Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2026

South Norfolk Council

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this document is to set out the Council's policy for accommodating homeless households in Temporary Accommodation (TA). This covers the following:

i. Interim placements under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 while the client's homelessness is investigated.
ii. Temporary Accommodation placements made under S190 of the Housing Act 1996 following a decision that an applicant became homeless intentionally.
iii. Temporary Accommodation placements for those accepted as homeless under Section 193 of the Housing Act and waiting for rehousing.

1.2 This policy uses the term TA as a general term where the wording applies to both interim or temporary accommodation, where there are different provisions relating to Interim Accommodation or Temporary Accommodation these terms will be used.

1.3. Other aims of the Council through this policy are to:

i. Ensure all TA is suitable for the individual household
ii. Provide accommodation that is safe and of good quality
iii. Meet anticipated demand through effective planning and procurement
iv. Minimise disruption to education, healthcare, employment and support networks
v. Regularly review placements to ensure ongoing suitability.

2. Legislation and Case Law:

2.1 This policy complies with the following:

i. The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
ii. The Localism Act 2011
iii. Equality Act 2010
iv. Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) orders 1996, 2003 and 2012
v. Supplementary Guidance on the Homelessness changes in the Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012
vi. Children Act 1989
vii. Children Act 2004
viii. Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
ix. UK General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2018
x. R (on the application of Carstens) v Basildon DC [2007]
xi. Kensington and Chelsea LBC, ex p Kujtim [1999]
xii. Nzolameso v City of Westminster (2015)

3. Key principles

3.1 In accordance with legislation and guidance, the council seeks to accommodate homeless households within the district as far as reasonably practicable and considers the suitability of any TA offered. The preference is for households to be placed in TA owned by the Council. However, due to limited availability of TA, it is sometimes necessary to place people outside of the district, either in owned or spot-purchase accommodation, as it would not be reasonably practicable to accommodate them in the area.

3.2 The council will robustly assess the suitability of any offer of TA. If there is a particular reason why a household should not be housed in a certain area, this will be considered.

3.3 Wherever possible, the Council will avoid placing families with dependent children, care leavers under the age of 25, and homeless children aged 16 and 17 in bed and breakfast accommodation. Where no other suitable accommodation exists and such placements are necessary, the Council will move these households to self-contained accommodation as soon as possible and always within six weeks.

3.4 For safeguarding purposes, the Council will divulge any potential risk or safeguarding issues to the relevant provider prior to placement. For spot purchase provision, the provider is at liberty to refuse any placement.

3.5 Statutory guidance and relevant case-law make clear that affordability is a key component of the suitability of accommodation and that unaffordable accommodation may not be regarded as suitable. Cost of accommodation is therefore a relevant consideration when deciding whether it is reasonably practicable to provide TA in the district.

3.6 The Council will do all that is reasonably possible to provide TA. Where a referral to a provider is refused by the provider, the council will try other providers and contact other local authorities in the county. There may be occasions when the risk presented by the client means that no providers will accept a referral. In this situation, the council will continue to seek TA as required under legislation.

3.7 Homeless applicants who are accommodated under the council's interim duty to accommodate may be placed in short-term self-contained accommodation such as annexes, managed cluster units, hotel or bed and breakfast rooms while enquires are carried out. This accommodation may be outside of the district. If the Council decides it has a duty to house the household, they may be moved to longer-term accommodation as soon as a suitable property becomes available.

3.8 The Council provides all households in TA with access to support and advice. This includes assistance with settling into temporary accommodation, accessing appropriate services, sustaining their TA accommodation, including payment of accommodation charges, and preparing for a successful move into long-term, sustainable housing.

4. Assessments, Offers and Refusals

4.1 Where an offer of TA is required, households will be assessed on the following to identify a suitable TA placement:

i. Household composition.
ii. Medical needs.
iii. Physical accessibility requirements.
iv. Mental health considerations.
v. Pregnancy and maternity.
vi. Social considerations including risk of violence, domestic abuse. Harassment or safeguarding concerns
vii. Educational needs of children.
viii. Financial circumstances
ix. Employment responsibilities.
x. Support and care requirements.
xi. Cultural or religious requirements where relevant.

4.2 One offer of TA will be made to applicants, and they will be advised to accept this. The council has no obligation to allow applicants to view any Interim Accommodation placement. A request to view any accommodation placement other than interim accommodation will be considered and arrangements made where reasonably practical.

4.3 If a household is placed in TA and more suitable accommodation subsequently becomes available, the household may be moved with little notice.

4.4 If an applicant refuses an offer, they must provide reasons. The council will consider any reasons given, making any further enquiries as necessary. If it is concluded that the offer is indeed unsuitable, the offer will be withdrawn and another suitable offer made.

4.5 If an offer of TA is rejected and the council considers the accommodation suitable, no further accommodation will be offered. The only exception to this is where the applicant rejects the accommodation but a subsequent change in circumstances renders the accommodation offered unsuitable. In that case, an alternative offer will be made. In all other circumstances, following the refusal of an offer the applicant will be required to make their own accommodation arrangements. The applicant has a right of review of the suitability of any Temporary Accommodation offered under S193, however the suitability of Interim Accommodation can only be challenged by way of a Judicial Review.

5. Type of Temporary Accommodation and Location

5.1 The preference is for households to be placed in Council owned TA within the district. However, the following can also be offered based on assessment of household needs and availability:

i. TA owned by South Norfolk Council in the Norwich City area
ii. TA owned by Broadland District Council in the Broadland area or the Norwich City area as part of the Broadland and South Norfolk One Team Housing Service approach.

5.2 All Council owned TA for families is self-contained. The Council also owns properties that are Homes of Multiple Occupation, these will not be offered to households with children.

5.3 Spot purchase TA placements will be made where there is no suitable Council owned TA available.

5.4 Spot purchase placements will be made within the district, where possible. Placements outside of the district will sometimes be necessary but will only be used where suitable and when accommodation within the district is unavailable.

5.5 If a household is placed outside of the district (owned or spot-purchase), the local authority in which they are placed will be notified within 5 working days via a Section 208 notification using the agreed Norfolk s208 notification template.

5.6 If vulnerable households are placed outside the district, the Council will work with the receiving Councils and other partners to identify and access appropriate support and manage any risk to the household or others.

5.7 The Council will comply with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act notifying (with appropriate consents) health and education settings of a child being placed in TA.

5.8 The Council will participate in and comply with locally agreed protocols in relation to out of district placements.

5.9 The Council will endeavour not to make placements of households, whom they have already informed they are minded finding intentionally homeless, in TA out of the local housing authority area, unless the household is already accommodated out of area, when the "minded to" decision is made.

5.10 Availability of TA in the district is limited. The following conditions will be used to prioritise which households are placed in TA within the district, dependent on suitable accommodation being vacant:

i. Applicants with a severe and enduring physical or mental health condition or disability that requires specialist treatment only available in the district.
ii. Applicants who are in receipt of a significant package of care that could not be easily transferred to another area.
iii. Applicants with a severe and enduring physical or mental health condition or disability that requires intensive and/or specialist treatment or aftercare where a transfer of care would create serious risk to their safety or the sustainability of their care.
iv. Households in the district with children on the child protection register, or families with high social needs and are linked in with local social or health services and it is confirmed that being accommodated temporarily in another area would significantly affect their welfare.
v. Households containing a child with special educational needs who is receiving education or educational support in the district, and where being accommodated temporarily in another area would significantly affect their welfare.
vi. Households where at least one member can demonstrate that they have a longstanding arrangement to provide care and support to another person in the district.
vii. Households that contain a child in full time education who is currently undertaking examination courses in the district.
viii. Applicants at risk of domestic abuse or violence will be accommodated in a refuge or, if this is not practicable, other safe accommodation outside of South Norfolk if the risk is within the district. They will be accommodated in an area where the risk is not present, with consideration given to all other aspects of this policy.

ix. Applicants offered TA who are at risk of domestic abuse or violence will only be accommodated in an area where the risk is not present.
x. Any other special circumstances which are relevant.

6. Suitability and standards of accommodation

6.1 The following factors will be considered when assessing the suitability of a placement:

i. Accommodation will be adequately sized and be fit to inhabit. The Council will ensure accommodation:
   a) Is free from Category 1 hazards.
   b) Meets relevant fire, gas and electrical safety requirements.
   c) Is in a good state of repair.
   d) Can safely accommodate any identified vulnerabilities. Including any health or mobility issues. If possible, accommodation will be in an area where support networks can be accessed.
ii. Health and mobility issues will be taken into consideration when they will have an impact on the suitability of a temporary accommodation placement.
iii. The household must have a reasonable level of earned income, housing benefit or income based Universal Credit (whether claimed or not) available to spend on reasonable living costs after accommodation costs have been met.

6.2 For households with infants under two years old, accommodation will provide sufficient space for a cot and appropriate sleeping arrangements as per Safer Sleeping guidelines.

7. Out of hours placements

7.1 If a duty to accommodate is accepted outside of normal office hours, the applicant will be placed in whatever accommodation is available at that time by our contracted Out of Hours service.

7.2 The customer will be contacted by the Housing team during the next working day to assess their application and where appropriate, the temporary accommodation team will seek to move the customer to more suitable accommodation.

8. Ending Temporary Accommodation

8.1 The Council's duty to provide TA will end where permitted by homelessness legislation, including where suitable accommodation has been accepted or refused, the applicant is no longer homeless or eligible for assistance, a homelessness duty has been discharged, responsibility transfers to another local authority, or no further accommodation duty is owed.

8.2 If, having been provided with accommodation, the applicant shows by their conduct a persistent and unequivocal refusal to observe the reasonable requirements of the council in relation to the occupation of the accommodation, the council will consider that the applicant has rejected the accommodation offer and so the duty to accommodate them will be ended.

8.3 If it is found that a duty is not owed to an applicant, they will be asked to leave the TA, usually within 7 days after the homelessness decision letter has been received.

8.4 Where the circumstances outlined above apply, the Council will consider any ongoing support needs of the applicant and make referrals to relevant services where appropriate, such as the Rough Sleeper Team, Children's Services, and Adult Social Services. The Council will also work in partnership with other organisations, where needed, to help resolve housing issues and support sustainable housing outcomes.

8.5 Where an applicant requests a statutory review of a homeless decision, they will only be accommodated during the review period at the council's discretion. Each case will be considered on an individual basis, considering the merits of the case, any new information that may affect the original decision, and the circumstances of the applicant and possible effect of loss of accommodation. The exception to this is if an applicant requests a review of the suitability of a final part 6 offer made under the S189B relief duty and we have reason to believe they have a priority need, in this instance we will continue to be under a duty to secure Interim Accommodation until the review decision has been notified to the applicant.

9. Assessing demand for Temporary Accommodation

9.1 The Council will assess the need for TA through quarterly performance monitoring of:

i. Owned TA occupation levels
ii. Utilisation of spot purchase TA
iii. Homelessness application data
iv. Number of single person/couples/family households in TA
v. Households with children in B&B accommodation
vi. Delivery of affordable housing
vii. Policy driven or operational changes

10. Procurement of Temporary Accommodation

10.1 The Council will ensure there is a suitable supply of TA through:

i. Council owned TA units and properties
ii. Use of Spot Purchase accommodation.

10.2 The Council is currently developing a TA commissioning framework which will be used for all spot purchased placements. In the meantime, existing arrangements will apply to ensure all placements meet mandated condition and standard requirements and to support value for money and procurement requirements.

11. Monitoring

11.1 The impacts of this policy will be monitored and will be reviewed if there are significant changes required in the light of best practice and any changes to legislation and Government guidance.