

How do you apply for social housing in the meantime?

You can apply by telephone **03448 920900** and ask for your local Housing Executive district office. You can complete an application form which you can get from any Housing Executive office or download from the Housing Executive website www.nihe.gov.uk

You may also call in person to your local office to fill in a form. One application form will allow you to be considered by all social landlords who have housing in the area in which you want to live.

Is everyone entitled to apply for social housing?

Everyone over the age of 18 (and in some exceptional cases 16 years) is entitled to apply for social housing in Northern Ireland - but the Housing Executive will decide if you are eligible i.e. consideration must be given if you are a person from abroad and/or if there is previous unacceptable behaviour that might make you unsuitable as a tenant.

Homelessness

If your home is no longer suitable for your needs, for example, if you can no longer manage the stairs due to illness or disability, you may be assessed as being homeless by the Housing Executive and may be re-housed in a new home that better meets your needs.

www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org



Rural Community Network
SUPPORTING RURAL COMMUNITIES

HOW IT WORKS...

Area identified for rural housing needs test

NIHE work with the local community to carry out a test using leaflets and adverts, press adverts, social media, public meetings & school art competition

People register for assessment of housing needs with NIHE

Applicants contacted for a discussion on potential housing solutions

Following Housing Needs Test, the waiting list is reviewed to determine the extent of the new housing required

For further information on any social housing query contact the **Housing Executive on 03448 920900**

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Addressing Social Housing Needs in Rural Communities

www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org

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Rural Residents' Forum



What is social housing?

The key purpose of social housing is to provide accommodation that is affordable for people in housing need. Social housing consists of homes that are let at below market rents on a secure basis to those most in need or struggling with their housing costs. It is allocated to people who have made an application for social housing, who have been assessed using a points based system and are added to the waiting list. There isn't enough social housing in Northern Ireland to house everyone on the waiting list, so depending on their area of choice, people may have to wait for a suitable home to become available.

What is affordable housing?

The Housing Executive considers 'affordable housing' to be both social housing and intermediate housing. Intermediate housing is shared ownership housing provided by a registered housing association to households who can afford a small mortgage but are not able to own the property outright.

Who builds and manages Social Housing?

In Northern Ireland the Housing Executive has been the main provider of social housing since it was established in 1971. Although the Housing Executive no longer builds new social housing they manage over 86,000 units of social housing and deliver a range of services to their tenants as well as to people living in socially rented, privately rented and owner occupied accommodation.

Housing associations have grown rapidly in the last twenty years and they are now the only organisations that build new social housing in Northern Ireland. Housing associations are not-for-profit organisations who use any surplus they make to maintain their existing stock and build more social housing.

Is social housing built in rural communities?

Yes. The Housing Executive owns around 15,000 social housing units in rural communities. Housing associations own around 3,000 social housing units in rural areas.

How do the Housing Executive and housing associations decide where new houses should be built?

Anyone can apply for social housing and can identify a rural area as their preferred location to be housed. However, The Housing Executive recognises that social housing need can be hidden in rural areas. Many people who want to live in a rural community don't register on the housing waiting list because there is little or no social housing available in their area.

At present approximately 12% of the people on the housing waiting list want a home in a rural location. The Housing Executive works

with housing associations to enable the provision of new homes in these areas and also works with rural communities to identify other rural areas where there may be a hidden need for housing.

How are Tests for Housing Need carried out?

The Housing Executive will encourage anyone who may be in need of a home in an area to come forward and register their interest. Each test will be tailored to suit the area and could involve a community meeting or event, an art competition in the local primary school and newspaper articles, posters, leaflets and newsfeeds on social media. The test usually lasts for around 4 weeks to give people a chance to register. The Housing Executive will then get in touch to take your details, assess your circumstances and discuss your potential housing options. Anyone interested in and eligible for social housing will be added to the common waiting list for their area of choice.

The common waiting list is used by all social housing providers to allocate homes.

What happens next?

If housing need is identified then the area is highlighted to housing associations for a new build scheme. It is then up to housing associations to talk to landowners in the area to identify potential sites, negotiate their sale, apply for planning permission and develop housing. If you think there are people in your area who might need social housing you can contact the Housing Executive switchboard on **03448 920900**. Or speak to your local Councillor who can ask the Housing Executive to come out and undertake a Housing Need Test. You can also contact the Housing Executive Rural Unit on **028 9598 2502**.

