

Details of amendments made to Appendix 2 in Common Allocations Policy

Updated Appendix 2 Medical & Welfare Considerations

When ill health, disability or welfare is aggravated by housing conditions' including the location of the property; and the ill health, disability or welfare would improve if other accommodation were offered; the banding awarded will be dependent on two crucial factors:

- The link between the identified medical or welfare issue(s) and the individual's current housing situation.
- The realistic expectation that the identified medical or welfare issue(s) would improve if alternative, more suitable accommodation was made available.

When determining what banding to award, staff will assess what degree of need exists and, what adverse effect this need has on the lifestyle of the household as a whole. To achieve consistency in the allocation of banding under this heading a schedule is detailed below in tables 2A & 2B that sets out the different levels of need:

Table 2A – Medical considerations

Medical Considerations	Impact current property has on medical issues	Band
Low	Minor impact, where the existing housing circumstances have a low impact on an individual's medical issues.	Bronze
Moderate	Moderate impact where there is a clear relationship to an individual's medical issues and the existing housing circumstances.	Silver
Significant	Significant impact where the individuals medical issues makes it unreasonable to remain in the current accommodation; or where the property cannot be adapted to meet the applicant's needs or funds are not available for such adaptations or landlord permission cannot be obtained.	Gold
Severe	Severe impact where the individuals medical issue is life threatening or which is causing bed blocking with hospital / care facility	Emergency

Examples of circumstances that may fall into each banding category are shown below but please note that this is not an exhaustive list and each case will be reviewed on its merits. Supporting evidence would be expected in order to award Gold or Emergency band.

Severe

Medical specialists will not allow the individual to be discharged from hospital to their current property.

All other cases need referral to the medical/emergency assessment panel.

Individual lives alone and has chronic mobility and, or medical issues; or is living with another frail individual who has serious mobility or medical issues and with virtually no support or contact with family or neighbours.

- Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair and the property necessitates the climbing of steps/stairs to gain access to the property and, or steps/stairs within the property itself and is effectively housebound.
- Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair but cannot manage in the property due to the lay out not being compatible with the aids required.
- Is reliant on oxygen and has to manoeuvre oxygen cylinders up and down the stairs to access the building or within the property.

Significant

Individual has serious mobility or medical issues and has no access to a lift/stair lift and:

- Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair but has difficulty in the property due to the lay out not being compatible with the aids required (unable to access bedroom or bathroom).
- Has difficulty in managing the layout or size of property (toilet, bathing facilities).
- Is confined to the existing property as dependant on assistance to leave/return to the property.
- Lives in a property which necessitates the climbing of stairs to gain access to the property and, or steps within the property itself and has medical issues which make it difficult to managing this.

Moderate

Individual has moderate mobility or medical issues and has access to a lift/stair lift and:

- Is reliant on walking aids or a wheelchair and has some difficulty in the property due to the lay out not being compatible with the aids required.
- Has some difficulty in managing the layout or size of property (toilet, bathing facilities).
- Lives in a property which necessitates the climbing of stairs to gain access to the property and, or steps within the property itself and has medical issues which means there us some difficulty to manage this.
- Is not confined to the existing property and does not need assistance to leave/return to the property but would benefit from living on a ground floor/level access property

Low

- Individual has low mobility or medical issues who do not require a lift/stair lift or are already living in a level access, ground floor property.
- An individual suffering from generalised symptoms of asthma and eczema aggravated by the cold.
- Minor problems relating to recurring colds/asthma or regular depression or unusual allergies could be pointed under this heading providing a link to the existing accommodation could be demonstrated.

Table 2B – Welfare considerations

Social welfare is concerned with the quality of life that includes factors such as the quality of the environment, services available (gas, electric, water, public transport), level of crime, extent of drug abuse, availability and distance of essential social services, individuals place of work, education as well as religious and spiritual aspects of life. The age, physical or learning disability, behavioural difficulties and threats to the individual should be considered as well as the impact on the rest of the household.

Welfare Considerations	Impact current property has on welfare condition	Band
Low	Minor impact, where an individual's welfare issues has a low impact on the existing housing circumstances.	Bronze
Moderate	Moderate impact, where there is a clear relationship to an individual's welfare issues and the existing housing circumstances.	Silver
Significant	Significant impact, where the individuals welfare issues makes it unreasonable to remain in the current accommodation	Gold
Severe	Severe impact, where the individuals welfare issue could be life threatening	Emergency

Examples of circumstances that may fall into each banding category are shown below please note that this is not an exhaustive list and each case will be reviewed on its merits. Supporting evidence would be expected in order to award Gold or Emergency band.

Severe

For cases where an individual's welfare could be life threatening

All cases need referral to the medical/emergency assessment panel.

- Individual suffers dizzy spells and arthritis lives alone in old caravan in grounds of a house in rural area. Only mains service is electricity. Fetches water from an outside cold water tap and uses an Elsan bucket toilet situated some distance from the caravan. Dangers include cold during the winter and potential falls when collecting water or using the outside toilet.

Significant

For cases where an individual's welfare has a serious impact on their housing need making it unreasonable to remain in their current property

- The existing home seriously limits the care and support that can be provided to the individual
- The environment in and around the home has a serious detrimental effect on the quality of life of the household
- Remote location of property resulting in isolation and it can be demonstrated a move to an area with greater facilities will significantly improve quality of life, health & wellbeing
- High financial hardship created by the cost of the current property which is unsustainable and cannot be resolved
- Significant cumulative need to move due to several welfare factors for one or all members of the household that are not covered elsewhere in the policy.

Moderate

For cases where an individual's welfare has a moderate impact and a clear relationship to existing housing circumstances.

- The existing home moderately limits the care and support that can be provided to the individual
- The environment in and around the home has a moderate detrimental effect on the quality of life of the household
- Moderate isolation whereby it can be demonstrated a move to an area with more facilities will greatly improve quality of life, health & wellbeing
- Moderate financial hardship created by the cost of the current property which may be resolved within 6 months with debt intervention.
- Moderate cumulative welfare need to move due to some welfare factors for one or all members of the household are not covered elsewhere in the policy.

Low

For cases where an individual's welfare has a low impact on the existing housing circumstances

- The existing home has little impact in the care and support that can be provided to the individual
- The environment in and around the home has a low detrimental effect on the quality of life of the household
- Low isolation whereby it can be demonstrated a move to an area with more facilities will greatly improve quality of life, health & wellbeing
- Low financial hardship created by the cost of the current property which can be resolved within 6 months.
- Low cumulative welfare need to move due to some welfare factors for one or all members of the household are not covered elsewhere in the policy.

Referrals by the housing team for advice / information to third parties

In the rare event that information contained within the application makes the assessment of an applicant's medical priority for re-housing unclear the applicant's circumstances and available medical information may be referred to an independent third party for advice to be given to officer's in relation to the applicant's medical issues and thus the applicant's need for re-housing. Upon receipt of a response officers will consider this information in order to assist them in making a decision as to the applicant's priority for re-housing.

Referrals to the Councils assessment panel.

In limited often complex cases officers may be undecided about which band (priority) to award the applicant for re-housing on medical grounds. In such cases the matter can be referred by officer's to the Council's assessment panel. The panel will form a view considering all information available from the application (which may include information from relevant third parties) and reach a decision as to the client's banding priority for re-housing on medical grounds.

Appendix 2 - Current wording

Medical Considerations

When ill health (including both physical and mental health issues), disability or old age is aggravated by housing conditions and would improve if other accommodation were offered. The award for medical consideration is a range from Gold to Bronze Band.

Low	Minor Problems	Bronze
Medium	Moderate Problems	Silver
High	Serious Problems Medical issue(s) which have a serious impact on your housing need or make it unreasonable to remain in your current accommodation.	Gold
Urgent	Urgent Medical need which is life threatening or which is causing bed blocking with hospital/care facility	Emergency

(See following examples which are for guidance only)

In the case of stress this will be reflected when deciding on banding.

The two crucial factors that are looked for in any awards of medical conditions are:

1. The physical link between the identified medical complaint and the current housing accommodation/situation.
2. That there is a realistic expectation that the identified medical condition would improve if alternative, more suitable accommodation was made available.

The Housing Team will carefully consider any representation received and check the circumstances outlined with any banding award that may have previously been made. Where there is a need, a change to banding will be made. You do not normally need to submit medical certificates or letters from your GP. However, no supporting evidence is refused and may assist the Housing Officer in assessing your application. Please note that the Local Authority will not pay any costs associated with the provision of supporting medical evidence.

When determining what banding to award, staff should approach the matter from the standpoint of assessing what degree of need exists and, secondly, what adverse effect this

has on the lifestyle of the household as a whole?

To achieve consistency in the allocation of banding under this heading a descending schedule is detailed below.

Urgent Problems – Emergency Band. This band will be reserved for those cases where an applicant's or tenant's housing medical issue(s) are urgent and are life threatening or which are causing bed blocking within hospital/care facility

Example 1: An elderly applicant who the medical specialists will not allow to be discharged from hospital back to a second floor split-level flat which necessitates the climbing of stairs both to gain access and also within the flat itself. This person suffers from a chronic heart condition and the only accommodation available to them would place their life at risk. This view is amplified when further research reveals that the applicant lives alone, has virtually no contact with any neighbours, becoming in effect, a prisoner within the flat should the medical authorities decide to discharge him/ her from hospital.

Example 2: Mr Stevens, a frail, elderly gentleman, lives on his own in an old caravan in the grounds of a house in a country area. The only mains service is electricity. He fetches his water from an outside cold water tap and must use an Elsan bucket toilet situated some distance from the caravan. Mr Stevens suffers from dizzy spells, arthritis and was admitted to hospital as a result of the cold during the winter and the danger of falls when collecting water or using the outside toilet.

High/Serious Problems – Gold Band. This band will be reserved for those cases where an applicant's or tenant's housing medical issue(s) have a serious impact on their housing need or make it unreasonable to remain in their current accommodation.

Please note that gold band will only be made where the property cannot be adapted to meet the applicants needs or funds are not available for such adaptations or landlord permission cannot be obtained.

NOTE: It is expected that any medical award, which is assessed to be a serious problem, will be linked to medical or social service recommendations that have been received by the Housing Team.

Example 1 Mr Brown is a 39 year man who suffers with severe headaches, called cluster headaches. For this he takes large doses of medication and also needs oxygen to help relieve his pain. He currently lives on the third floor in a flat, which results in several problems. Mr Brown has to lift heavy oxygen cylinders up and down the stairs of the building to the third floor. In addition he finds that when he is suffering with his severe cluster headaches he finds himself very dizzy and this has proven to be rather dangerous when he has tried to go up and down the stairs. Mr Brown's headaches are also brought on by lots of background noise, and therefore struggles when he has noisy neighbours.

Example 2: Mrs Smith, an elderly widow, lives on her own in a first floor flat. She suffers from severe rheumatoid arthritis, and is unable to climb stairs. As a consequence she is housebound.

Medium/Moderate Problems – Silver Band. This again is a high banding award and should only be used to reflect moderate medical difficulties that have a clear relationship to existing housing circumstances.

Example 1: Mrs Baggins and her daughter are living in a property where Mr Baggins (husband and father) died of cancer. The young child (7 years old) is now constantly looking for her father in the property and this is causing considerable upset.

Example 2: Mr and Mrs Brown, are both aged 70, are the owner-occupiers of a large Victorian property. Mrs Brown also suffers from osteoarthritis and now finds mobility painful, which is aggravated by this large dwelling, where only the WC facilities are on an upper floor. Mr Brown has a blood disorder and has considerable problems keeping warm because the property has no central heating. The GP is concerned on both accounts and has advised the Housing Team accordingly.

With both serious and moderate problems officers have a certain amount of discretion regarding the award. This will be of particular use to visiting officers in assessing the degree of seriousness of any medical problem.

Low/Minor Problems – Bronze Band. The degree of the problem is minor.

Example 1: A family with a young child suffering from generalised symptoms of asthma and eczema aggravated by the cold.

Example 2: Minor problems relating to recurring colds/asthma or regular depression or unusual allergies could be pointed under this heading providing a link to the existing accommodation could be demonstrated.

Who is responsible for assessing medical priority?

The Housing Team undertake the majority of assessments for applicant's housing need for re-housing under medical grounds. The team will base their assessments on the information provided in the application and any supporting information supplied by the applicant and /or their representatives.

Referrals by the housing team for advice / information to third parties

In the rare event that information contained within the application makes the assessment of an applicant's medical priority for re-housing unclear the applicant's circumstances and available medical information may be referred to an independent third party for advice to be given to officer's in relation to the applicant's medical issues and thus the applicant's need for re-housing. Upon receipt of a response officers will consider this information in order to assist them in making a decision as to the applicant's priority for re-housing.

Referrals to the Council's assessment panel.

In limited often complex cases officers may be undecided about which band (priority) to award the applicant for re-housing on medical grounds. In such cases the matter can be referred by officer's to the Council's assessment panel. The panel will form a view

considering all information available from the application (which may include information from relevant third parties) and reach a decision as to the client's banding priority for re-housing on medical grounds.

The following list covers some of the main factors, which can be reflected in a banding award under medical considerations.

1. Mobility - Inability to manage stairs/control-heating (e.g. put on extra clothing or adjust fire). size of accommodation, garden.
2. Applicants or tenants who are more or less confined to their existing accommodation, or where they depend on others to enable them to leave the dwelling.
3. Where present accommodation is causing the applicant's mental or physical disability, which could be overcome by a move to more suitable accommodation. The approach in this instance is to focus on how the applicant or tenant's circumstances could be improved by a move to alternative accommodation - banding will be awarded accordingly.