# Lambeth families face homelessness challenges in temporary housing 140 miles away



A family from Lambeth has been navigating the challenges of temporary housing for over five years, currently residing 140 miles away in Herefordshire. This situation is reflective of a broader trend, as data from a Freedom of Information (FOI) request indicates that, as of December 31 last year, there were 256 homeless households from the South London borough living in temporary accommodation outside London.

The 256 households represent a significant increase, with the number having surged nine-fold over a four-year period, jumping from just 29 in 2020. Another family from Lambeth has faced similar circumstances, having stayed in temporary housing in Herefordshire for more than four years by the end of 2024, according to the same FOI request submitted by the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS).

The geographical distance between the families and their home borough adds to the complexity of their situation. The journey from Lambeth Town Hall in Brixton to Herefordshire Council in Hereford typically requires a three-and-a-half-hour drive, or about three hours and 45 minutes by train, involving multiple changes along the way.

In addition to Herefordshire, families from Lambeth have also been placed in temporary accommodation in Walsall, which lies 127 miles away, Birmingham at 121 miles away, and Tendring in Essex, which is 86 miles distant. The evidence points to an alarming trend in the placement of families further away from their communities, driven largely by a shortage of affordable housing in the capital and the South East, which has been compounded by an increase in homelessness.

Lambeth Council is presently supporting around 4,700 homeless households with temporary housing, a figure that represents a 50% increase over the last two years. The annual expenditure for the council on temporary accommodation for families has reached a staggering £100 million.

A spokesperson for Lambeth Council acknowledged the difficulties, stating, "Lambeth is one of the country's biggest social housing landlords, with more than 33,000 council homes, but we are on the front line of a national housing crisis." The spokesperson continued to emphasise the commitment of the council to provide suitable accommodation, adding, “But the acute shortage of affordable accommodation – in Lambeth, London and the South East – and the rising number of people needing a home means it is not always possible to find suitable, permanent accommodation within our borough. This means we sometimes have to house people in temporary accommodation, outside Lambeth, until somewhere permanent becomes available."

The challenges faced by Lambeth families reflect a broader issue of homelessness within urban areas, as one recent report also highlighted a family from Newham who was relocated to Middlesbrough, approximately 250 miles away, where they spent eight years in temporary accommodation. This sheds light on the ongoing struggle surrounding housing security and the limited options available to families in need of stable homes.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://londonnewsonline.co.uk/news/lambeth-concedes-it-must-now-send-temporary-homes-families-further-afield/> - This article supports the claim that Lambeth Council is providing temporary accommodation to a large number of homeless families and has seen a significant increase over the past years.
* <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/temporary-housing-waiting-lists-lambeth-council-b1220289.html> - This source confirms that Lambeth Council is housing around 4,700 homeless households in temporary accommodation, reflecting a substantial increase in demand.
* <https://love.lambeth.gov.uk/providing-temporary-accommodation-for-vulnerable-residents-creates-multi-million-pound-overspend/> - The article highlights the financial challenges faced by Lambeth Council in providing temporary accommodation due to rising costs and demand, which contributes to its financial difficulties.
* <https://swlondoner.shorthandstories.com/lambeths-empty-homes/index.html> - This piece discusses the broader housing challenges in Lambeth, including the presence of empty council homes and the use of temporary accommodation, which is often unsuitable and expensive.
* <https://haveyoursay.lambeth.gov.uk/uploads/f43a1bbd-d83a-47db-99cb-525df665d771/project_file/file/34909d35-f3ac-4d2a-9199-63f8e3705027/Full_Draft_Lambeth_Homelessness_Strategypdf_2024.pdf> - This document outlines Lambeth's strategy to address homelessness, including the challenges of securing permanent housing due to high demand and limited supply.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - Although specific articles are not listed, this source often reports on such social issues and may provide additional context or reports similar to the ones described.
* <https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/regional-news/family-forced-live-140-miles-10106499> - Please view link - unable to able to access data