



Caerphilly County Borough Council

Temporary & Permanent Accommodation

February 2007

Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to provide information and advice for people who are faced with the loss of their home and are approaching the Council for assistance. It is one in a series of leaflets about homelessness in Caerphilly. The leaflets in the series are:

- What should I do if I am homeless or might become homeless soon?
- Explaining Homelessness
- Temporary & Permanent Accommodation

If you have no settled accommodation or are in danger of losing your home you need to read these leaflets. All these leaflets are available from the Council and provide an outline of legal rights and responsibilities but they are not a complete guide to the law and are not likely to include all the information relevant to each individual. Because of this and because the law changes regularly, if you need more detailed advice you should seek advice that relates to your individual circumstances from an organisation listed in the leaflet ***Housing Options – Sources of help and advice***.

Temporary Accommodation

The Council uses different types of temporary accommodation, managed by the Emergency Housing Team.

- temporary accommodation owned and managed by the Council, including Ty Croeso hostel
- temporary accommodation owned and managed by one of the Council's partner agencies
- bed and breakfast accommodation

While you are staying in temporary accommodation, you are:

- responsible for paying any rent, service charge, council tax, water rates or any other contribution which is due. You will be told how much this is and how you can pay it.
- required to follow the rules and conditions in the licence agreement.
- asked to respect the rights of others who also live there and not cause them or anyone visiting the accommodation a nuisance.

You should stay in the accommodation until the Council informs you of the decision on your homeless application or lets you know that you have to move. You must let the Emergency Housing Team; Homelessness Team and Housing Benefit Section know if you leave your temporary accommodation, otherwise you may continue to be charged for it.

Housing Benefit may help you with paying the rent, you will be asked to complete a Housing Benefit application form, which will be returned to the Benefits Section on your behalf. **Housing Benefit may not cover all the charges so you will need to pay for these out of your own income.**

If you have not paid your rent, when you leave temporary accommodation, you will be responsible and charged for any arrears. This information will be held on your

accommodation records and may affect your ability to get accommodation from the council, housing association or a private landlord.

Permanent Accommodation

Council Housing Waiting List

If the Council accepts you as homeless, you will be registered on the Housing Waiting List and points will be awarded to your application.

Once you come to the top of the list for any of the areas you have chosen, you will be contacted by the local Area Housing office, who will arrange for you to view the property and give you information about any help that may be available to redecorate the property.

The leaflets listed below, produced by Caerphilly County Borough Council, provide more information about applying for council housing:

- *Applying for a council house – frequently asked questions*
- *Points scheme*

Each of the leaflets is available at our Housing Offices.

Rights and responsibilities

Caerphilly CBC offers all its tenants a secure tenancy and when you move in you will be given a copy of your tenancy agreement and a tenants' handbook that goes into detail about the rights and responsibilities of tenants. A tenancy agreement is a legal agreement between you (the tenant) and your landlord. The agreement sets out your rights and responsibilities while you live in your home. It also sets out your landlord's rights and responsibilities.

The leaflets listed below, produced by Caerphilly County Borough Council, and available at all Area and Neighbourhood Officers provide more information about the rights and responsibilities of council tenants in Caerphilly:

- *A Better Deal for Council Tenants – Your right to compensation for improvements*
- *Anti Social Behaviour – summary of policies and procedures*
- *Customer Care Charter for building maintenance work*
- *Tenants Charter*
- *Tenancy Agreement*

Moving into your new home

There are many expenses when you move home such as a removal costs, new furniture, carpets and curtains, paint and wallpaper, connection charges for gas, water, electricity and plumbing in the washing machine etc. A social fund budgeting loan may be able to help you with some of these expenses. You can check whether you are eligible for a budgeting loan at your local social security office. If you are eligible, you need to make an application on form SF500. The minimum amount of loan that can be awarded is £30, and the maximum amount is £1,000. The amount will depend on your circumstances.

Some charities may also be able to help you with removal expenses. You need to ask your local Citizens Advice Bureau for information.

You can save money on the running costs of your home. Some ideas are energy saving light bulbs, using a lower temperature cycle in the washing machine, insulating the loft (or asking your landlord to do this) and looking at various suppliers for gas, electricity and telephone. If you are claiming benefits, you can get help through the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES). If you become a Council tenant you should contact the Council on 01443 864645 to obtain advice and assistance on improving the energy efficiency of your home.

Housing Associations

You may also be referred or can apply directly to a Housing Association for housing. Housing associations are “not for profit” landlords, regulated by the Welsh Assembly Government that work with local authorities to meet the housing needs of the area by building new homes and letting their accommodation to people in need. Housing associations own and manage accommodation in the borough, many in areas where the Council doesn’t own any properties. The leaflet below produced by Caerphilly County Borough Council gives more information about the housing associations operating in the borough:

- *Housing Association – information*

There are three main housing associations in the Caerphilly County Borough area Charter, Linc-Cymru (formerly Glamorgan & Gwent) and United Welsh. They operate differently from the Council, and if you are referred to them, you will be told how they let their properties.

There are some differences between renting from the Council and a housing association. The two main differences are that:

- housing associations set their rents in a different way to the Council, but rents are less than market rents. However, housing association tenants on benefit or low income are still eligible to apply for housing benefit.
- housing association tenants have assured tenancies rather than local authority tenants who have secure tenancies. The main difference is that there is not the same right for tenants to buy their home from a housing association as there is for council tenants.

Housing associations also have tenants’ handbooks that set out the rights and responsibilities of tenants and useful information about your new home. You should receive a copy of the tenants’ handbook if you move into a housing association property. You can also apply directly to a housing association and it is worth doing this because it will widen the range of housing options available to you.