**Your home
Your move**

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**Frequently asked questions and/or myths about housing in Croydon**

People ask us many questions about housing in Croydon. Sometimes they also believe (or have been told) things about housing that are untrue. Below are the questions and myths we hear the most frequently, and our response. See the full list below – you can click on any that are relevant to you and the link will take you to an answer.

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About council housing

# Am I allowed to move to a borough of my choice?

Yes.

* Into private rented – as long as you complete a budget planner, confirming the rent is affordable, we can support you by paying any deposit and rent (that the landlord or agents may ask for) in advance. Further information on available support can be found – [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/benefits/discretionary-support/discretionary-support-fund)
* For social housing (council or housing association) you can use various options, such as Home Finder – more information can be found on [www.croydonchoice.org.uk](http://www.croydonchoice.org.uk)

# I have the right to a council property.

**No.**

We have **limited supply** of council accommodation, which is only for those residents who are most in need. We have set criteria that you must meet in order to be eligible. For full details, please see our [Allocation Policy](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/housing/strategies/part-7-accommodation-allocations-policy). There are currently over 5,000 individuals and families on our housing register.

We only get just over 20 properties a month, and have people who have been waiting for over fifteen years for a council home.



5,000 people could bid for these 5 properties a week, but only 5 people will be successful.

You would do better to **look for something in the private sector**. Over 600 people successfully found accommodation in the private sector, last year. We helped them by paying their deposit and rent in advance. Further information on available support can be found – [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/benefits/discretionary-support/discretionary-support-fund)

Other housing options can be found on [www.croydonchoice.org.uk](http://www.croydonchoice.org.uk)

# I can pick and choose which council house I get.

**No.**

Council properties that are available to **rent will be advertised via our Croydon Choice –** more information can be found on [www.croydonchoice.org.uk](http://www.croydonchoice.org.uk).

If you are accepted onto our Housing Register, you will be able to see the available properties, and **bid on those you are interested in**. However, the **successful bidder will be the person we identify as being in the most need**, based on their priority and position on our Housing Register. There are currently over 5,000 individuals and families already waiting on our Housing Register, and some have already been waiting for **over 10 years**.



5,000 people could bid for these 5 properties a week, but only 5 people will be successful.

If you are **homeless, you will not be offered social housing**. Our offer is likely to be a **private rented** property and **not necessarily in Croydon**. Given the current levels of demand this offer **could take 24 months** to be made, and you will only get **one offer**.

You would be better placed to **look for something in the private sector**. Over 600 people successfully found accommodation in the private sector last year, who were helped by us paying their deposit and rent in advance. Further information on support available can be found – HERE *(link to DHP/CDS pages).*

Other housing options can be found on [www.croydonchoice.org.uk](http://www.croydonchoice.org.uk)

# If I apply as homeless, I will get a council house.

**No.**

Given the current housing situation in Croydon, it is more likely that if you apply as homeless, you will be offered **accommodation in the private sector**, and this **may not be in Croydon**. Given the current level of demand, we might take **2 years** **to make this** **offer**, and you will only get **one offer**.

As you can see, you will have little control over where you might be offered your new home. Bear in mind that when accommodation is offered to you, there are practical things to consider, such as changing schools, doctors and additional journey time to work, etc. You would do better to **look for something in the private sector yourself**. Further information, to help you help yourself, can be found – [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/optadv/findhm/findahome)

Other housing options can be found on [www.croydonchoice.org.uk](http://www.croydonchoice.org.uk)

# If my parents die, I am entitled to remain in the house.

**Not necessarily.**

This is at the discretion of the council. The **majority of people are not eligible able to stay**. Depending on where you are, and if your current property is too big for your needs, you may be asked to move into something smaller. For more detail, please see our Allocations Policy - [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/housing/strategies/part-7-accommodation-allocations-policy)

# If you get a council house, you get it for life.

**No.**

Croydon now provides new tenants council accommodation under a “flexible tenancy”. This is a tenancy for **up to 5 years**, after which a review is made to see if you remain in need of social housing (i.e. a council property). The only exceptionsare for existing council tenants and the provision of sheltered accommodation.

If you are **homeless, you will not be offered social housing**. Our offer is more likely to be a **private rental** property and it will **not necessarily be in Croydon**. Given the current levels of demand this offer **could take up to 24 months** to be made, and you will only get **one offer**.

Please be advised that you would do better to look for something in the private sector, where you have more choice and can arrange a move more quickly. Further information on how you can help yourself can be found – [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/optadv/findhm/findahome)

# If you get pregnant, you’ll get a council house.

**No.**

To be eligible for a council property, you must meet the criteria laid down in our Allocation Policy. There is **no fast track** for people who get pregnant.

If you are pregnant and threatened with homelessness as a result, and if the council has a duty to help you with accommodation, it is highly likely to be a private sector home, quite possibly outside of Croydon.

# Immigrants get all the housing.

**No.**

Under the Housing Act, **you must be “eligible” for housing assistance** from a council. Immigrants are subject to Home Office legislation, and the Secretary of State will agree who has a right to remain in the country. If a person does not qualify to remain in the UK, they certainly will not be assessed as eligible for council housing. It would be unlawful for us to do so. Once they are granted status to be in the country, then they will have to go through the same process as everyone else, with no beneficial treatment.

# You can treat the property how you like - you won’t be evicted.

**No.**

Did you know that between April 2016 and March 2017, **we evicted 48 households** from their council homes?

You MUST sign a Tenancy Agreement before moving in to a council property. This contains all the terms and conditions you must observe. If you do not follow this, it will be considered a “**breach of your tenancy**”, and the **council will take legal action,** which could ultimately lead to eviction.

The same applies if you are in private rented accommodation, where you have signed a tenancy or licence agreement with your landlord. Furthermore, this situation may also apply if friends and family are no longer willing to house you due to your behaviour.

If you are evicted from any accommodation because of a **breach of tenancy**, you are likely to be **considered “intentionally homeless”** and **we have no housing duty to you,** once we have finished assessing your case.

# You don’t have to pay your rent, as Croydon won’t evict.

**No.**

If you do not pay your rent, the **council will take legal action** because of rent arrears, and you are likely to be considered **“intentionally homeless”.** We **have no housing duty to you** once we have finished assessing your case. You may also end up with county court judgements, which may affect your credit rating for loans, credit cards etc.

The same principle applies if you are in private rented accommodation. More information on not being able to pay your rent is available [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/counciltenants/paying-rent/paying-rent-0)

About ways to improve my chance of getting housing from the council

# If I get a medical assessment, GP’s letter – I will go up the housing list.

**Not necessarily.**

We follow our Allocations Policy, when assessing a customer’s priority. Where there are identified medical needs, the council refers these to an independent medical advisor with housing knowledge, who will make recommendations to the council about whether your medical condition warrants any additional priority. We only have three bands on our Housing Register. The **medical** **priority is only awarded where there is a significant link between your medical condition and your current housing**. Medical conditions, which will not be resolved by you moving house will not get any priority. You can access information on how medical conditions are consider in our Allocations Policy - [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/housing/strategies/part-7-accommodation-allocations-policy)

# My GP says I am entitled to …. OR My GP says I should have ….

If you tell us that you have a medical condition that is being made worse by your current housing situation, we will ask for suitable or additional medical information from your GP. The final decision on how this may affect your entitlement to housing is determined by legislation, and our Allocation Policy. You can access information on how medical conditions are considered in our Allocations Policy - [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/housing/strategies/part-7-accommodation-allocations-policy)

# I can’t be offered a high-rise flat as I have children. I can’t manage stairs with a buggy as well.

Our high-rise flats all have lifts. The high-rise flats do provide family-sized accommodation. We would **consider not offering you a flat with stairs, if there was a condition that meant you couldn’t physically manage stairs**, AND an independent medical advisor has agreed with this assessment. You can see our eligibility policy- HERE (link to Housing Allocation Policy)

# I need a bigger property - What size property am I entitled to?

This will depend on the number of people in your family who live with you.

* For private rented see – [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/benefits/lhageninfo)
* For social housing (council or housing association) see -[HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/housing/strategies/part-7-accommodation-allocations-policy)

# If I move to a private rented property, am I entitled to go onto the housing register?

The housing register is for people whose current housing is not suitable for their needs and who meet the criteria laid down in our Allocations Policy see [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/housing/strategies/part-7-accommodation-allocations-policy)

About available support

# If I move to private rented home in another borough, can I get help with the deposit and the rent in advance?

Yes.

As long as you complete a budget planner, confirming the rent is affordable, we can help you by paying any deposit and rent that the landlord or agents may ask for, in advance. Find more info - [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/benefits/discretionary-support/discretionary-housing-payment)

# What if I can no longer afford the rent in my current home?

We can help you by:

* Reviewing your budget – [HERE](https://universal-benefit-calculator.co.uk/croydon-better-off-self-service)
* Checking you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to - [HERE](https://universal-benefit-calculator.co.uk/croydon-better-off-self-service)
* Supporting you into employment to increase your income - [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/jobs-and-training-0)
* Reviewing your rent arrears and agree how to repay - [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/counciltenants/paying-rent/paying-rent-0)
* Helping you look for cheaper accommodation - [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/optadv/findhm/findahome)

# How soon in can deposit and rent in advance payments be made?

Once you have made an application for a deposit and/or rent in advance, your application will be looked at within one working day, and if all of the required information is provided, a decision can be made on the same day. Payments take between 3-5 working days to reach the landlord’s bank account.

# If I move into a private rented property is there a minimum or maximum tenancy term?

No.

These will be agreed between you and the landlord or their agent. Generally, a minimum term of 6 months is given, but after this period, the tenancy will continue until either you or the landlord give notice to end. The only exception is where you sign up for a fixed term tenancy – and then this details the length of the tenancy.

# If my landlord asks me to leave, do I have to start the process again?

This will depend on whether we can support you to remain in the property. If not, it will depend on your personal circumstances, and you should contact Housing for advice and guidance.

# Those who shout the loudest get what they want.

**No.**

**We follow our Allocations Policy** For people looking for social housing. For people who are homeless or at threat of being homeless, we follow the relevant housing legislation. We follow a **fair and transparent** system for accessing council accommodation. All properties are advertised on Croydon Choice, and allocated according to the published allocations’ policy which can be accessed - [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/housing/strategies/part-7-accommodation-allocations-policy)

# You are the council; you have to help me.

**No.**

We have set duties under the housing legislation, and **we will help you with housing advice**, but we **do not provide accommodation for everybody**. We have a comprehensive website, which provides advice, guidance, sign-posting and support to **allow people to find their own** suitable, safe and affordable homes.

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# My social worker will be able to help me put pressure on, or influence, Housing.

**No.**

The Housing services follow the relevant legislation and policies in the provision of housing and advice. **Social workers are not able to go against these policies**. Housing and Social Care staff work closely together on available options, to ensure you will be advised consistently on what you can do. You can see our Allocations Policy - [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/housing/strategies/part-7-accommodation-allocations-policy)

# If you are a single male, you do not get a good housing service from the council.

We will offer housing **advice to everyone** regardless of their gender, family make-up etc.

Our policies meet the equalities legislation requirements, and **we do not discriminate** between single males and other customers, who approach us for a service. Our policies and procedures are **built around the level of a person’s need**, as well as other groups listed in the Housing Act that we must support. If a resident, single male or otherwise, does not meet the housing criteria, they will be given advice and sign-posted to further support available.

The current housing legislation provides clear guidance as to which categories of applicants are in priority support as a homeless applicant. You can see which applicants and in priority support – [HERE](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/optadv/homeless)