

Housing Needs Assessment Form

**Guidance for Applicants
Reviewed February 2024**

Table of Contents

1. What is a Housing Needs Assessment?
2. Who assesses the completed Housing Needs Assessment Form?
3. Information about the Housing Needs Assessment Form
4. Consent to verify information
5. How Housing Needs and Disability priority is assessed
 - 5.1. Access to the home
 - 5.2. Access to essential facilities within the home
 - 5.3. Mental health conditions
 - 5.4. Adaptations
 - 5.5. Additional space for a carer or for specialist medical equipment
6. Circumstances where medical needs and Disability Awards will not be considered
 - 6.1. Medical condition
 - 6.2. Unsecure/homeless circumstances
 - 6.3. Financial circumstances
 - 6.4. Anti-social neighbour problems
 - 6.5. Dampness or poor condition of property
 - 6.6. Accommodation too large or too small
 - 6.7. Difficulty maintaining garden
7. Grades and Descriptions
 - 7.1. Category A: Urgent Housing Need
 - 7.2. Category B: Serious Housing Need
 - 7.3. Category C: Significant Housing Need
8. Recommendations for house types

9. Time Taken for Assessment
10. Notification of the award and possible recommendation
11. If your Medical Condition or Disability worsens
12. If other members of your household develop a medical condition or disability made worse by your current accommodation
13. Wheelchair access
14. Deferring your Housing Application
15. Appeal against a Housing Needs Award

1. What is a Housing Need Priority?

You can apply for Housing Needs points if you have a **permanent or long-lasting medical condition or disability** that is made **worse** by your current accommodation.

A disability is a physical or mental health condition which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your normal activities of daily living. Overall, housing needs apply mainly to medical conditions or disabilities that affect your mobility. For example, you may find it difficult to climb the stairs in your current accommodation.

2. Who assesses the completed Housing Needs Form?

We use a qualified Occupational Therapist who decides the level of award and appropriate recommendations based on the severity of the effects your current accommodation is having on your medical condition or disability.

3. Information about the Housing Needs Form

You should only complete the Housing Need Form if you think that moving home would alleviate the difficulties that you are experiencing in your current accommodation. The process is one of self-assessment. You are not required to contact your Doctor.

Only one award can be given per household. If more than one person in your household has a medical condition or disability which is made worse by your current accommodation, please only complete a form for the person whom your property is having the worst affect on. However, a form should be submitted for any member of your household requiring wheelchair access regardless of whether a medical award has already been made. If you require assistance in completing the form you may request this from your local housing office. A home visit can be arranged if you are unable to visit your local housing office.

The information you provide on your form is strictly confidential and will be used to assess whether you should be awarded Housing Needs points. Where appropriate we can make referrals for assistance to another Council Service, e.g. Repairs in relation to dampness, Anti-Social Behaviour Team for Anti-Social behaviour.

4. Consent to verify information

Assessments are based on your own description of how your current accommodation affects your medical condition or disability. There may be instances where we will need to

confirm the details you have provided or seek additional information from health care professionals. Therefore, please ensure you sign the consent section at the end of your application.

5. How a Housing Need priority is assessed

An agreed criteria is used when assessing housing needs priority and it is based on the following five factors:

- 5.1. Access to the home:** - the level of award is determined on whether you are unable to access your home or only with severe difficulty, require considerable assistance to access your home or are becoming less able to get out of your home unaided.
- 5.2. Access to essential facilities within the home:** - the level of award is determined by whether you are unable to access or can only access essential facilities with severe difficulty within your home, only able to access essential facilities with considerable difficulty, or becoming less able to access essential facilities unaided.
- 5.3. Mental health conditions:** - the level of award is determined by whether you have an enduring mental illness which is adversely affected by your current accommodation.
- 5.4. Adaptations:** - the level of award is determined by whether you have been assessed by an Occupational Therapist and have already received major adaptations to your current accommodation. It is also taken into consideration, instances where an Occupational Therapist has confirmed that it is not possible to adapt your current accommodation.
- 5.5. Additional space for a carer or for specialist medical equipment:** - the level of award is determined by the amount of support given by your carer throughout a week. If you require additional space for specialist medical equipment it is determined by whether it is essential or if it would improve your situation.

6. Circumstances where Housing Needs Awards will not be considered

Generally, we will **not** consider your application if it states that your medical condition or disability is made worse by:

- 6.1. Medical condition** - is of temporary nature, e.g. fracture
- 6.2. Unsecure/homeless circumstances** - applicants should request an interview with our Homeless Team who will be able to assess their situation and offer assistance and advice.
- 6.3. Financial circumstances** - applicants should contact the Homeless Prevention Officer, Welfare Rights, Money Advice or Citizens Advice Bureau, for assistance

6.4. Anti-social neighbour problems - applicants should contact their Housing Officer who will be able to investigate the situation and where necessary work with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team and the Police to resolve the situation.

6.5. Dampness or poor condition of property - West Dunbartonshire tenants should contact the Repairs Section. Housing Association or Private Landlord tenants should contact their own landlords. The Environmental Section can offer advice to tenants with Private Landlords.

6.6. Accommodation too large or too small - applicants should check with Allocations staff whether they are entitled to under-occupancy or over-crowding points in accordance with the current Allocation Policy.

6.7. Difficulty maintaining garden - applicants can contact Greenlight Garden Scheme who may be able to offer assistance.

If the application for housing needs points is unsuccessful, you will be notified in writing explaining the decision and details of referrals where appropriate. Information on your right to appeal is also provided.

7. Grades and Descriptions

A Housing Needs Assessment, Award and Recommendation Matrix is completed for each application and then passed to the Allocation Team Leader for approval.

Awards for medical priority can be given at three levels: Category A, 100 points, Category B, 60 points and Category C, 10 points. Grades and descriptions are provided below on the types of difficulties caused by medical conditions and disabilities and the levels of award that are given:

7.1. Category A: Urgent Housing Needs

If you have a medical condition or disability and are:

- Unable to access your current accommodation:
- Unable to continue living in your own accommodation as you would not be able to or are at risk when trying to gain access to essential facilities i.e. kitchen, toilet, bedroom:
- Due to significant and long-lasting mental illness, you are unable to return to or to continue to live in your current accommodation:
- It is essential that you have your own bedroom due to your medical condition or disability:
- Require an additional bedroom for a full-time carer 7 nights per week and/or for storing specialist medical equipment.
- Unable to have your current accommodation adapted via Occupational Therapy assessment and provision.

7.2. Category B: Serious Housing Needs

If you have a medical condition or disability and are:

- Unable to access your current accommodation without considerable difficulty or assistance:

- Living at home and you are less able to independently gain access to essential facilities e.g. kitchen, toilet, bedroom:
- Due to significant and long-lasting mental illness, you are severely restricted in your ability to continue to live in your current accommodation:
- It would be of substantial benefit that you have your own bedroom due to your medical condition or disability;
- Require an additional bedroom for a carer, 4 nights or less per week and/or require additional space for specialist medical equipment.

7.3. Category C: Significant Housing Needs

If you have a medical condition or disability and are:

- Becoming less able to get out of your current accommodation unaided:
- Living at home and you are becoming less able to gain access to essential facilities unaided e.g. Kitchen, toilet, bedroom.
- Becoming less able to manage in your current accommodation due to your mental illness.
- Require your own bedroom in relation to your medical condition or disability, however it is not essential.
- Require an additional bedroom for a carer, less than 4 nights per week and/or additional space would improve accommodation of specialist equipment but is not essential.

8. Recommendations are also made on the house types which would best meet your housing needs.

Recommendations include:

- internal wheelchair use
- externally accessible for a wheelchair
- above first floor
- access with few (1-3)/no external stairs
- flat with a lift
- extra bedroom for applicant/carers/specialist medical equipment
- sheltered
- ground floor (access at ground level and no internal stairs)

Please note that your previously selected house types and area choices may need to be amended according to property recommendations made. This is to ensure that we offer you a property that meets your Housing Needs e.g. ground floor, no internal stairs.

9. Time Taken for Assessment

Generally, we aim to assess most applications in 4 weeks. It may take longer where additional information or verification is required.

10. Notification of the award and possible recommendation

We will contact you in writing after your application has been assessed and inform you of the level of award and possible property recommendation.

A single award is given per household; therefore, it is advisable that an application is submitted only for the person whose medical condition is most severely affected by your current accommodation.

Housing Needs points may increase or decrease depending on the deterioration or improvement of your medical condition or disability and also if there is a relevant change in the housing circumstances.

Housing Needs points will be withdrawn in instances where the person awarded the points no longer resides in the property.

11. If your Medical Condition or Disability worsens

A Housing Needs Reassessment can be applied for if your medical condition or disability worsens, your mobility deteriorates or you develop further medical conditions or disabilities which are made worse by your current accommodation.

12. If other members of your household develop a medical condition or disability made worse by your current accommodation.

Where a member of your household has already been given housing needs points and at a later date a different household member either develops a medical condition or disability or has one which worsens and is more severely affected by your current accommodation than the person already awarded medical points, then an application should be submitted. The application will be assessed and the award compared to the existing award and the higher of the two awards given.

13. Wheelchair access

A housing need form should be submitted for any household member requiring wheelchair access regardless of whether a housing need award has already been recorded on the application. Wheelchair access is recorded as a separate recommendation which requires any potential property to be assessed for wheelchair suitability.

14. Deferring your Housing Application

As Housing Needs points are a reflection of your need to be re-housed, if you then request to defer your application once Housing Needs points are awarded, we will remove your housing needs points and when you wish again to be considered for offers of housing, you will need to complete a new housing need form. This will **not** apply if you only want to defer your application for less than a month or if due to a period of hospitalisation.

15. Appeal against a Housing Needs Award

If you disagree with the level of award or recommendation given you have the right to appeal. However, you are advised to refer to the **Grades and Descriptions** included in these guidelines.

You should contact your local area housing office if you still disagree with the award or recommendation. An appeal can be made in person, in writing, by telephone or by a third party within 14 days of being informed of the award or recommendation. If made by a third party, appropriate permission from yourself must be in place so we can discuss personal information. A list of independent advice agencies is sent out with the housing need notification to assist if you wish to appeal. A Senior Officer, who was not involved in the initial assessment, will then review your housing need form and the award and

recommendation given. We aim to advise you in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the decision within 14 days.

This is a guide and it is recognised that it cannot describe all potential difficulties applicants may detail in their assessments.