

Statement for Investigating Intentional Homelessness in the City and County of Swansea

When someone who is eligible for help under the homelessness provisions of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, is threatened with homelessness, the Council is required to take all reasonable steps to keep that household together in their home, if it is suitable. If this isn't possible, then there is a legal duty to take all reasonable steps to help them find somewhere to else to live. This duty remains for a maximum of 56 days.

If someone is still homeless after these duties end, the Council will consider if any further housing duties are owed. This will take into account whether the household falls within a definition of a 'Priority Need' category as defined by section 70 of [the Act](#).

The Council will also take into account the reasons why someone has become homeless. We may make a decision that someone is intentionally homeless if the homelessness is as a result of them deliberately doing (or not doing) something, and there is no other good reason for being homeless. For example rent arrears that could have been paid by the household.

Intentional homeless decisions are extremely rare. On average, less than 1% of the homeless households that present to Swansea are found to be homeless intentionally. This figure is monitored annually as part of a review of homelessness in Swansea. An intentional decision is not made lightly, and only where there is no other alternative to that decision being made.

The Housing Act (Wales) 2014 has however introduced plans to remove the power to investigate intentionality in the future for some priority need categories. The Act also requires Councils to publicise their statement regarding intentional homelessness investigations.

Statement about the retention of the power to investigate intentionality

The Council intends to continue investigating intentionality for all homeless households who fall within one of the Priority Need categories listed within the Act and will continue to do this until this power is removed by Welsh Government, or the Council decides to revisit which groups will be included in these investigations. The main reason for taking this approach is to ensure that for the very small numbers of households that will be found to be intentionally homeless, the possibility of being intentionally homeless acts to prevent potential irresponsible and deliberate behaviours which may result in homelessness.

When a household is intentionally homeless, the Council is required to provide temporary accommodation for a 'reasonable period'. It is for the Council to decide what is reasonable in the circumstances, but it has to be for a minimum of 56 days from the point that household becomes homeless. It is expected that this would be a reasonable amount of time for that household to find an alternative home.

The Council understands that in deciding that someone is intentionally homeless, this potentially creates difficulties for them finding somewhere to live on a temporary and permanent basis. The Council therefore only intends to make an intentional decision after all reasonable steps to prevent and relieve the homeless have been completed, and there is no other good reason for the homelessness.

If you wish to find out more about the Housing Act (Wales) 2014, the power to investigate intentionality, or the services to help prevent and resolve homelessness in Swansea, please contact Housing Options on 01792 533100.