



HILLINGDON  
LONDON

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# Understanding medical assessments

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## What is a medical assessment?

If you are applying for housing because your current accommodation affects a medical condition or disability, you must complete a medical assessment form. This information will help us to determine if you have housing priority for medical reasons. Depending on the complexity of your case, we will complete the assessment or refer your application to the council's medical adviser or occupational therapy team.

The assessment does not examine how severe your medical condition or disability is. It looks at how your current accommodation affects your health or disability or a member of your household. We want to find out if your health or a member of your household's health would improve by moving to alternative accommodation.

### Homeless applications

If you are homeless the medical assessment will determine whether you are vulnerable or can manage your own affairs. If you are living in temporary accommodation we will consider whether your current accommodation is suitable and / or the suitability of future temporary accommodation.

### Waiting and transfer list applications

If you are applying to be offered alternative accommodation for medical reasons and there is evidence that your illness or disability is being made worse by your existing housing conditions, additional priority may be awarded. At times, we may need to contact your doctor who is named on the form for further information. We may also seek the advice of an occupational therapist to help assess how you function within your current home. If this assessment shows that you require a specially adapted property, you will be informed in writing. You should be aware that most applicants do not receive additional priority.

**Please note:** If an applicant's current property is found to be suitable or could be improved to an acceptable standard, we cannot award medical priority.

## Who is the Council's Medical Adviser?

We use an independent medical adviser who is a practicing GP and has a thorough knowledge of homelessness and housing legislation, the council's Allocations Policy, and how it applies to medical priority.

The Medical Adviser does not make a decision but give us a professional opinion about the severity of the medical condition, and whether the housing is having a significant impact. Where this can be demonstrated, additional priority will be awarded.

Any complaints or enquiries about the decision are the responsibility of the Housing Manager.

## **Why haven't I received medical priority when I have a serious medical condition?**

Medical priority is only awarded when the housing is having a **significant effect** on the medical problems.

No matter how serious the medical problems are, we cannot award an upgrade unless we can demonstrate how the housing is making this worse. Because of the chronic shortage of available properties, we have to assess your degree of medical problems and housing need against others in a less, similar or worse situation.

It does not mean we have not accepted your medical conditions if your priority is not upgraded.

## **What happens once the medical assessment has been carried out?**

Once the assessment is complete, we will write to you with the outcome.

Depending on the outcome of your medical assessment, you may have no identified housing need; your priority band may remain the same if you had other reasons for housing; or you may be given an upgrade in your priority banding.

## **Other Factors**

### **Lift Failure**

If you request re-housing because lifts where you currently live are constantly broken or unusable, the landlord will need to give us a report on the lift's reliability before you can be awarded a medical priority. If the lift is found to be reliable, medical priority may not be awarded.

Please note: Unreliability is only based on the number of mechanical faults and how long the lift has been out of order, not the amount of call outs (whether nuisance calls or to report vandalism)

### **Damp and disrepair**

If you request a transfer due to the state of disrepair in your property, medical priority can only be given if the disrepair that is worsening your health cannot be put right. You should first report any damp and disrepair to your landlord.

### **Overcrowding**

Difficulties arising from overcrowding affect a very large number of households in Hillingdon and additional medical priority will generally not be awarded for problems solely relating to overcrowded accommodation. The allocation policy specifically takes account of the effects of overcrowding and attracts its own priority. In a small minority of cases, where severe medical

problems are involved, overcrowding may be considered as an additional factor following a discussion with health professionals.

**Extra bedroom on medical grounds**

The council only awards extra bedrooms in exceptional circumstances. The medical advisor will discuss individual cases with other health professionals before deciding if an extra bedroom is essential to maintain health and well being,

While we will consider the needs of a family to protect a child with challenging behaviour, we cannot guarantee that priority will be given for an extra bedroom. Ultimately it is the parent's duty to create a safe environment to minimise the potential risk of harm.

**Extra bedroom for full-time carer**

An extra bedroom will only be recommended where an applicant needs ongoing regular night time care.

**What can I do if I disagree with the medical assessment decision?**

As stated above, if you disagree with the medical assessment decision or any other aspect of your housing assessment, you can appeal against this by writing to us. Please remember to say why you disagree with our decision.

**Contacting us by telephone: 01895 556666**

**Contacting us by email: [housingoptions@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:housingoptions@hillingdon.gov.uk)**

**Contacting us by writing:  
Housing Options Team  
London Borough of Hillingdon  
Civic Centre, 2 North/05  
Uxbridge High Street  
Middlesex, UB8 1UW**

**Contacting us in person:  
Housing Services Reception  
Civic Centre**

**Opening Hours  
Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm**