

Homelessness Task and Finish Group – Responses

<u>Date Received</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Comments</u>
7 October 2022	C	<p>I would like to tell you about mine and my three children’s on going experience of being homeless</p> <p>Myself and my three children have been homeless for a time period of over 9 months and unfortunately have all had to share just one room during that time. I was given notice after 8 years of private renting our family home last November being asked to leave in the January.</p> <p>I had my first meeting with my Exeter City housing officer shortly after who didn’t really tell me my options just speaking about the fact that I needed to find another private rental, which of course I had already been doing since being given the notice. She then told me to have a nice Christmas and she would speak to me in the new year.</p> <p>During January I tried to contact her several times as was having no success finding another property to rent due to them all being above my price range and not meeting the criteria. As well as this I had been calling and leaving messages with housing department at Exeter council. (No one got back to me)</p> <p>My landlord had threatened to take me to court and i didn’t know my options only what I had read through google.</p> <p>Previously suffering from domestic abuse I also had an ongoing gruelling court case with my ex-husband which was due for a two day fact finding hearing a week after I was asked to vacate the property and couldn’t face another court case and that I may have to pay for all of the court fees with not having any money. Also the risk bailiffs coming to my door gave myself and children who were already scared and anxious made us feel even distressed.</p> <p>After still not being able to make contact with Exeter city council we vacated the property and moved into my parents two bedroom park home for over 50s at Exonia park in Exeter.</p> <p>My self and my 3 children had to sleep on air beds on my parents lounge for four months. Causing us to have severe back, neck and hip pain and very little sleep . This affected my children at school and my youngest daughter would fall asleep during class all the while still enduring our domestic abuse court case.</p> <p>I sought medical advice from my doctor and continued to try and make contact with my housing officer who simply in my opinion didn’t care.</p> <p>Although being aware of my situation, my housing officer did not once showed any consideration or empathy towards my case and had not attempted to ascertain updates about my court case and/or how it affected my requirements for housing, especially given the fact that i have explained countless times about how our anxiety is easily triggered due to our past situation.</p>

She forced us to relocate to Glencoe Sheltered Housing on 8th June even though she was aware of my concerns . She informed me that me and my children would have to share accommodation with other residents, including the kitchen and the bathroom. I had made her aware of my domestic abuse case which was proven to be true in court, I explained how we already felt uneasy and scared so temporary accommodation would not be suitable for us. I told her that two of my children had just been interviewed by a Cafcass officer to prepare for a report the week before and how they were asked questions about their father which caused them to receive distressing flashbacks of what they have experienced in the past.

She left me no longer than 45 minutes to make the decision and if i objected to this offer, she would take my Band B status away from me.

We had no choice and moved into Glencoe.

We all share one room and are lucky to have our own bathroom attached.

Up until two weeks ago there was one man at the property who's behaviour had certain elements that gave me flashbacks of the domestic abuse that was committed against me and my children . He lived in the room above and quite often shouted outside our door and his window. He also used to drug deal out side our door and bang on our bedroom window late at night as would forget his keys leaving me and my children petrified.

The safeguarding officer at my daughter's school has sent emails previously about the issue and and her concerns but was been ignored.

I now have a new housing officer who is alot more understanding.

I was ecstatic to be told 6 weeks ago that I had been shortlisted for a property that I had bid for. I was made aware that I was the bottom end of a chain and it may be some time before the property is available. But I have had very little communication about when are new home will be ready even after 6 weeks.

I have requested that my children and I can move into temporary accommodation slightly bigger even if it were just to have one room so my children can have some privacy until our new house is ready to be told I can't and that some families have had to wait upto two years in a room like ours. I've been made to feel that becoming homeless had been my own fault and that I should be grateful for what I have already been given as there is a huge housing crisis in Exeter.

I feel the housing department for Exeter city council all read from same script when actually they should try living with their own children how I am living with mine, they then might have a tiny bit of understanding for what we are going through:

All I am told is that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. It's very frustrating how I am ignored so much. I've always paid my rent on time at my previous home and have always

		<p>lived in Exeter, I feel very let down and depressed due to my treatment from Exeter City Council. I've received very little support and experienced the worst year of my life.</p> <p>All I would like now is to have a moving in date for our new property even if it's not going to be for a couple of months just a date would give my something to work towards.</p> <p>I feel that is what is deserved for everything me and my children have been through.</p>