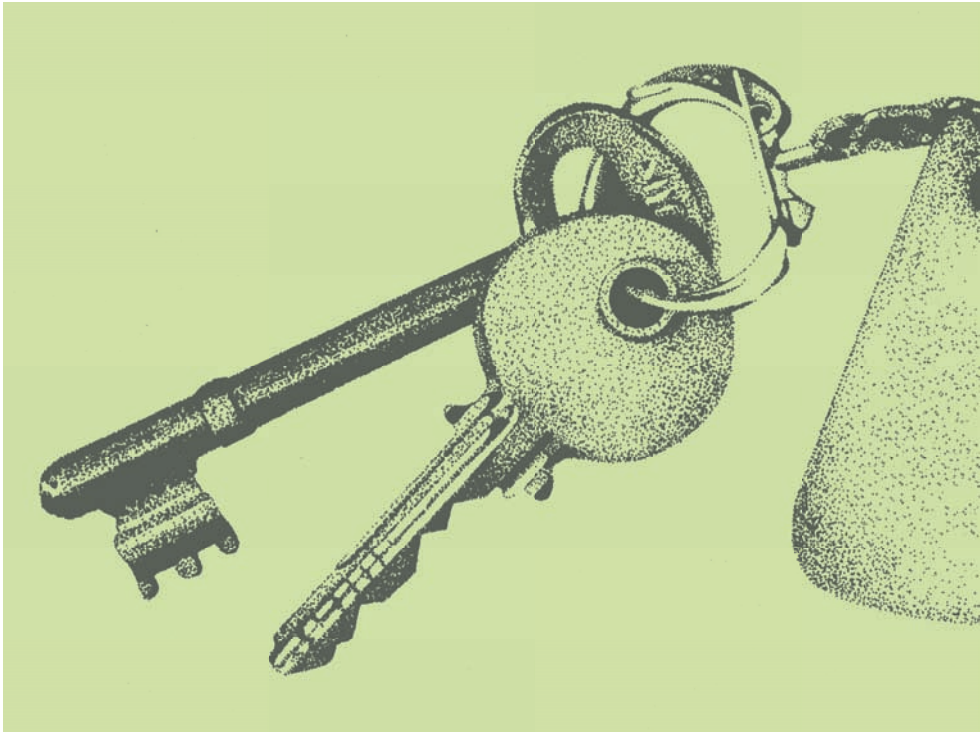


THE HOUSING SELECTION SCHEME



Applying for Social Housing in Northern Ireland

Introduction

The Selection Scheme was approved by the Department of Social Development and has been effective from 1st November 2000. It applies to accommodation owned by the participating landlords except where it is accommodation which is let on a temporary basis. A list of the participating landlords is provided with this booklet.

This booklet summarises the rules used to assess the needs of applicants and to allocate such accommodation. A full copy of the rules may be obtained by contacting any Housing Executive or housing association office.

Aims of the Scheme

The scheme has been devised to be fair and open and to give applicants freedom of choice in where they wish to live. Anyone applying under this scheme will be:-

- visited and assessed
- registered on a Common Waiting List
- allocated property according to the rules of the scheme

Applying for Accommodation

If you are a Housing Executive tenant requesting a transfer or an applicant currently living in Northern Ireland applying for accommodation for the first time please phone [03448 920900](tel:03448920900). Your basic details will be recorded and a suitable appointment will be arranged for a housing officer to contact you to carry out a housing needs assessment.

If you are unable to apply by telephone please complete a Housing/Transfer Application Form which is available in all district offices or housing association offices, it can also be downloaded from the NIHE website www.nihe.gov.uk. The form includes notes explaining the process. Please follow them carefully, and do not hesitate to contact the Housing Executive or a housing association office if you have any enquiries.



Housing Association Tenants

If you are a housing association tenant requesting a transfer a telephone service may not be available to you. Please contact your own landlord to enquire if you can apply by phone or whether you need to complete a Housing/Transfer application form.

Is Proof of Identity Required?

If you are not currently a Housing Executive or housing association tenant, you will be asked during the housing needs assessment for proof of identity if you have not provided it already.

This may consist of the following primary documents which should be current and valid and contain your photograph:

- Passport
- UK Driving Licence
- Translink Senior Smartpass
- National Identity Card
- Electoral Identity Card

If none of above is available, two primary documents may be used, they include:

- Benefit Payment Book(s)
- Birth Certificate
- Credit Cards
- Utility Bill(s) (previous quarter)
- Medical Cards
- Recent Bank Statements
- Wage Slip
- Marriage/Civil Partnership Certificate etc.

NB. If you are successful with your housing application you will have to supply identification to your landlord when you are signing up for your new tenancy.

Homeless Persons

If you consider yourself to be homeless you should contact the Housing Executive directly. To help us decide what we can do for you, we will first need to establish your eligibility for housing/homelessness assistance in Northern Ireland.

The Housing Executive will also provide advice and assistance and, in certain circumstances, temporary accommodation if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness (subject to meeting the eligibility criteria or whilst investigations are being carried out into same).

Transfers

If you are already a tenant of the Housing Executive or a housing association and you wish to move, you can apply for a transfer.

A request for a transfer will not normally be considered where:

1. The existing tenancy is less than two years old;
2. There are arrears of four weeks or more;
3. The tenant's existing property is not in a good state of repair or the tenant owes recoverable charges for repairs;
4. The tenant is guilty of any other serious breach of the tenancy conditions; or
5. The tenant or a member of his/her household is guilty of unacceptable behaviour.

Exchanges

You may wish to 'exchange' homes with someone who has another secure tenancy.

If so, you should request permission in writing from your landlord, who will consider each case on its merits and will not unreasonably withhold approval.



Areas of Choice

When you apply for housing or request a transfer, you should indicate one, or preferably, two locations where you are prepared to live. There may be a number of landlords with accommodation in your areas of choice and you can also choose which of these you wish to be considered by.

You can also extend your areas of choice by opting for a wider General Housing Area (GHA) which would include more estates and possibly a greater choice of landlords.

You can obtain more information by contacting the Housing Executive or your existing landlord.

Applying from Outside Northern Ireland

Your eligibility for housing in Northern Ireland and your housing needs will be assessed in the same way as any other applicant under the rules of the Housing Selection Scheme. However as the Housing Executive is unable to carry out a visit you will be asked to complete a combined application and self assessment form.

Your housing needs will be assessed by the Housing Executive office responsible for the area in which you want to live, and if you are eligible you will be placed on the Waiting List for your areas and landlords of choice.

You can obtain the Housing/Transfer Application and Self Assessment Form by contacting the Housing Executive district office in the area you would like to live in or download the form from the Housing Executive website under "Apply for a Home".

How the Scheme Works

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply you must:-

- Comply with the application requirements and
- be a Full Duty Applicant (FDA) under homelessness legislation, (see Page 16 (NI)) or
- meet both the age and the connection with Northern Ireland requirements (see below).

Generally you must have attained the age of 18 years at the date of application. In certain specific circumstances you may be eligible at 16 years of age. You must also have a substantial connection with Northern Ireland. If you are in any doubt as to whether you are eligible to be considered for housing in Northern Ireland, please contact any of the participating landlords.

The Housing Executive will then investigate your eligibility for housing assistance. This will involve determining if:-

- a) You are a person from abroad who is not entitled to housing assistance: or
- b) You or a member of your household has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour.

A visit may also be carried out to assess housing need. Providing you are not deemed to be ineligible for housing assistance, you will be registered on the waiting list as quickly as possible.

NB The Housing Executive will continue to review your eligibility to remain on the waiting list once you have been placed on it.



Assessment

When you apply you will be assessed and awarded points according to your housing need. The level of points awarded will determine your position on the waiting list. You may qualify for the award of points under four categories- these are:-

1. Intimidation

This category is intended to cater for applicants who are victims of sectarian, terrorist or racial attack, **or** because of an attack motivated by hostility because of an individual's disability or sexual orientation, **or** as a result of an attack by a person who falls within the scope of the Housing Executive's statutory powers to address neighbourhood nuisance, or other similar forms of Anti Social Behaviour. It is intended to facilitate immediate rehousing.

2. Insecurity of Tenure

This refers to situations where applicants are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The level of points applicable may vary depending on the duty owed under legislation.

3. Housing Conditions

Points awarded under this category reflect adverse housing circumstances both in terms of physical conditions and the degree of sharing/overcrowding being experienced.

4. Health/Social Well-being Assessment

A comprehensive range of health and social well-being circumstances are acknowledged under this category. These include an applicant's ability to function within their existing home as well as any social, support and care needs they may have.

Points awarded under any of these categories will be added together to determine your total points level and your subsequent position on the waiting list. You will be informed of your points total in writing. The points schedule is in Appendix 1.

Complex Needs

Some applicants may have special circumstances which mean they require intensive care and support.

This need may be met in a specialist housing scheme, where additional support or care services are provided or in general housing where a tailored support and care package has been arranged.

Where a specialist scheme is considered appropriate, applicants will be placed on a separate, non-pointed waiting list.

Where support and care can be provided within general housing, applicants may be awarded additional points under the Health and Social Well-Being category.

Allocations

As a general rule, each dwelling will be offered to the applicant with the highest points.

Where points are equal, the date on which the application is received will decide the order in which applicants are offered accommodation.

Within your areas of choice there may be specific blocks of flats that have been designated under the rules of the Selection Scheme by a participating landlord not to be allocated to a person under the age of 35 years of age, (the age criteria also applies to members of the household) unless there are exceptional personal circumstances prevailing. Further information can be obtained by contacting your local district office or housing association in relation to flats which have met the appropriate criteria and have been designated accordingly.



Landlords may disqualify certain applicants from being housed. This can apply, for example, in cases where the applicant has:-

- rent arrears
- abandoned a previous tenancy
- illegally occupied a dwelling
- been involved in serious Anti-Social Behaviour

You will be entitled to a maximum of three reasonable offers. If you refuse three reasonable offers you may not receive any further offers for a period of one year. Alternatively in some circumstances you may have your points reduced but still be considered for accommodation.

You are responsible for the accuracy of all information given on your application form and in the course of your assessment visit. You must also inform the landlord dealing with your application of every change of circumstances which may affect your application.

Where accommodation has been allocated on the basis of false or incorrect information your tenancy may be terminated.

You will be asked in writing each year whether you still need accommodation. Failure to reply may result in your removal from the waiting list.

If you deliberately worsen your circumstances in order to gain a higher ranking on the waiting list you may have the advantage of any additional points entitlement withheld for a period of two years.

Tenancy Agreement

There are two kinds of tenancy

- Introductory
- Secure

Non Social Housing tenants will start as introductory tenants. This means they will not have all the rights of a secure tenant, and could be evicted more quickly if they break the tenancy agreement.

An Introductory Tenancy will last for 12 months and providing there have been no problems at the end of the Introductory Tenancy they automatically become a secure tenant.

Advice and Information

If you wish to seek advice on, or assistance with the completion of your application form, or if you need any information on the types of accommodation or landlords in your areas of choice or indeed any other matter relating to your housing application, you should contact any of the participating landlords listed on page 13.



Points Schedule

	Points
Section 1 Intimidation	200
Section 2 Insecurity of Tenure	
Homeless/Threatened with Homelessness-Full Duty Applicant (FDA)	70
Other Homeless	50
Interim Accommodation	20
Section 3 Housing Conditions	
Sharing	
1) An Applicant with dependent children	
Sharing Kitchen	10
Sharing Living Room	10
Sharing Toilet	10
Sharing Bath/Shower	10
2) An Applicant aged 18 years and over without dependent children	
Sharing Kitchen	5
Sharing Living Room	5
Sharing Toilet	5
Sharing Bath/Shower	5
3) An Applicant aged 16 -18 years without dependent children	
Sharing Kitchen	5
Sharing Living Room	5
Sharing Toilet	5
Sharing Bath/Shower	5

Overcrowding

Each bedroom short of criteria **10**

Lack of Amenities and Disrepair

- 1) The Applicant's current accommodation is not free from serious disrepair. **10**
- 2) The Applicant's current accommodation is not free from dampness which is prejudicial to the health of the occupants. **10**
- 3) The Applicant's current accommodation does not have adequate provision for lighting, heating and ventilation. **10**
- 4) The Applicant's current accommodation does not have an adequate supply of wholesome water. **10**
- 5) The Applicant's current accommodation does not have satisfactory facilities for the preparation and cooking of food, including a sink with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water. **10**
- 6) The Applicant's current accommodation does not have a suitably located water closet (w.c.) for the exclusive use of the occupants. **10**
- 7) The Applicant's current accommodation does not have, for the exclusive use of the occupants a suitably located fixed bath or shower, each of which is provided with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water. **10**



8) The Applicant's current accommodation does not have an electricity supply. **10**

Time in Housing Need

(Only awarded to Applicants with points on the Waiting List. 2 points per year (for a maximum of five years) after two years on the Waiting List) **Max 10**

Section 4 Health and Social Well Being

Functional Matrix **Max 32**

Unsuitable Accommodation **10**

Support/Care Needs Matrix
(only applicable to those applying for Sheltered/Supported Housing)

- Home Management **Max 16**
- Self Care **Max 14**

Each Primary Social Needs Factor
(capped at 2 factors i.e. 2x 20 points) **20**

Each Other Social Needs Factor
(capped at 4 factors i.e. 4x10 points) **10**

Complex Needs
(General Needs Housing) **20**

Underoccupation
(Transfer Applications only)
10 points per room in excess **Max 30**

Notes:

1. Points will be awarded on a cumulative basis unless otherwise stated

List of Participating Landlords

Abbeyfield NI Development Society Ltd 21 Glassillan Grove Greenisland BT38 8TE	02890365081
Alpha Housing Association Ltd 6 Edgewater Rd Belfast BT3 9JQ	02890787750
Apex HA Ltd 10 Butcher St L'Derry/Derry BT48 6HL	02871304800
Ark Housing Association Ltd Units 17&18 Duncairn Gardens Belfast BT15 2GG	02890752310
Broadway Housing Association Ltd 33 May St Belfast BT1 4NA	02890246811
Clanmil Housing Association Ltd "Northern Whig House", 3 Waring St Belfast BT1 2DX	02890876000
Connswater Homes Ltd 157 Upper Newtownards Rd Belfast BT4 3HX	02890656155
Covenanter Residential Association Ltd Room 204 City East Business Pk 68-72 Newtownards Rd Belfast BT4 1GW	02890941672
Craigowen Housing Association Ltd "Muir Buildings" 427 Holywood Rd Belfast BT4 2LT	02890768029



Dungannon & District Housing Association Ltd "Anderson House" 12 Thomas St Dungannon BT70 1HN	02887722121
Filor Housing Association Ltd 282-290 Crumlin Rd Belfast BT14 7EE	02890351131
Flax Housing Association Ltd Gatelodge 8 Flax Sreet Belfast BT14 7EQ	02890592110
Fold Housing Association Ltd Fold House 3 Redburn Square Holywood Co Down BT18 9HZ	02890428314
Gosford Housing Association Ltd 1 Barrack Hill Armagh BT60 1BL	02837518522
Grove Housing Association Ltd 171 York Rd Belfast BT15 3HB	02890773330
Habinteg Housing Association Ltd Alex Moira House 22 Hibernia St Holywood BT28 9JE	02890427211
Hearth Housing Association Ltd 66 Donegall Pass Belfast BT7 1BU	02890530121
Helm Housing "Helm House" 38-52 Lisburn Rd Belfast BT9 6AA	02890320485
Newington Housing Association Ltd 300-302 Limestone Rd Belfast BT15 3AR	02890744055
Northern Ireland Housing Executive 2 Adelaide St Belfast BT2 8PB	03448920900
Oaklee Housing Association Ltd Leslie Morrell House 37-41 May St Belfast BT1 4DN	08450730005

Open Door Housing Association Ltd 3-5 Commercial Court Belfast BT1 2NB	02890243785
Rural Housing Association Ltd 2 Killyclogher Road Omagh BT79 0AX	02882246118
St Matthews Housing Association Ltd 58 Harper St Belfast BT5 4EN	02890451070
SHAC Housing Association Ltd 33 May St Belfast BT4 1GW	08450743431
South Ulster Housing Association Ltd 18-22 Carleton St Portadown BT62 3EN	02838339795
Triangle Housing Association Ltd 60 Eastermeade Gardens Ballymoney BT53 6BD	02827666880
Trinity Housing Association "Maple House" Beechill Business Park 96 Beechill Road Belfast BT8 7QN	02890690250
Ulidia Housing Association Ltd 20 Derryvolgie Ave Belfast BT9 6PN	02890382288
Wesley HA Ltd 2 Wesley Court Carrickfergus BT38 8HS	02893363558
Harmony Homes 91-93 Woodvale Rd Belfast BT13 3BP	02890741618
Equity Sharing Co-Ownership Housing Association Ltd Murray House Murray St Belfast BT1 6DN	02890327276



Glossary of Terms

Full Duty Applicant

A Full Duty Applicant is a person to whom the Housing Executive owes a duty under the Homelessness legislation, Article 10(2) of the Housing (NI) Order, 1988 to “secure that accommodation becomes available for his /her occupation”.

Functionality

An applicant’s ability to manage within their existing accommodation, taking account of their level of independence or dependency on others.

Latent Demand

To establish the demand for housing in areas where accommodation may be limited at present.

Participating Landlord

In this scheme “Participating Landlord” means the Housing Executive or any registered housing association which is participating in the Common Selection Scheme.

Article 22 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) order 1981 requires that the Housing Executive shall submit to the Department a scheme making provision for determining the order in which prospective tenants or occupiers of the Housing Executive’s houses are to be granted tenancies or licences of those houses.

