

PRIORITY FOR HOUSING FORM - GUIDANCE NOTES

All housing authorities on the Island act in accordance with the Uniform Criteria for Housing as agreed by Tynwald. Application for public sector housing on the Isle of Man is subject to a residency qualification of 10 years and upper income limits apply. Points are awarded to eligible applicants in respect of their individual circumstances and housing need. Allocations are made to those with the highest points on the Housing Waiting List. The Uniform Criteria aim to deliver a transparent process that facilitates an acceptable balance between those in greatest housing need and those who have lesser need and must wait to be housed. Public sector waiting lists are considerable and property turnover is low. There are many people awaiting housing with significant health/welfare needs and it is important that applicants are given priority appropriately so that they are not housed at the expense of others with more pressing needs.

A maximum of **10** points (awarded as 3, 6, or 10) are available within the Criteria with regard to the adequacy of an applicant's present accommodation in relation to **serious and enduring health/welfare issues** which are **directly** impacted by the current accommodation, and over which the applicant has no reasonable personal control e.g. could they move? (*Must be supported by an appropriate health/welfare professional*).

A further **10** points are available for Environmental Health issues relating to **Unfit housing** (quality/safety of accommodation) and/or **Statutory overcrowding** (*Unfitness and overcrowding must be determined by Environmental Health – the Environmental Health team can advise on these issues -Tel. 685948*)

The SUPPORT FOR HOUSING FORM has been developed with the support of health and welfare professionals to focus attention on housing need rather than general needs or issues, and aims to make the process of prioritising allocation fair and equitable. On receipt of completed forms, Health/Welfare prioritisation will be agreed by a multidisciplinary team to ensure that subsequent allocations are as fair and appropriate as possible.

NB *The process should always be professional or clinician led where a housing related need is identified as part of the consultation/ongoing contact - **not** driven by patient/client request. There is no value in submitting forms in relation to chronic disease or other circumstances which will not be resolved or improved by a change of accommodation, and/or financial concerns around the cost of private rental, neither of which are relevant in terms of the panel's remit. **It is always the health/welfare professional's prerogative to refuse to complete a form where they do not, in their professional opinion, feel there is a health/welfare issue which can be resolved by alternative accommodation** (and where it is not outside the patient/client's power to make those changes themselves).*

Completing the form

The form is to be completed (with the consent of the applicant) by any recognised health/welfare professional (e.g. Health Visitor, Social Worker, Mental Health professional). GPs or other medical practitioners can submit forms on behalf of their patients if they choose to do so. A separate GP letter is not necessary. If the multi-disciplinary assessment team require further clarification in respect of medical need, the relevant GP may be contacted by the Public Health Consultant or Health Visitor on the assessment team's behalf.

Information given under professional concerns should only be **specific to housing requirements** – whilst there must be sufficient evidence to support the identified need, the housing authority does not need to be party to information that is not relevant to making appropriate housing provision. However, for assessment purposes it is prudent to indicate the extent/severity of the condition/problem e.g. that the applicant/s is receiving regular professional intervention or is on medication etc. If more than one health/welfare professional is involved in supporting the application the form may be used jointly to reflect all relevant circumstances – there is space for details of other health/welfare professionals involved on Page 1, and for two signatures/designations on Page 2, and, as above, this may allow the extent of the housing issues to be more fully represented.

An OT assessment is required to address physical housing needs e.g. mobility issues and adaptations. It should be requested and an assessment carried out. Please include a copy of the OT report supporting the application.

If the issue relates to overcrowding or unfit housing the applicant or their representative should contact Environmental Health (Tel. 685948) and arrange for an inspection of the property prior to the submission of this form. A copy of the Environmental Health report should be attached where possible.

Low income is pointed separately by the housing provider to take account of affordability issues and general financial circumstances – Low income is therefore not grounds for completion of the form but may be a factor for example where there are also other issues such as a severe and enduring mental health problem, learning disability, or physical disability that significantly restricts the applicant's options and/or ability to cope in the private sector housing market.

Please note *that if you are approached to support tenants who wish to move to a different property and the health/welfare issues relate to such things as stress caused by difficult neighbours, disputes with extended family etc. please ensure that the applicant has made the Landlord or Housing Authority aware of these problems prior to the submission of this form. These are housing management issues which can be addressed under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement. The Police should also be involved in cases of harassment/victimisation or other criminal activity.*

Please complete all sections of the form as relevant and appropriate, providing as much information as possible to indicate the extent of the housing need/issue, as insufficient information may mean that the form has to be returned to you for completion.