**Access to Temporary Accommodation through the Housing Options Service**

Where a household makes an application as homeless to the local authority and requests temporary accommodation whilst the outcome of their application is being determined, the Housing Options Service is required to determine whether a duty to provide the accommodation is owed to the household, and if so, to secure accommodation.

During the period whilst the outcome of the application is being determined, this accommodation is referred to as interim accommodation and the interim duty to accommodate is defined by section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 part 7.

**Section 188 interim duty to accommodate:**

Requires housing authorities to secure that accommodation is available for an applicant (and their household) if they have reason to believe that the applicant may:

1. be homeless
2. be eligible for assistance; and,
3. have a priority need

The duty cannot be postponed as it is triggered as soon as the requisite ‘reason to believe’ is identified, accommodation must therefore be provided on the day of presentation.

Under section 175, a person is **homeless** if they have no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere which is available for their occupation and which that person has a legal right to occupy.

A person who has accommodation is to be treated as homeless where it would not be reasonable for them to continue to occupy that accommodation.

Under section 177, it is not reasonable for a person to continue to occupy accommodation if it is probable that this will lead to domestic abuse or other violence against:

1. the applicant
2. a person who normally resides with the applicant as a member of the applicant’s family; or,
3. any other person who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant

‘Violence’ means violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out.

It is not a requirement to accept at face value what the applicant says, however where it is not accepted the local authority must investigate it. In cases where there are threats of violence inquiries could be made with the police or any other agency that might hold relevant information.

**Eligibility** refers to an applicant’s immigration status, an applicant must not be subject to immigration control in order to make a homelessness application and be offered interim accommodation.

Under section 189, the following have a **priority need**:

1. a pregnant woman or a person with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside
2. a person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside
3. a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness, learning disability or physical disability or other special reason
4. a person aged 16 or 17 who is not a relevant child or child in need
5. a person under 21 who is a former ‘relevant child’
6. a person who is vulnerable as a result of care, armed forces or prison background
7. a person who is vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence which are likely to be carried out
8. a person who is homeless as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster

**What will the person be offered as temporary accommodation?**

**B&B** – initially, the majority of clients will be placed in a B&B. It is quite likely that this will be out of the Salford area. Every effort is made to limit the length of stay in this type of accommodation and to move them to one of the alternatives

**Shared houses** – these are used for single people; they have their own bedroom and share bathroom and kitchen facilities. Some of these are outside Salford.

**Supported accommodation projects** – Salford has two projects, SASH and Abbott Lodge, for single people. Residents have their own room and share kitchen facilities. In Abbott Lodge clients have their own bathroom, in SASH facilities are shared.

**Dispersed units** – these are self-contained houses and flats, in Salford, used for both singles and families. There is no time limit on how long households might stay in this type of accommodation.

**How long is a stay in temporary accommodation?**

There is no time limit on how long a household can stay in temporary accommodation with the exception of B&B. Households with dependent children or a pregnant woman cannot stay in a B&B for longer than 6 weeks.

How long a family stays in temporary accommodation will depend on the type and size of property required. For example, a family requiring a three bedroom property suitable for a wheelchair user can expect to wait in excess of 12 months. A family needing a two bedroom property may only be waiting two to three months.

Households can be asked to leave temporary accommodation if they are not using it as their main place of residence, if they breach their tenancy/licence agreement or if they refuse a suitable offer of accommodation.

For further assistance or information, please contact Jane Anderson, Service Manager – Housing Options **tel:** 0161 793 2078 and **email:** jane.anderson@salford.gov.uk

**Flowchart for Placement into Temporary Accommodation**

Clients presents to Housing Options Service

Referred by triage Housing Options Advisor to duty assessment officer. Duty officer completes temporary accommodation assessment – reason to believe eligible, homeless and in priority need – and refers to the Temporary Accommodation Officer if criteria met

Temporary Accommodation Officer checks available placements taking into account household size/make up, safety of household, support needs, health issues etc

Placement made taking into account above factors and availability. Where only B&B accommodation available, client will be moved to more suitable placement as soon as available. Where a refuge space is not available but this is the client’s preferred option, move can be made from B&B into refuge

Move to settled accommodation