable home, including support for those with mental health and physical disability needs.
- Supporting people with learning disabilities in the longer term to maximise their independence and exercise choice and control over their lives.

If you require supported housing your officer, can help you get in touch with supported housing providers.

Do you need further information or advice?

We want to make it as easy as possible for our customers to get in touch with us regarding their housing issues. Following reading this pack, there are a variety of channels you can get in touch.



If you are in the process of approaching the homeless service you can now do so by referring online by registering on <https://live.housingjigsaw.co.uk/>.



Should you need to speak with us you can also call us on 0121 368 1166 (option 2).

If you have visited the Housing Solutions Team for support as you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, please remember to keep a copy of your Personal Housing Plan and work through the actions that were agreed with your Housing Needs Officer. It is important to keep in contact with your officer and let us know if your circumstances change

If you require any further information please visit our website <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/homepage/295/homelessness> or alternatively you can contact your Housing Solutions Officer.

