



Isle of Man
Government

Reiltys Ellan Vannin



AMENDMENTS TO ACCESS AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR OLDER PERSONS' HOUSING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

SEPTEMBER 2015

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction by Minister for Infrastructure	3
2. About the Consultation	4
3. Consultation Survey	6

1. Introduction

The existing eligibility criteria for access to older persons' housing (formerly known as sheltered housing) in the public sector on the Isle of Man were last reviewed in 2002.

At that time the criteria were mainly focussed on residency and did not take any account of the financial circumstances of the applicant or objectively prioritise their housing need.

The proposal is to introduce a broader initial assessment of eligibility for entry onto the waiting list, with allocation being prioritised on the basis of income and assets, as well as health and wellbeing. The intention is to introduce a points-based system to determine an older person's priority for allocation in line with that used for the general public sector housing stock.

My Department would very much welcome your comments.

Thank you.



Phil Gawne, MHK
Minister of the Department of Infrastructure

2. About the Consultation

There are currently 680 older persons' housing (formerly known as sheltered housing) public sector homes on the Island. Interest in these properties is increasing year on year, leading to a growing waiting list.

In response to feedback received from the Housing Review public consultation exercise undertaken in 2013 the Department has considered the suitability of the existing criteria for access and eligibility.

It is proposed that there should be more focus on financial assessment and greater alignment with the criteria used for access to general public sector stock.

The purpose of this consultation is to invite comments on the Department of Infrastructure's proposed amendments to public sector older persons' (sheltered) housing access and eligibility criteria.

The consultation is in two parts and should be read alongside the Draft Criteria (**Annex A**) which can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.im/consultations.gov>

Section A seeks feedback on the proposed amendments to eligibility criteria for acceptance on to a waiting list for older persons' (sheltered) public sector housing.

Section B seeks feedback on the proposed amendments to the criteria for allocation of properties for older persons' (sheltered) public sector housing.

It should be noted that the responses received do not guarantee changes will be made to what has been proposed.

If you wish to comment on the consultation, you can submit your responses online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/G6FW7SZ or alternatively you may send your comments in writing by post or email to:

Rachel Smith
Housing Review Officer
Housing Division
2nd Floor, Markwell House
Market Street
Douglas
IM1 2RZ

Telephone: (01624) 685187
Email: housing@gov.im

Paper copies of the consultation, if required, may be requested using the contact details above.

The consultation may also be downloaded electronically from:

<https://www.gov.im/consultations.gov> or

<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/government/government-consultations/>

The consultation period ends at 5pm on Wednesday 11th November 2015.

Following consultation, the next steps in the process will be as follows:

- The Department will review comments received from respondents.
- A summary of the responses received will be published within 3 months of the closing date for this consultation and will be made available on the Government website.
- The Department will prepare the final Criteria for Access document.

If you wish to comment on the conduct of this consultation or make a complaint about the way the consultation has been carried out, please write to:

Mrs D Reeve
Director of Housing
2nd Floor Markwell House
Market Street
Douglas
IM1 2RZ

3. Consultation Survey

CONFIDENTIALITY

To ensure that the process is open and honest and in line with the Government's Code of Conduct on Consultation, responses can only be accepted if you provide your name with your response.

Unless specifically requested otherwise, any responses received may be published either in part or in their entirety.

Please mark your response clearly if you wish your response and name to be kept confidential. Confidential responses will only be included in any statistical summary and numbers of comments received.

1. Do you wish your response to remain confidential? (please tick)

YES

NO

CONTACT INFORMATION

2. Please fill in your name, address and contact details

Name

Organisation
(if applicable)

Address 1

Address 2

Town

Postcode

Email

Telephone

ABOUT YOU

3. Are you completing the survey on behalf of an organisation or as an individual?

Organisation

Individual

ORGANISATION DETAILS

4. What type of Organisation do you represent? (please tick)

- Local Authority Public Sector Housing Provider
- Local Authority (non-Housing Provider)
- Public Sector Sheltered Housing Board
- Other Sheltered Housing Provider
- Charity/Third Sector Organisation
- Other (please specify)

INDIVIDUAL DETAILS

5. What category best describes you as an Individual? (please tick)

- Homeowner
- Tenant (public sector)
- Tenant (private sector)
- Health or Welfare Professional
- Politician (local)
- Politician (national)
- Other (please specify)

Section A - Amendments to Eligibility Criteria for Acceptance on to Waiting List for Older Persons' Housing (Questions 6 to 14)

Criteria for Eligible Applicant(s)

The definition of an Applicant(s) shall be:

- i. Single Person with no dependent children, aged 60 years, or
 - ii. Couple with no dependent children with at least one person aged 60 years and over. Where one person is younger than 60 they must be at least 50 years of age.
- Couples granted a tenancy shall be joint tenants only if both are residentially qualified.

The amendment to the criteria for eligible applicant(s) is to clarify age restrictions, household type (no children) and how joint tenancies will be allocated.

6. Is it acceptable for access to be restricted to applicants aged 60 or over?

Yes

No

7. In the case of couples, is it acceptable for one person in the couple to be required to be aged at least 50 years?

Yes

No

8. Is it appropriate that joint tenancies are awarded only where both parties qualify for housing on the Isle of Man?

Yes

No

Comments:

Criteria for Residential Qualification

The definition of Residential Qualification shall be:

- i. Applicant(s) must have been ordinarily resident on the Island for a minimum of 10 years.

The period of residency remains at 10 years.

- ii. Applicants must be resident on the Island for at least 3 months immediately prior to allocation.

The addition to the residency qualification is to ensure that current Island residents have priority for allocation of housing.

9. Is it appropriate that applicants are resident on the island immediately prior to allocation of a property?

Yes

No

10. If 'Yes', is a minimum of 3 months appropriate?

Yes

No

Comments:

Criteria for Financial Qualification

The definition of Financial Qualification shall be:

- i. Maximum gross income of applicant(s) must not exceed the median income (currently £28,392) plus 10% for couples.

The maximum income threshold is currently based on the median income for 2014 and is set provisionally at £28,392 plus an additional 10% for a couple.

- ii. Financial and/or property assets must not exceed the median House price (currently £245,000) or such other amount as determined by the Department from time to time.

Once allocated a public sector property, the applicant must not own or continue to own residential property in any jurisdiction.

The word "savings" used in general public sector criteria has been replaced with "financial assets" to clarify that all types of investments including property will be considered.

The new criterion also requires that the older persons' housing (sheltered) property is an applicant's only home.

11. Is the proposed income ceiling appropriate for eligibility?

Yes

No

12. Is the financial asset / property asset ceiling appropriate for eligibility?

Yes

No

13. Is it appropriate that the older persons' (sheltered) housing unit is the person's permanent place of residence and only property holding?

Yes

No

Comments:

Criteria for Health and Welfare Qualification

The definition of Health and Welfare Qualification shall be:

- i. The applicant must be capable of independent living (with an appropriate and continuing package of support where necessary).

Applicants to older persons' (sheltered) housing are already required to be independent so this criterion clarifies and updates rather than amends the provision.

14. Is it acceptable that applicants must be able to live independently (with appropriate support where necessary)?

Yes

No

Comments:

Please continue to Section B of the survey

Section B - Criteria for Allocation of Properties and Pointing System (Questions 15 - 26)

The Criteria for Allocation awards points in order to prioritise housing need and is based on current practice for allocation of general public housing. There is currently no objective method of prioritisation for allocation for sheltered housing.

15. Is it acceptable to have a needs based pointing framework to ensure fair access to older persons' (sheltered) housing, as currently used in general housing?

Yes No

Comments:

The twelve criteria for determining Criteria for Allocation are as follows:

Criterion 1	Points
Time on List	1 point per each 3 month period to a maximum of 20 points

Points for time on the housing waiting list caps the time on list points currently used in general housing to 5 years i.e. 20 points, on the basis that the Waiting List should be addressing current housing need.

16. Should points be awarded for time on list?

Yes No

17. Is it appropriate for points to be capped at 20 (5 years on list)?

Yes No

Comments:

Criterion 2	Points
Years of Residency on Island	1 point for every year in excess of 10 years to a maximum of 10 points

This criterion is the same as is currently used in general public sector housing so brings older persons' housing into alignment with existing criteria.

18. Is the alignment of pointing for years of residency with that of general public sector housing acceptable?

Yes No

Comments:

Criterion 3	Points
Local connection with housing authority area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in area more than 5 years 5 points • Living in area more than 1 year 4 points • No residence – family/welfare connections 3 points • No connections 0 points

This criterion considers an applicant's connections to the area so that people who already live there have some degree of priority.

19. Do you agree that residents with connections to the local area should be given some priority for allocation?

Yes No

Comments:

Criterion 4	Points
Public Sector Tenant	Releasing a general public sector property suitable for a family 10 points

This criterion awards points to an existing public sector tenant who would be freeing up a public sector home for a family in need.

20. Is this appropriate?

Yes No

Comments:

Criterion 5	Points
Gross income (including combined income of joint applicants and benefits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £25,001 & above 0 points • £22,501 - £25,000 3 points • £20,001 - £22,500 6 points • £17,501 - £20,000 9 points • £15,001 - £17,500 12 points • £15,000 and under 15 points

Gross income is banded to ensure those with a lower income receive priority over applicants with a higher income. This is similar to general housing.

21. Is it appropriate that those on lower income get priority?

Yes No

22. Are the income thresholds acceptable?

Yes No

Comments:

Criterion 6	Points
Financial / Property Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="671 309 1414 342">• £25,000 to £34,999 -3 points <li data-bbox="671 342 1414 376">• £35,000 to £49,999 -6 points <li data-bbox="671 376 1414 409">• £50,000 or over -10 points

As referred to in Section A, Financial Qualification is proposed as a criterion for Access and Eligibility (currently set at a limit of £245,000).

In the above criterion, assets are banded to ensure those with least financial means receive priority over applicants with most assets.

23. Is this appropriate?

Yes

No

Comments:

(Please continue overleaf to Question 24)

Criterion 7	Points
Adequacy of present accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="571 309 1431 412">• Property condition / overcrowding (certified / awarded by Environmental Health Officer) Up to 20 points <li data-bbox="571 450 1431 483">• Low priority 5 points <li data-bbox="571 488 1431 521">• Medium priority 10 points <li data-bbox="571 526 1431 560">• High priority 20 points <li data-bbox="571 593 1431 730">• Health / welfare issues (validated by Report from health/welfare professional & multidisciplinary assessment by health/ Welfare panel) Up to 30 points <li data-bbox="571 768 1431 801">• Low priority 5 or 10 points <li data-bbox="571 806 1431 840">• Medium priority 15 or 20 points <li data-bbox="571 844 1431 878">• High priority 25 or 30 points

Where there is an identified health or wellbeing issue related to housing need, applications will include an assessment of the adequacy of current accommodation undertaken by a panel of health and welfare professionals. This is the current practice for allocation of general stock.

The weighting (or number) of points available in these categories will mean that those in greatest health or welfare need, who are living in the most inadequate accommodation for their needs, will receive most priority for housing.

24. Do you agree applicants with health and welfare needs should have greatest priority?

Yes

No

Comments:

(Please continue overleaf to Question 25)

Criterion 8	Points
Supported Housing	20 points

Criterion 9	Points
Notice to Quit (excluding rent arrears)	Formal legal notice NTQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord / Advocate 5 points • Court order 10 points

Criterion 10	Points
Unjustified refusal by applicant where an offer of a property considered suitable for the applicant was refused without a valid reason	Discretionary deduction (per refusal) -10 points After two refusals of suitable properties, the applicant will be removed from the Housing Waiting List

Criteria 8, 9, and 10 (and criteria 11 and 12 – see next page) simply bring the older persons' (sheltered) housing criteria in line with current practice for general public sector housing.

However, the second part of Criterion 10 is an addition to the existing criterion; where applicants refuse two offers of accommodation suitable for their needs they will be removed from the Housing Waiting List. This is so the Waiting List reflects true housing need. Applicants who are removed will be free to reapply at a later date when they are ready to accept an offer of allocation.

25. Is it acceptable to remove an applicant from the Housing Waiting List after 2 unjustified refusals to the offer of suitable accommodation?

Yes No

Comments:

Criterion 11	Points
Accumulated Rent Arrears	Discretionary deduction -10 points

Criterion 12	
Appeals Procedure	<p>Any applicant having an application for acceptance on to a waiting list rejected</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Any applicant dissatisfied by reason of non-allocation of a property by virtue of non-allocation of points, may</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Seek a review of that decision by submitting request in writing to the appropriate housing authority, and 2) If the decision is upheld by that housing authority, seek an appeal against that decision in writing to the Department's Housing Division, whose decision shall be final. 3) In the case of houses owned by the Department, the review or appeal shall be to a Minister or Member of the Legislature outside the Department as appointed by the Council of Ministers.

Criteria 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 all align the criteria for older persons' (sheltered) housing with those that already exist within general housing.

26. Is it appropriate to align these provisions with that of general housing?

Yes No

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.