



Waiting for social housing

If you are eligible for social housing assistance, your application is placed on the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) housing register according to your level of housing need.

- **Very high need** - applicants who have the highest housing need as they are homeless, **or** their current housing is inappropriate and they have a number of issues with accessing and sustaining a tenancy in the private rental market.
- **High need** - applicants whose current housing is inappropriate and they have some issues with accessing or sustaining a tenancy in the private rental market.
- **Moderate need** - applicants whose current housing is inappropriate and they have fewer issues with accessing or sustaining a tenancy in the private rental market.
- **Lower need** - applicants who have issues with their current housing but do not have any barriers to accessing and sustaining appropriate housing. They have the financial means and capacity to rent appropriate housing in the private sector.

Note: Applicants within each of the levels of housing need are considered to be equal and are listed in order of their application date.

You will be listed on the housing register for the type of housing and the number of bedrooms you are eligible for in the areas you have chosen. On your Application for Housing Assistance, you must list six locations (suburbs, towns, cities) of your choice, except:

- where you have demonstrated a need to live in a particular location, or
- if you are applying for a property in a regional or remote area.

Note: You may be offered housing from any of your selected areas.

We will contact you at regular intervals to review your eligibility and housing need.

When is an offer of housing made?

We cannot predict when an offer of social housing may be made to you. Offers of housing are affected by:

- the number of properties in the area you want to live in
- the number of properties that become available (e.g. from people moving out of social housing)
- the number of people listed on the housing register who have a higher housing need than you and who are listed for the same areas you have chosen, and
- people listed on the housing register who have the same housing need as you but who have had their application approved before you for the same areas you have chosen.

Each of these factors can change very quickly.

If you are listed on the housing register as having a moderate or lower housing need, we may be unable to offer you social housing and you may wish to consider other housing options. You should talk to your nearest Housing Services office about other available housing assistance.

Changes in your circumstances or housing need

If you are approved for social housing assistance, you must advise us of any changes to your household circumstances or housing need. We will review your eligibility and level of housing need regularly so it is important this information is kept up-to-date.

This includes changes to:

- your address - your application will be cancelled if we do not have your current address and cannot contact you
- your name, for example, if you marry, divorce or separate
- the number of people on your housing application, e.g. you have another child, you and your partner separate, you add a new household member to your application or a household member listed on your application moves out
- a household member's health, for example, if the household member cannot climb stairs or has specific housing needs resulting from a disability or medical condition. You will need to provide evidence from a medical practitioner explaining how the change in health affects your housing needs.
- other related housing issues
- you no longer require housing assistance.

We will update our records with the new information and reassess your eligibility for social housing. If you are still eligible, we will send you a letter about this decision. If you are not eligible for social housing, we will send you a letter about this decision and the reasons why it was made.

Changing your listed areas

You can change the areas where you want to live until you are offered housing. If you have previously demonstrated a need to live in a specific area, you must discuss the reasons why you want to change where you want to live with your nearest Housing Services office.

Note: You can only change your areas of preference before you are offered housing.

Responding to letters and phone calls from the department

We will regularly send you letters to make sure you are still eligible for housing assistance and to update your housing need information. If you do not answer these letters in the requested time or respond to any phone calls we make, we will cancel your application. We will review your eligibility and housing need every:

- six months, if you are listed on the housing register as having a very high need or high need
- 12 months, if you are listed as having a moderate or lower need.

Note: it is an offence under the *Housing Act 2003* to knowingly provide false or misleading information to the Department of Communities that may influence decisions about your eligibility for housing services.

Pets

Tell your nearest Housing Services office if you want to keep a pet. We will advise you about how your choice of pet may affect your housing options. The fact sheet *Pets in departmental properties* has more information.

If you go on a holiday

Tell your nearest Housing Services office before you leave for holidays. This ensures that your application is not cancelled if mail is sent to you while you are away and is unanswered.

If you no longer want housing assistance

If you no longer want housing assistance, tell your nearest Housing Services office as soon as possible so your application can be taken off the housing register.

Further information

Please contact your nearest Housing Services office.