

## **Mendip Housing Options Team Service Standards**

These standards should be read in conjunction with Mendip District Council's [Corporate Service Standards](http://www.mendip.gov.uk/corporatestandards) - [www.mendip.gov.uk/corporatestandards](http://www.mendip.gov.uk/corporatestandards).

### 1. Introduction

The Housing Options Service provides free information, assistance and specialist advice to landlords, tenants and owner occupiers to help keep you in your home or by helping you to find alternative accommodation.

### 2. General

We will:

- Provide a range of up to date and relevant advice and information
- Provide a professional advice service from experienced and trained staff
- Be discreet and show respect when dealing with and responding to your case
- Give you details when requested on how to [make a complaint](#) / compliment about our services and respond in line with the corporate response times (10 calendar days)

### 3. Homefinder Somerset application

Once an application has been assessed and entered onto the Homefinder Somerset register, the applicant will receive a letter within 15 working days confirming their application details. This notification will include:

- The band in which the applicant has been placed (bronze, silver or gold or emergency),
- The reason for their banding,
- The size of property the applicant is eligible for,
- The application date,
- A reminder about informing us of a change in circumstances,
- The Homefinder Somerset review procedure,
- A personal reference number to allow bidding.

Applicants will also receive notification of their application details within 15 working days if they have submitted a 'Change of Circumstances' form. Applicants that are unhappy with their banding are required to submit (in writing) the reasons why they feel their banding is incorrect. A review decision will be undertaken within 28 calendar days and the applicant will be notified in writing of the decision.

### 4. Threatened with homelessness

If you are threatened with homelessness we will:

- Aim to visit you at your home / conduct a phone call within 5 days of your initial contact or at an agreed time period.
- Following a visit to your home / office interview / phone call, your Housing Options Officer will write to you within 7 working days to confirm the advice / information given to you along with the actions both you and the council have agreed to take to assist you to prevent your homelessness

- Inform you about your eligibility for “Mendip Help to Rent” within your written advice
- Explain to you about your right to make a homeless application (everybody has this right) if you are likely to become homeless within 28 days
- Work with you where possible to offer advice and assistance to prevent your homelessness
- Keep you informed about the progress of the actions we have agreed to carry out in order to assist in preventing you becoming homeless
- Work with other specialist and partner organisations where appropriate and refer you to them when necessary to assist in preventing your homelessness

## 5. Homelessness

If you are homeless we will:

- Explain to you about your rights to make a homeless application
- Assess all statutory homeless applications and notify you of our decision within 28 calendar days<sup>1</sup> while keeping you informed along the way
- Advise you how to ask us to review your homelessness application if you disagree with our decision
- Give you a decision on your homelessness review within 56 days or later if mutually agreed
- Arrange temporary accommodation (if eligible and Council have reason to believe you are in Priority Need) & work with you to assist you in seeking a longer term housing solution
- Maintain contact with each customer in Temporary Accommodation on a regular basis to discuss future housing options

## 6. Visiting our offices

If you visit our office you will be:

- Interviewed in a private room to discuss your case in privacy
- Interview you carefully and politely with your chosen advocacy worker / support worker or speak to them with your consent about your housing circumstances
- Advised of the staff members name, job title and contact details
- Able to seek advice in person from officers at our Cannards Grave Road offices without appointment during Housing Options Team drop in sessions Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) 8:30am to 10:15am and 1pm to 3:15pm
- Offered translation services if requested
- Offered hearing loop facilities if requested

## 7. Visits to your home

If we visit you at home we will:

- Contact you within 2 working days to make an appointment where we deem that a home visit is urgent
- Arrive at the agreed time and let you know in advance if we will be delayed by more than 15 minutes

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<sup>1</sup> in exceptional individual cases this time limit may be exceeded due to complexities with the homelessness investigation

- Advise you as soon as possible if we need to cancel an appointment. We will apologise and arrange another meeting wherever possible there and then
- Show you photo identification

## 8. Rough sleepers

- All other relevant service standards above (e.g. 5.Homelessness)
- To work proactively with partner agencies and the outreach team to find housing solutions for rough sleepers
- Work with partner agencies and local communities to ensure nobody has to sleep rough during severe weather periods
- Offer reconnection options to rough sleepers in line with the current reconnection policy
- Work with the Home office to identify rough sleepers that may not have access to public funds and work with them to find solutions in these cases.

## 9. Monitoring

To monitor these standards we will record and report on the length of time we take to:

- assess a Homefinder application – standard is 15 working days
- amend a Homefinder change of circumstances – standard is 15 working days
- assess all statutory homeless applications – submitting a decision to you within 28 calendar days\*
- conduct a review of a banding decision – standard is 28 days

Service standards will be reviewed annually in consultation with our customers and partners. We are always looking at ways to improve our service and are keen to hear your views to help shape our future service. Our [customer service survey](http://www.mendip.gov.uk/survey) can be completed at: [www.mendip.gov.uk/survey](http://www.mendip.gov.uk/survey).

This document is also available in other languages,  
large print and audio format upon request



Tento dokument je na vyžádání k dispozici také v jiných jazycích, ve velkém tištěném formátu a zvukovém formátu.



अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छापाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है



درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔



Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.



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