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## CHAPTER 4 APPLICANTS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

Some applicants' circumstances will be such that general needs accommodation alone will not be adequate for their needs i.e. applicants with *intense* care and / or support needs or "*Complex Needs*". In addition to obtaining permanent accommodation, these applicants need to have their care / support needs addressed as part of any solution to their housing needs.

This chapter deals with the procedures for identifying and dealing with applications and transfer requests from applicants with intensive care and support needs. The procedures involve a multi-disciplinary approach between housing and Health and Social Services personnel in the identification of Complex Needs applicants and agreement on the most suitable re-housing options available to them.

The two main housing options for such applicants are:

- a. Supported Housing Option.
- b. General Needs Accommodation Option - with an agreed, tailored care package for the relevant Applicant, or household member, (see 4.2 General Needs Accommodation).

Note: Only those applicants with *intense* care or support needs will be considered, for the purposes of the Housing Selection Scheme, as being "Complex Needs Applicants".

Applicants requiring adapted or purpose built accommodation, such as wheelchair accommodation, and *who do not have intense care / support needs are not considered to be Complex Needs applicants* for the purposes of the Housing Selection Scheme.

### 4.1 SUPPORTED HOUSING SCHEMES

Supported housing schemes, for the purposes of assessing applicants with "Complex Needs", are any supported accommodation let by participating landlords by a mechanism other than that used to allocate general needs accommodation, e.g. utilising other agencies in the assessment and allocation procedure. Examples of these include Health and Social Services and Housing Association joint management partners.

Participating Landlords owning supported housing schemes provide not only accommodation to tenants with Complex Needs but also, directly or indirectly, the intensive care and support that these tenants require within a supported housing environment. The day to day management of supported housing schemes and the

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delivery of care and support to residents may be undertaken the Landlord or by a third party with whom the Landlord has entered into a management agreement.

## 4.2 GENERAL NEEDS ACCOMMODATION

Where supported housing is not required, general needs accommodation may be a suitable re-housing option for some applicants with Complex Needs. Given the intensive care and support needs that these applicants will have, general needs accommodation will normally only be suited to Complex Needs applicants who will be in receipt of an agreed, tailored care package, available and delivered to them by Health and Social Services, at the time of any allocation.

Other applicants, or household members, who have *intense* care and support needs may also be considered as being Complex Needs applicants for general needs accommodation where:

1. Their intense care and support needs are being met, or will be met, by some means other than by a care package from Health and Social Services, e.g. by a partner or other person acting as the Applicant's carer,
- AND
2. Where it is agreed that, in the event of this other carer being unable to continue to provide the very high levels of support and care required, Health and Social Services would be required to provide such a care package in order to allow the Applicant to continue to remain in general needs accommodation.

## 4.3 ACCESS TO ACCOMMODATION: **RULE 19**

Applicants with Complex Needs will be considered for housing as a result of a direct referral process from Health and Social Services or as an exceptional case arising from defined criteria identified in the health and social well being assessment of any General Housing or Transfer application. In either event applicants must comply with usual application requirements as described in Part 2 of the Rules of the Housing Selection Scheme, (Rules 9-14). See also the protocol document for inter-agency working between housing providers and Health and Social Services.

There are two stages involved in meeting the housing needs of persons with Complex Needs:

1. The Referral Stage - (Stage 1): The identification of applicants having Complex Needs and the determination of the type of housing option that will best meet those needs.

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2. The Assessment Stage - (Stage 2): The allocation of suitable accommodation to the Applicant.

## 4.4 COMPLEX NEEDS - REFERRAL (STAGE 1)

Applicants, who may be *potential* Complex Needs applicants, will be identified through one of two routes, (see Complex Needs Flowchart - Appendix 4.1), by direct Referral from Health and Social Services or following a Housing Needs Assessment.

For both types of referral, a multi-disciplinary discussion between Health and Social Services and the Housing Executive, ("Housing Support Service", see 4.5.1 "Housing Executive Contact - Housing Support Officer"), will take place to agree whether the Applicant is to be registered as having Complex Needs and, if so, which of the two possible housing options would best meet the Applicant's needs, i.e. re-housing in a supported housing scheme or in general needs accommodation.

### 4.4.1 DIRECT REFERRAL

By direct referral to the Housing Support Service from Health and Social Services Trusts, e.g. following a form of Community Care assessment where a person is leaving long time institutional care such as hospital and is seeking permanent re-housing.

Referrals will be directed by Health and Social Services personnel directly to the Housing Support Officer working in the Housing Executive Area Office covering the geographical area in which the Applicant is living at the time of application.

Applicants being referred in this way will be required to comply with the normal application requirements, (see 4.8 "Administration of Complex Needs Applications").

### 4.4.2 HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Potential Complex Needs applicants may be identified as a result of information contained on an application form and / or as a result of a Housing Needs Assessment. In such cases the application should be registered onto HMS in the usual way.

Where the Applicant is seeking general needs accommodation their points assessment and preferences should be input to **HMS**, with comments recorded as appropriate prior to referral to the Housing Support Service.

Note: Complex Needs flags and Complex Needs points *should not* be set or awarded prior to instructions being received back from the Housing Support Officer

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The criteria for Designated Officers to use in deciding whether a person may be a potential Complex Needs applicant have to be flexible due to the variety and nature of the conditions that may be experienced by applicants. The details of the individual case should therefore be fully and formally investigated accordingly. Designated Officers will however be guided by a range of indicators and by the particular circumstances applicable to the individual case, e.g.

- Where the Applicant is, for example, frail elderly, has learning difficulties or extensive physical disabilities and requires intensive support.
- Where the Applicant is currently involved with 2 or more Primary Care Teams within Social Services, e.g. Elderly Care Team, Disability Team, Mental Health Team etc., Occupational Therapist, etc.)
- The range and intensity of points scored on the Support / Care Matrix.
- The range and intensity of points scored on the Functionality Matrix.
- Where the Applicant, or household member, has recently been admitted, to a hospital, or another institution, for respite care or is due for such an admission.
- Other details of the case appearing to warrant further investigation into potential Complex Needs.

Where, in the opinion of the Designated Officer, the Applicant may be a potential Complex Needs applicant the case should be referred to the Area Housing Support Officer.

## **4.5 POINTS OF CONTACT**

The points of contact in the relevant organisations will be:

### **4.5.1 HOUSING EXECUTIVE CONTACT - HOUSING SUPPORT OFFICER**

Housing Executive - A named Designated Officer in each Housing Executive administrative Area Office, ("Housing Support Officer"). This person will provide a "Housing Support Service" to Housing Executive District offices and to Housing Associations and others. The Designated Officer will have a detailed knowledge of all the supported housing schemes available within their Area and access to information on the whole of Northern Ireland. He / she will be able to advise Health and Social Services staff on the nature of these schemes.

Housing Support Officers will process applications originating within their geographical area, i.e. the relevant Housing Executive Area, irrespective of where the Applicant is seeking re-housing.

The Housing Support Officer will instruct District Offices or Housing Associations responsible in regard to:

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- Confirmation of “Complex Needs”.
- Instructions when “Complex Needs Points” are to be awarded.
- Whether supported or general needs housing options apply.
- The supported scheme(s) an applicant should be considered for.

**In relation to the administration of the case on HMS refer to Section 4.8 in this chapter**

The Housing Executive Regional/Area Offices are:

Regional/AreaOffice	Phone Number
Belfast Region	02890317736
North Region	02825667811
South Region	02838315782
South Down/Lis/ C'reagh North Down/Ards Area	02891825007
West Area	02871306162

## 4.5.2 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES CONTACT

Health and Social Services - In most cases the point of contact will be the Applicant's Key Worker, e.g. Social Worker, (normally this information will be available from the application form or from the Housing Support Officer in respect of direct referrals from Health and Social Services). On some occasions, however, another member of Health and Social Services staff may undertake this function.

## 4.6 THE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY DISCUSSION

The Housing Support Officer will enter into dialogue, (a “multi-disciplinary discussion”), with Health and Social Services staff to discuss individual potential Complex Needs cases.

The may take a variety of forms. It may be formal, such as a specially convened case conference to discuss the various available housing and support options for the Applicant, or it may be informal e.g. by telephone where the Applicant's needs are well known and documented and the available housing options are limited.

The aim of the multi-disciplinary discussion, in addition to identifying Complex Needs applicants, is to maximise the amount of housing choice available to the Applicant. The discussion will allow for the widest possible range of available housing options to be explored and for the Applicant to be registered for an agreed housing option which will most suit his / her needs.

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Where, following a multi-disciplinary discussion, the agreed option is for supported housing and one or more suitable Complex Needs schemes have been identified, the Applicant's preferences will be input to **HMS** for each scheme. By so doing, the availability of a suitable vacancy existing, or the likelihood of one occurring in a reasonable timeframe, will also be a factor to be considered, (see 4.7.1 Allocation / Assessment Stage 2 - Option 1).

Where the agreed option is for general needs housing with a support package, (to be in place at time of allocation), the Applicant's preferences will be input to the **HMS**, (see 4.7.2 Allocation / Assessment Stage 2 - Option 2).

## 4.7 ALLOCATION / ASSESSMENT (STAGE 2)

In terms of meeting their accommodation requirements there are two options available for Complex Needs applicants:

### 4.7.1 OPTION 1 - SUPPORTED HOUSING: RULES 20-22

Complex Needs applicants who require supported housing will be considered without reference to points and apart from the general needs waiting list.

Examples of applicants with Complex Needs who require the supported housing option may include persons with major learning difficulties, frail elderly persons and persons with chronic debilitating mental conditions, persons with learning difficulties etc. Applicants will be housed in accordance with their individual needs subject to suitable supported accommodation being available.

Where the agreed option is for supported housing the Applicant's name will be registered onto **HMS** for each suitable Complex Needs scheme on instruction from Housing Support Officers. When deciding which scheme or schemes are suitable, the type of scheme and the available care and support services provided will be taken into account, as will the likelihood of a vacancy arising within a reasonable period of time.

Once a vacancy arises in one of the identified schemes, the relevant Housing Association and its joint management partner will determine if that vacancy is suitable for the Applicant *at that time*. They will consider whether the Applicant's needs are unchanged since the last assessment took place and if these would be met by offering the Applicant the vacant accommodation. Other factors to be considered may include:

- The implications for the management of the accommodation, e.g. the ability of the management to cater for the Applicant's individual needs at that time.

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- The Applicant's compatibility with any other residents in the scheme, e.g. if there are any behavioural issues that might disrupt the existing harmony within the scheme.
- Other housing management interests.

Where the Applicant is deemed to be suitable then the allocation can be made, on **HMS**, and the application closed. The allocating landlord will inform the Housing Support Service of the allocation.

Where the Applicant is deemed not to be suitable or where no allocation has been made within a reasonable time the case will be referred back to the Housing Support Service for review.

## **4.7.2 OPTION 2 - GENERAL NEEDS OPTION**

Other Complex Needs applicants who can be considered for General Needs housing but who, in order to manage in this type of accommodation, will also require some form of support package to be put in place at the time of any allocation, (see also 4.2 General Needs Accommodation). These applicants will be pointed in the same manner as all other general needs applicants and will be placed onto the general Waiting List with, upon instruction from the relevant Housing Support Officer, an additional award of 20 Complex Needs points. Offers of accommodation will be made to the Applicant based on his / her position on the waiting list, subject to a suitable care / support package also being available at the same time, (or other agreed arrangements).

Examples of applicants with Complex Needs, who do not require supported housing and who would be able to live in general needs accommodation, so long as an associated support package was also in place, will also include persons with similar conditions to those requiring supported housing but who may not require quite the same level of care and support.

Where the preferred option is for general needs housing with an associated care / support package the Applicant's name will be recorded onto the general needs Waiting List for his / her Areas of Preference.

The Applicant will be awarded Complex Needs points in addition to any other points awarded under the Selection Scheme only on instruction from the relevant Housing Support Officer. This process is carried out and keyed in circumstance table as follows: CN Referral Date, CN Referral Return and CN Points.

When a vacancy arises which can be offered to the Applicant the Designated Officer making the allocation will contact the relevant Housing Support Officer. The Housing Support Officer will then liaise with the appropriate Health and Social Services Trust to arrange for the provision of the agreed care and support package. Where other care arrangements have been agreed, i.e. that do not require direct



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input from Health and Social Services, the Designated Officer will contact the relevant Housing Support Officer for information purposes only.

Where the agreed care and support package is ready and available for delivery to the Applicant then an offer of accommodation will be made on confirmation from the Housing Support Officer, (Housing Support Officers will liaise with Health and Social Services, landlords and partners as required).

Where the agreed care and support package is *not ready or available* for delivery to the Applicant then *no allocation of accommodation will be made*. Housing Support Officers will provide appropriate instructions to Housing Executive Districts and to Housing Associations in this regard.

In such circumstances the Applicant's name will remain on the Waiting List and the allocating officer will continue to liaise with the Housing Support Service until such time as another potential vacancy arises and the care and support package becomes available. The Housing Support Officer will liaise with all relevant bodies and will endeavour to determine why the agreed arrangements did not work as planned and will review the various available housing options as necessary with Health and Social Services.

A comment should be recorded on the file and on the **HMS** detailing why the offer was not made to the Applicant.

## 4.8 ADMINISTRATION OF COMPLEX NEEDS APPLICATIONS

### 4.8.1 REGISTRATION - APPLICATION FORMS

All applicants must complete a housing or transfer application form as appropriate.

Applications must be registered on **HMS** by the Housing Executive District Office responsible for the geographical area where the Applicant lives, (see 10.13 Guide to Areas Covered by NIHE Districts). Transfers must be registered on **HMS** by the tenant's Landlord.

#### 4.8.1.1 DIRECT REFERRALS

Where a Complex Needs applicant has been identified following a direct referral from Health and Social Services, (Route 1), the person(s) making the referral will forward a completed housing application / transfer form to the relevant Housing Support Officer in addition to any other required documentation / information. The relevant Housing Support Officer will be the one with responsibility for the geographical area in which the Applicant resides.

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Housing Support Officers will subsequently forward applications to the appropriate Participating Landlord, (Housing Executive for applicants and Housing Executive transfers and Housing Associations for their applicants seeking transfer), for registration on **HMS**. All applications and transfers received Participating Landlords should be initially recorded onto **HMS**.

Applicants or Transfers requesting general needs accommodation, including general needs sheltered accommodation, should have their housing needs assessed and the details input to **HMS**. Where a potential Complex Needs applicant is identified details should be forwarded to the Housing Support Service in the relevant Housing Executive Area Office for full consideration under the Complex Needs processes. Housing Support Officers will then instruct Housing Executive District Offices and Housing Associations accordingly, (see 4.5.1. Housing Executive Contact - Housing Support Officer).

#### 4.8.1.2 HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

All applications / transfers must be recorded onto **HMS**, (see 4.8.1 Registration - Application Forms).

Housing Executive **Local** Offices making referrals to the Housing Support Service will complete a housing needs assessment for the Applicant and forward a copy of the file, and any other relevant documentation, to the appropriate Housing Support Officer. Housing Associations will do the same for their own tenants seeking transfers.

There may be instances where an individual *applicant* approaches a Participating Landlord with a request for consideration for a supported housing project owned by that landlord. In such instances the applicant will still have to have a housing needs assessment carried out by the Housing Executive, (or Housing Association in respect of a *tenant seeking a transfer*). Application forms should be forwarded to the appropriate Housing Executive **Local** Office (or Housing Association in respect of a *tenant seeking a transfer*).

Where the Applicant has expressed a desire to be re-housed in a named supported housing project the Designated Officer will, following the completion of a housing needs assessment, refer the case to the Housing Support Service for consideration even if the assessment apparently does not meet the usual Complex Needs “triggers”.

#### 4.8.2 OFFERS / REFUSAL OF ACCOMMODATION

All offers, acceptances and refusals of accommodation must be recorded onto **HMS** at the time they are made by the allocating Landlord.

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a. Supported Accommodation - Offers / Refusals

Landlords making offers of supported housing must key offers onto **HMS**, at the time the offer is made, in the same manner as for general needs accommodation. Refusals and acceptances of offers must similarly be promptly recorded onto **HMS**.

It is important that Landlords who have accommodation that is managed by a partner, who is also responsible for making allocations, keep effective lines of communication open to ensure that **HMS** is kept up to date.

b. General Needs Accommodation - Offers / Refusals

Landlords making offers of general needs accommodation will do so after confirmation has been received from the relevant Housing Support Officer that is correct to do so. The offer details must then be input to **HMS** in the normal manner.

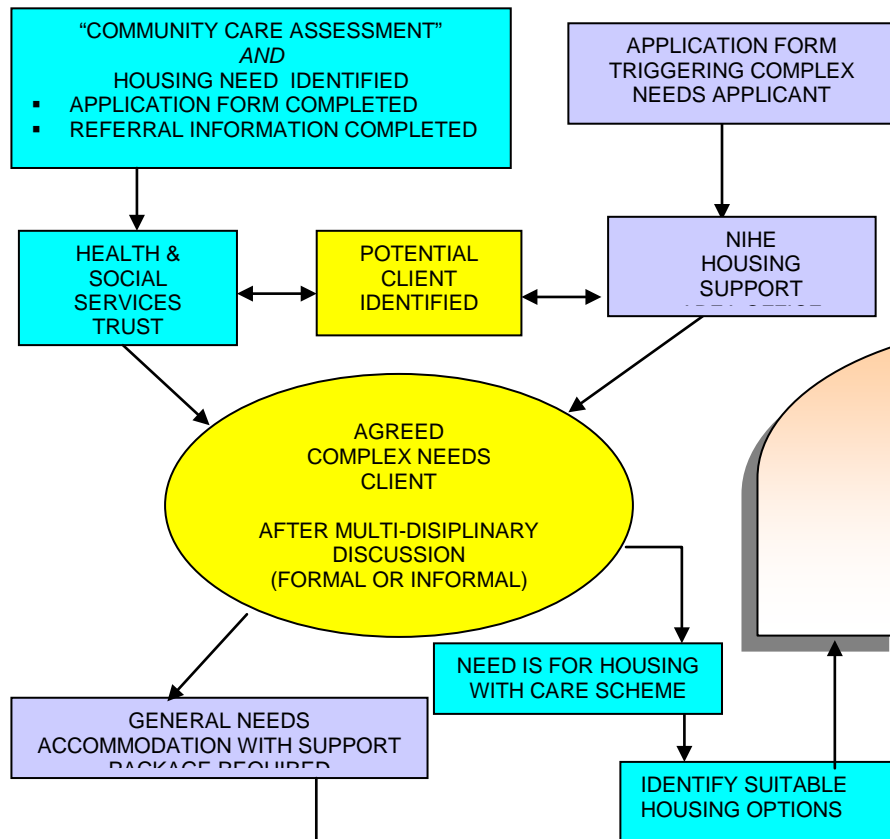
The normal time allowed for responses to offers is 2 / 3 days but, in view of the greater level of vulnerability of Complex Needs applicants, Landlords should use discretion in this regard. Landlords should also be aware that Complex Needs applicants may require more time than usual to take up their tenancy because of the arrangements that may have to be put in place by various agencies involved in their care and re-housing.

## 4.8.3 POST ALLOCATION - FORWARDING OF FILES

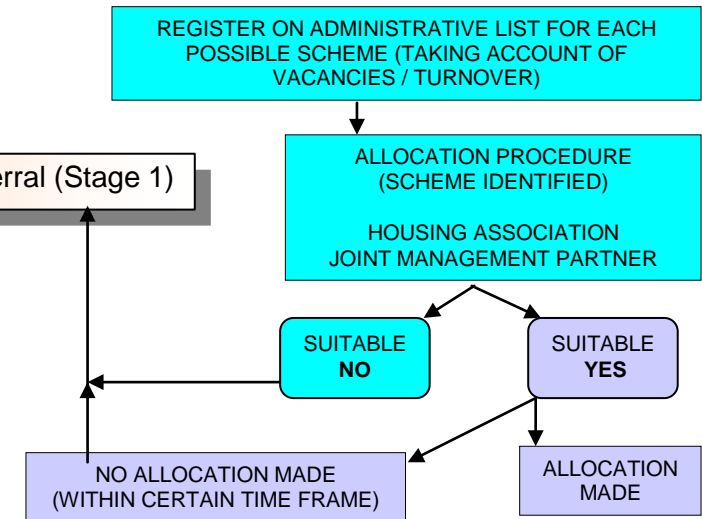
When an offer of accommodation has been accepted, Executive **Local Offices** and Housing Associations will forward the Applicant's file, upon request, to the Participating Landlord who made the offer.



## REFERRAL - (STAGE 1)



## ASSESSMENT / ALLOCATION - (STAGE 2) OPTION 1 - HOUSING WITH CARE



## ASSESSMENT / ALLOCATION- (STAGE 2) OPTION 2 - GENERAL NEEDS OPTION

