Applying for council housing for health or medical reasons

A brief guide to the medical assessment process
Introduction

If you have a medical condition that you believe is being made worse by your current accommodation, and you would like the council to consider this when assessing your housing application, you need to complete a medical assessment form.

You should be aware that having a serious illness or disability in itself is unlikely to result in you receiving additional priority or medical points – and most applications are not successful.

We need you to explain how your illness or disability is being made worse by existing housing conditions that cannot be remedied.

A medical assessment will take into account the health and well being of everyone moving with you. You should complete a medical form for each person in your household with a medical condition, however the medical assessment will be for everyone in your household.
The assessment process

The council will consider all the information you provide on your form. We base our decision upon the information given by you on the form, therefore please ensure that you include everything you want considered. In most cases, the assessment will be carried out within our target time of six weeks.

If more information is required, we may contact your doctor or other health provider for a further medical report. This may delay the final decision by up to four weeks depending on how quickly we get a response.

We may also seek the advice of an occupational therapist to help assess how you function within your current home and whether you need any adaptations. Again these assessments may take a further four to eight weeks to complete.

We will notify you of the outcome of your medical assessment – and any assessment about adaptations at home – in writing.
Factors we consider when accessing

Medical points can be awarded only if your medical condition is made worse by your accommodation and where we are sure that problems with your current home cannot be resolved. For example:

**Lift failure**
If you claim that your lifts are often broken or unusable, we will need your landlord to give us a report on the lift’s reliability. We can award a medical priority if we find the lift to be unreliable. Our assessment will be based on numbers of mechanical faults and how long the lift has been out of order, not numbers of call-outs.

**Damp and disrepair**
Medical priority can only be given if you can show that the disrepair you feel is affecting your health cannot be put right. You should report any damp or disrepair to your landlord first.

**Overcrowding**
Overcrowding points will already have been awarded to your application to reflect the difficulties you are experiencing because your home is too small. Only in a small minority of cases, where severe medical problems are involved, will overcrowding attract additional medical priority points.

**Extra bedroom on medical grounds**
The council only award extra bedrooms in exceptional circumstances – and on the advice of a health professional. While we will consider the needs of a family to protect a child with challenging behaviour, ultimately it is the parent’s duty to minimise the potential risk of harm.
Extra bedroom for full-time carer
An extra bedroom will only be recommended where an applicant needs on going, regular, night time care.

Medical priorities
There are three categories of medical priority A, B and C. These reflect how seriously the current accommodation is impacting on a household’s health.

Category A Emergency Medical
Granted in exceptional circumstances, when the applicant or a member of the applicant’s household has an immediately life-threatening or progressive condition which is seriously affected by their current housing.
This point award is limited for six months because we expect that customers receiving this award will have sufficient points to bid successfully for a suitable home within this time.

Category B High Priority
Granted where an applicant’s or a member of their household’s current housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on their medical condition; it will not apply where the effect of the housing conditions on health is moderate, slight or variable.

Category C Priority
Granted where an applicant’s or a member of the household’s current housing conditions are having a moderate or variable adverse effect on their medical condition.
No Priority:
Where the current housing is having no effect on the health of the applicants.

Points awards

A medical assessment will consider the health of the whole household and one medical award will be made per category as follows:

Category A – 150 points
Category B – 80 points
Category C – 40 points

How to apply

If you would like the council to consider your medical condition when assessing your housing application, you should complete a medical assessment form.

- you can download a form from our website at www.islington.gov.uk/services/housing
- Or call 020 7527 4140 to request that a form is sent to you.

If you have medical reports or letters at home you can also send us copies of these with your form.

Housing Options Team
PO Box 34750,
London, N7 9WF
The London Assessable Housing Register (LHAR)

The LHAR is a London wide standard against which all council homes are assessed to determine how accessible they are. Below are the LHAR categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Wheelchair Accessible throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Wheelchair Accessible essential rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Lifetime Homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Easy Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Step Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E+</td>
<td>Minimal Steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>General Needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full details of the **London Accessible Housing Categories** can be downloaded from our website at [www.islington.gov.uk/services/housing](http://www.islington.gov.uk/services/housing).

As part of your medical assessment you may be given a recommendation for a specific type of housing based on the above categories. You can then bid for properties that meet these recommendations. For example if the assessment says that you need a step free property (LAHR category E) this means you should only bid for LAHR category E properties that are advertised.

You can get help with bidding for homes from the housing options team on **020 7527 4140**.

How to appeal

You can appeal against the medical award if you are able to provide medical information not previously considered. If you wish to appeal, you should state your reasons, in writing, within four weeks of the medical decision.
Do you need this information in another language or reading format such as Braille, large print, audio or Easy Read?

Please contact 020 7527 2000.

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