

# Guidance Notes for the Highland Housing Register

## The Highland Housing Register (HHR) – What is it?

There are currently five housing associations operating locally in the Highlands along with The Highland Council:

- Albyn Housing Society, Cairn Housing Association, Lochaber Housing Association, Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association and Pentland Housing Association.

The Highland Council and all five associations are participating in a partnership called the **Highland Housing Register (HHR)**, which offers a single way of applying for housing to any of the six organisations. To apply for any or all of them, you just have to fill in one application form. This information is then shared between all of the Partners.

The aim of the HHR is to make it easier for you to apply for housing. The HHR Partners also aim to provide high quality housing information and advice, meaning that you can go into any of the partner's offices and get good advice on all of your housing options in the Highlands.

In addition, the following participating landlords are social housing providers who have limited stock in the Highlands or whose stock is mostly for people with special needs:

- Hanover Housing Association, Key Housing Association, Link Housing Association, Margaret Blackwood Housing Association and Trust Housing Association.

To be considered for suitable vacancies of the participating landlords, you can agree to be nominated to them by ticking the appropriate boxes on page 3 of the application form. Because of the specialist nature of their housing stock these participating landlords may require applications to be made separately to them as not all of their vacancies will be let from the HHR.

These notes are intended to help you fill in the Housing Application Form. If, however you would prefer guidance and help from a member of staff, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Partners who have an office near to you (see Pages 21 & 22 of the Application Form for a list of offices).

## Tables 1 & 2 : Explanation of types of housing

- **Amenity** housing (general needs housing which has additional features) is for people who, for example, have a medical need **or** physical disability and who have a requirement for housing of amenity standard.
- **Adapted** housing is/can be a property that has been designed or changed (adapted) for special needs. We will usually give priority to applicants if they or a member of their household have mobility or medical needs and would benefit from the type of adaptation available. If a property has been purpose built or substantially adapted to be fully wheelchair accessible, you or a member of your household should normally need this type of specialised property.
- **Supported** housing is allocated to people who will receive specialist support while they are living in it. The support may be provided by your landlord or by another organisation. The target client group and any special criteria that have to be met will usually be included in a referral agreement specific to each project.
- **Sheltered** housing is for people who have a medical need or physical disability and who have a requirement for housing support/emergency alarm call services.
- **Very Sheltered** housing is specially designed for the elderly with the provision of 24 hour support, communal facilities and with the additional provision of meals.
- Any other type of house or flat is known as **General Needs** Housing.

### 1. Which HHR Partner/s and or Participating landlords would you like to be housed by

#### Question 1.1

If you wish to be considered by all of the HHR Partners please tick **All Partners**. If you only want to be considered by some of the partners put a tick beside the ones you have chosen. Please refer to the areas of operation of each partner indicated on page 1 of the form.

#### Note :

**Your details will be shared between all of the partners through the shared computer system, but you will only be considered for suitable properties of the Partner/s you have selected.**

**If you do NOT wish your details to be shared with one or more of the Partners due to a potential risk of danger to your household, you must advise a member of staff in order that your application can be processed manually.**

## **Question 1.2**

If you wish to be nominated to all of the HHR Participants please tick **All Participants**. If you only want to be nominated to some of the participants put a tick beside the ones you have chosen. Please refer to the types of housing and areas of operation of each partner indicated on page 2 of the form.

### **Note :**

**Your details will be shared with participating landlord/s you have chosen through a nomination process and between all of the partners through the shared computer system.**

**If you do NOT wish your details to be shared with one or more of the Partners due to a potential risk of danger to you household, you must advise a member of staff in order that your application can be processed manually.**

## **2. Your Personal Details**

### **Question 2.1      The person who has worse housing conditions should be Applicant 1.**

#### **Applicant 1**

Please tell us your full name (including any middle names), address, (including your post code) and daytime, evening and mobile telephone numbers along with your e-mail address if you have one.

#### **Applicant 2**

Applicant 2 is your spouse/partner or another person who you want to be a joint tenant with you. Please tell us their full name (including any middle names), address (including post code) and daytime, evening and mobile telephone numbers along with their e-mail address if they have one.

### **Question 2.2**

If you are of no fixed abode you **must** give us an address to send any correspondence to. If you do not want your mail sent to your current address, tell us where you want your mail to be sent. Remember that we will send all correspondence regarding your application to this address until you tell us otherwise.

### **Question 2.3**

If you want to give a relative or friend permission to discuss your application on your behalf please tell us about him/her here. Tell us their full name (including any middle names), address (including post code) and daytime, evening and mobile telephone numbers along with their e-mail address if they have one. You must also tell us their date of birth or a password you would like to use so that we can confirm their identity when they contact us. Without a form of verification we will not be able to discuss your application with another person.

### **Question 2.4**

Starting with yourself, you should list all persons who live with you now and tell us if that person will be moving house with you by ticking the appropriate box. You should tell us about anyone who does not live with you now but who will be moving house with you or a child/children you have access to by ticking the appropriate box. The people who will move with you (whether they live with you at the moment or not) will be known as your 'household'. Give details of each person's date of birth including your own. If a baby is expected, tell us the expected date of birth and provide written confirmation of this with the application form. Tell us what the relationship is between you and each person.

### **Question 2.5**

Please tell us if you have an access arrangement for children who do not live with you at present and whether this causes overcrowding in your present home. It is important to let us know as this may affect your point's level. You must give us proof of this arrangement.

### **Question 2.6**

Please tell us how many couples are included in question 2.4 (household details). We need to know this so that we can work out how many bedrooms your household needs and whether you are overcrowded or have too many bedrooms in your present accommodation.

### **Question 2.7**

Please list all of the previous addresses you have lived at over the last five years, starting with your present address. You should tell us the dates you lived at each property, as well as your landlord's name and address if you can. If you are/were an owner-occupier during the last 5 years please tell us about it here. You should also advise us your reason for leaving these properties. This information is required for Applicant 1 and for Applicant 2 if you are applying with someone who will be a joint tenant. We may contact previous landlords to obtain tenancy related details.

### **Question 2.8**

Please tell us if you or your joint applicant has rent arrears or any other tenancy related debt which you still owe to your current (or any former) landlord. If this is the case we will suspend your application if you have rent arrears or other debts unless:

- the amount you owe is less than 1/12th of the amount you had to pay over a full year for the tenancy; or
- you have agreed arrangements with the landlord for paying off the debt and have kept to these arrangements for at least three months.

### **Question 2.9**

It is important that if any legal action has been taken against you or anyone who will be living with you for anti social behaviour that you give us details. This information may not necessarily prevent you being housed but it may affect the type of tenancy you get and it may mean that we are able to offer you support.

### Question 2.10

The law says that if you are subject to immigration control you can only apply for social housing in certain circumstances. Please answer the question for you and any joint applicant. For your information here are details of the EU & A8 States.

- **EEA – European Economic Area**
- **EU – European Union,**
- **A8 - EU Accession Countries**

<b>EU States</b>		<b>A8 States</b>
Austria	Malta	Czech Republic
Belgium	Netherlands	Estonia
Denmark	Portugal	Hungary
Finland	Southern Cyprus	Latvia
France	Spain	Lithuania
Germany	Sweden	Poland
Greece	UK	Slovakia
Ireland	Iceland	Slovenia
Italy	Norway	
Luxembourg	Liechtenstein	

### Question 2.11

If you have suffered a relationship breakdown with a husband/wife/partner which means you have to find somewhere else to live, please tick the box in order that we know how to process your application.

### Question 2.12

If you have recently moved into the Highland area and have had any difficulties registering with a Doctor (GP) please tell us about it here. We collect this anonymous statistical information for NHS Highland.

## 3. Your Accommodation Details

### Question 3.1

Please tick one box that best describes the type of tenancy you have in your present accommodation. If none of the selection is applicable, please tell us about your accommodation in the space provided.

### Question 3.2

Please tell us if the property you live in is in a poor state of repair for example, there are significant repairs required, or there are serious issues with damp, or you have poor natural/artificial lighting in the property. Tell us if you do not have access to basic facilities such as a sink/basin, bath/shower or toilet.

It may be necessary for us to inspect your home, but we will let you know that we plan to do this and when we plan to come. The inspection is solely for the purposes of ensuring that your application receives all relevant priority on our waiting list. We will be discreet and will not normally inform your landlord that we have inspected the property.

### **Question 3.3**

You should tell us how many bedrooms are in the home that you live in now and how many of these bedrooms you (and your household) have for your own use. Give the same information for Applicant 2 if they are living apart from you.

## **4. Homeless**

### **Question 4.1**

If you or Applicant 2 have been asked to leave your present accommodation, tick 'YES' and tell us the date you have to leave by.

### **Question 4.2**

Tell us why you are being asked to leave.

### **Question 4.3**

If you have anything in writing which asks you to leave please enclose it with your application. However, do not delay sending in your application by waiting to receive confirmation that you have been asked to leave.

### **Question 4.4**

Tell us if you are at risk if you remain in your current accommodation. If you are, you must contact the Highland Council Area Housing & Property Office to discuss your situation.

#### **Note :**

**If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness and you live in the Highland Area you must contact the nearest Highland Council Area Housing and Property Office or Service Point who will interview you, assess your housing situation and advise you of your housing options. If you do not live in the Highland area and are homeless or threatened with homelessness please contact your nearest local authority, which will assess your situation and advise you of your housing options**

## **5. Social Factors**

### **Question 5.1**

Tick any of the boxes which apply to you. You will be asked to provide proof of your circumstances if this is available.

### **Question 5.1(c)**

A Community Care Order is a detention order in the community under the Mental Health Act. This order can dictate where a person lives (on release from hospital for example).

### **Question 5.2**

If you have ticked any of the statements in 5.1, further information will be required from people such as your Social Worker/Community Psychiatric Nurse/Doctor etc. Therefore, please give us as much information as you can.

### **Question 5.3**

If you need to move because you need to **receive care** from a relative or friend in order to live independently or need to **give care** to a relative or friend so that he/she can live independently, please tell us his/her name and address, tell us their relationship to you and tell us about the reasons for needing care. Please provide details in Q 5.2 of any Health or Social Work involvement.

## **6. Ill Health /Disability**

### **Question 6.1**

If you have ticked 'YES' to this question you need to complete a separate Medical Assessment form for each person that suffers from ill health or has a disability (forms are available from any of the partners listed on pages 21 & 22 of the application form).

### **Question 6.2**

If you or any member of your household have previously applied for a Medical Assessment you should tick 'YES' and tell us their name. If you know when the assessment was made and what grade was awarded please tell us.

## **7. Your Requirements**

### **Question 7.1**

Please tell us what type of accommodation you will consider living in. When you answer this question, bear in mind that not all types of property are available in all areas and that you will reduce your chance of getting an offer of housing by restricting the types of property you are willing to accept.

(A maisonette is a flat which is on 2 levels (with internal stairs) within a block of flats)

### **Question 7.2**

If because of a disability or ill health you require ground floor or a specially adapted house (e.g. level access shower/level access to property); or if you have other requirements (e.g. for a particular heating type) please tell us about these here. This should only be completed if you have a **need** for these particular requirements.

### **Question 7.3 & 7.4**

Tell us if you think you require sheltered or supported accommodation. If you want further information on this please refer to page 2 of these guidance notes or contact any of the partners listed on pages 21 & 22 of the application form.

## **8. Choice of Lettings Zones & Towns/Villages**

### **Question 8**

“**Lettings Zones**” are a collection of “**towns & villages**” e.g. West Caithness is a “Lettings Zone” within the Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Area and it contains the “towns & villages” Barrock, Bower, Castletown, Dunnet, Durran, Forss, Geise, Glengolly, Gillock, Halkirk, Janetstown, Mey, Murkle, Reay, Scarfskerry, Scrabster, Shebster, Spittal, Thurso, Westfield, Weydale.

Please tick up to **ten** towns/villages that you wish to live in.

Maps showing where the towns and villages are and a property portfolio advising what types of houses are available in each town or village can be made available by contacting one of the Partners listed on pages 21 & 22 of the application form.

Please remember that in some areas very few houses become available to allocate.

Please complete the section that requests your 1<sup>st</sup> preference of town or village at the bottom of page 14. This information will be used to gauge where the strongest demand is for future building purposes.

## **9. Reason for Applying**

### **Question 9.1**

The Highlands is divided into 3 geographical areas, i.e.

- Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross
- Mid Ross, Skye & Lochaber
- Inverness, Nairn & Badenoch & Strathspey

The Highland Housing Register has divided each of these geographical areas into Lettings Zones and towns & villages.

You will get priority within a Lettings Zones, if you have a reason for needing to live in a towns or village contained within it. These reasons may be because you currently live in the area and wish to move to another part of the area or to a different type of property. Or you may

wish to move to enable you to take up employment or be closer to your place of work. Alternatively you may wish to move to be nearer to your GP or hospital or to be closer to family for support. There may be other reasons not listed. Please tell us about the zone you wish to be housed in and tell us why you want to live there. If you have a need to live within a zone, then additional points will be given to take account of this need. If you have a link to more than one zone, points will only apply once.

### **Question 9.2**

If you have chosen an area because you work there or have been offered work there; please tell us who your employer is and your place of work. Written confirmation from your employer/prospective employer will be required.

### **Question 9.3**

If you are looking for work in the areas you have chosen, please tell us what type of work you are looking for and what your experience and qualifications are. Please also tell us about the jobs you have applied for so far.

### **Question 9.4**

If you wish to move for medical or social reasons give more information by either ticking the statement/s which applies to you, or by telling us why you wish to move. You may be asked for proof of your circumstances if this is available.

## **10. Other Information**

Please tell us why you are applying for housing, giving any information that you think should be taken into account when we are assessing your application.

## **11. Declaration**

We are required under Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to know if you are (or have been within the past year) an employee, committee member or elected member of any of the Partner organisations. We also need to know if you are a close relative of any of the above.

A “close relative” is a direct relative by blood or marriage (including step-relatives) for example your son/daughter, brother sister, mother/father, grandparent/grandchild, husband/wife.

Please complete this section if it applies to you or anyone included on your application.

## **12. Declaration**

Please complete this section if it applies to you or anyone included on your application. You should return your form in a sealed envelope marked for “the attention of a Senior Housing Officer” to the office that you wish your application to be held in (see details on pages 21 & 22 of the application form).

## **Data Protection Act 1998**

The landlords included in this form are registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 and are duty bound to comply with the conditions set out in this Act.

The landlords will share the information contained in this form (through the shared computer system) with all of the Highland Housing Register Partners listed on the top table of page 1 whether you wish to be housed by them or not. The landlords will process the information contained in this application form and any other relevant information they obtain in connection with the application in a number of ways. They will process the information for the purposes of your application for housing. They may also use this information to provide anonymous statistical data to their Management Committee, Communities Scotland and other interested parties. In addition if you are successful in obtaining accommodation with one of the Highland Housing Register landlords, that landlord will use your information to create your tenancy file. You have the right to see any details held in your personal files on request (there may be a charge for this).

By signing this application form you give consent to the landlords sharing and processing the information in the above way.

### **13. Your signature/s**

Please check that you have completed all the relevant questions and make sure that you are happy that the form is properly completed.

Please read carefully and only sign if you agree with all the aspects of the following declaration:

I/we confirm that to the best of my knowledge the details I/we have given on this application form are true and accurate.

I/we understand that if my circumstances change I/we must notify the landlord that accepted my application.

I/we understand that supplying any false or misleading information or withholding relevant information, now and at any time, may result in my/our application being suspended.

If I/we obtain a tenancy based on false or misleading information I/we understand that this can be grounds for eviction.

I/we give permission to the landlord that accepts this application to make any necessary enquiries in connection with my/our application for housing to verify the circumstances stated on the form or to obtain details relating to former tenancies.

I/we agree that any information given by me/us will be made available to all of the Partner landlords of the Highland Housing Register, now or in the future.

I/we understand and agree to the conditions noted in this declaration.

After careful reading, the Application Form **MUST** be signed by both Applicant 1 and Applicant 2 (if applicable), and should be returned to one of the Partners Offices at any of the addresses on pages 21 & 22 of the application form.

Unfortunately we will be unable to process your application if the application form has not been fully completed or if the form is not signed.

## **14. Information for Monitoring and Research**

You are not obliged to complete this section and, if you choose not to, it will in no way affect your application.

### **Question 14.1**

**Ethnic Origin** We have requested this information to enable the Highland Housing Register Partners to ensure that houses are let fairly and according to its rules, and that no discrimination takes place.

### **Question 14.2**

**Disabilities** We have requested this information to enable the Highland Housing Register Partners to ensure that houses are let fairly and according to its rules, and that no discrimination takes place

## **What Happens Next?**

Within 21 days of receipt of your application form we will acknowledge receipt and your details will be put onto a shared computer database which all partners will have access to.

If you have not provided supporting evidence in relation to your application, we will write to you requesting this. We will not be able to award points for specific categories without supporting evidence.

We will use the information you have given to us to calculate how many points you qualify for in relation to the Common Allocations Policy.

We will tell you how many points your application has been awarded and what these points have been awarded for. You can appeal if you think that you have not been awarded all the points you think you are entitled to.

We will not normally write to you again until a house becomes vacant that meets your needs and for which you have a high enough level of points, at that time we will make an offer of the property to you in writing.

If your circumstances change **you must** let us know. You may need to complete another application form.

## **False and Misleading Information**

If you give false or misleading information, which unfairly improves your priority on the list, we will suspend your application until you provide us with a new application telling us about your true circumstances.

In the same way, if you are allocated a tenancy because you gave false or misleading information, we will take legal action to take the tenancy back from you.

## **Complaints and Appeals**

If you disagree with how your application form for housing has been treated you can make a complaint. Contact any of the Highland Housing Register Partners and ask for a copy of the complaints and appeals procedure.

## **Other Housing Options**

For information on other housing options available, refer to the Highland Council website ; [www.highland.gov.uk/livinghere/housing/findinghousing/aquidtohousingoptions](http://www.highland.gov.uk/livinghere/housing/findinghousing/aquidtohousingoptions) or contact one of the Partners at the addresses on pages 21 & 22 of the application form

**Mutual exchange** - A mutual exchange is when two tenants exchange properties. They may be tenants of any local authority or Housing Association. You need to request forms from the landlords involved to apply for a mutual exchange and you must not move before you receive written permission and have signed leases.

If you want to exchange you must find another tenant who lives in a suitable property, and wants to move to your house. One way to do this is to advertise either in a housing office or in the local press. It is not necessary to display details of your address or phone number when you advertise. When you have found a suitable exchange you must contact your landlord to begin the process of undertaking a mutual exchange.

You may also look for or advertise for an exchange using HomeSwapper Details on how to register for an exchange or to search for an exchange can be found on their website [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)

**If you have any queries or concerns about filling in your application that are not addressed in the Guidance notes, please contact one of the Highland Housing Register Partner Offices at the addresses on pages 21 & 22 of the application form.**