



Isle of Man
Government

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Homelessness Pathway Assistance Policy and Criteria

Approved by the Housing and Communities Board

May 2025

Homelessness Assistance Policy and Criteria

Context

Anyone presenting as homeless should be entitled to a level of homelessness assistance. However, there are different levels, which will have eligibility criteria attached to them.

This approach ensures that vulnerable people can count on an appropriate response from government agencies that will be underpinned by a safeguarding approach. It provides assurance that dependents within homeless households are given due regard.

Levels of assistance

- 1 Advice and assistance
- 2 Emergency interim accommodation
- 3 Offer of suitable accommodation, which is available for at least 12 months.

Eligibility and assessment criteria

People must meet this criteria in order to enter the assessment process.

Assessment criteria

Broadly speaking, an applicant would be considered homeless or threatened with homelessness if they are covered by one of the adapted ETHOS criteria for the Isle of Man. The level of service will be determined by need and intentionality.

Assuming that an eligible applicant is homeless, factors will be taken into consideration that will impact upon the level of duty owed to them

Summary

Duty	Level 1 Advice and Assistance	Level 2 Temporary Accommodation	Level 3 (priority need) Temporary accommodation then transition to social or supported housing
Residency requirements	No	Same as Income Support (5 years) ¹	Same as Income Support (5 years) ²
Not intentionally Homeless	No	Yes No if priority need	Yes

¹ section 6 (2) Social Care Act discretion will apply

² section 6 (2) Social Care Act discretion will apply

Priority Need

Priority need is recognised when the applicant or their household include factors/issues that would render them vulnerable. Suggested households who would be accepted as “priority need”, or need further investigation are:

Households with children

Pregnant women

A person who is homeless as result of being a victim of domestic abuse

A person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness, learning disability, physical disability or other reason.

A person who is 16 or 17 year old who is not owed a duty under more appropriate legislation such as The Children and Young Person Act 2001.

A person under 25 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18.

A person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered.

A person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of Her/His Majesty’s regular naval, military or air forces.

A person who is vulnerable as a result of having served a custodial sentence

A person who is vulnerable as a result of having to leave their accommodation because of actual or threats of violence from another person, which were/are likely to be carried out.

A person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as result of an emergency or disaster such as flood or fire.

Detailed guidance and information will be provided to assist with assessment of vulnerability, as not all people in the above groups are automatically deemed vulnerable. E.g. not all people released from a custodial sentence are vulnerable; or old age isn’t a vulnerability in itself but can be a significant factor in assessing an individual’s needs and abilities. The list does however indicate that an assessment of need is required/owed.

Intentionality

Someone who is homeless as result of their own act or omission would be assessed as “intentionally homeless”. E.g. if a person’s home was suitable for their needs and the rent was affordable, but they did not pay the rent and so were asked to leave.

Intentionality impacts upon what level of duty would be offered.

Eg If a person was homeless because they were evicted from social housing due to non-payment of rent; it would be nonsensical to offer them a new home under Level 3 homelessness duty. However, if they are assessed as meeting the "priority need" criteria, they should still be offered Level 1 advice and assistance.

If advice and support does not result in them finding their own accommodation, they may need Level 2 emergency interim accommodation, which would be provided for a specified length of time. This would ensure they have time to address their housing need and to safeguard any children in the household. Where children are involved, failure to secure accommodation within the specified time would ultimately lead to a referral to Children's Services.

Residency

In general, the income support criteria will apply to people accessing the service. The team in charge of the service will be able to use their discretion using the test in section 6 (2) Social Care Act of "grave need" if the situation warrants it in their professional judgement.

Level 1 duty

This duty should be universally owed to all applicants, including those who are ineligible for social housing due to their immigration status. This will assist strategic housing and health bodies to understand and gauge the types, and levels of vulnerability within our society. Agencies have a duty to safeguard when necessary by signposting to appropriate agencies/services including charities and the third sector.

Eligible people who are homeless but are not assessed as being "priority need" would still be entitled to level 1 duty. Advice and assistance may take the form of potential housing options, and contacts for accommodation providers that may meet their housing needs should they choose to accept assistance.

Level 2 duty

Emergency interim accommodation can be varied. Some people may require accommodation based support, where the accommodation is offered on condition of engagement with support providers. It may be "dispersed accommodation" which is usually regular, singular units within the community. Alternatively there may be forms of board and lodgings/bed and breakfast. Following discussions, it is felt that there should be a minimum obligation of 48 hours (which can be extended to 72 hours to include a working day if someone presents at weekends), during which time an initial assessment would be made to determine further assistance.

Level 3 duty

This duty will generally be owed to people who are assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, who have been identified as having a priority need as described above and are homeless through no fault of their own.

Offers of property must be suitable, reasonable, and available for a specified length of time. There are reasons why an offer of property might be unreasonable e.g. the property might be in an area too far to travel to essential services required by the household. Further guidance regarding this will be included in more detailed material once this legislative work is more advanced.

Discretion

At all times, staff running the homelessness pathway are enabled to use their professional judgement in applying these criteria. This may include waiving some of the individual criteria. Such instances should be recorded and logged.

Support Plans

Where a person is threatened with homelessness, a support plan must be devised, which recognises and addresses support needs to try resolve their situation and prevent homelessness from actually occurring.

Where an applicant is already homeless, the support plan must outline interventions and plans that will ensure any current support needs don't continue to undermine any new accommodation solution.

Support plans can vary in intensity and have revenue implications. This topic will be subject to further inter departmental/agency discussions before recommendations and options are formulated.

Income Support Residency Requirements

Residence condition

To be entitled to Income Support you normally must satisfy the Isle of Man residential condition. You will

satisfy this condition if you–

- were born in the Isle of Man;
- have been ordinarily resident in the Isle of Man for a continuous period of at least 5 years at any

time; or

- have been ordinarily resident in the Isle of Man for 3 or more separate periods which, when added

together, amount to at least 10 years.

Or you are -

- the husband, wife or civil partner of a person who satisfies any of the conditions listed above;
- the widow, widower or surviving civil partner of a person who satisfies any of the conditions listed

above;

- the former husband, wife or civil partner of a person who satisfies any of the conditions listed above; or

- the child of a person who satisfies any of the conditions listed above and that person was (or their

spouse or civil partner was) serving in HM Forces when they were born.