

Housing Application Appeal Guidance

This guidance document has been designed to assist you in appealing against a decision we made about your housing application. Its aim is to help you understand the appeal process and give guidance on how to strengthen your appeal.

The Appeal Process

If you have received a decision that you do not agree with, you have 21 days from the date of your decision letter in which to submit an appeal. If you have been placed into 'Reduced Priority' on the Housing Register, you can request a review of the decision at any time. However, you will need to demonstrate how the removal of 'Reduced Priority' is now justified.

Northampton Partnership Homes aim to respond to routine appeals within 56 days of receipt and 'Reduced Priority' appeals within 28 days of receipt. A Senior Officer who was not involved in the original decision will undertake a full review of your housing application and consider any evidence. You will be notified of the outcome of the review, including the reasons if the original decision is upheld. The decision is final with no further right to appeal; any challenges to the decision can only be made through judicial review proceedings.

Strengthening Your Appeal

Each council sets its own eligibility criteria based on local stock and demand. We strongly advise that you refer to Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Policy before you submit an appeal so that you may identify **where** you meet the criteria. Submitting an appeal is your opportunity to demonstrate **how** you meet the criteria.

It is important that you tell us why you are appealing; your reasons do not have to be lengthy but it is not enough to merely state 'I disagree'. You should explain in simple terms why you disagree and be specific. Submitting new and **relevant** evidence will strengthen your appeal. If the evidence you wish to submit is not yet available, do not delay appealing while you obtain it. However, do inform us that you will be submitting it a later date.

Supporting Evidence

It may be there was not sufficient evidence to verify the circumstances of your current housing situation or your housing needs. Submitting new and **relevant** evidence will increase the chances of a successful appeal. We understand it can be difficult for you to know what is considered 'relevant' evidence. To help you, we have put together some examples of what is considered to be relevant, according to the decision that is being appealed. Under each heading, you will find examples of the types of evidence you can submit in order to strengthen your appeal.

No Local Connection

Residence - In order to meet the policy local connection criteria based on residence, you will need to evidence that you live in the Borough of Northampton and have done so for the past 3 years continuously.

Examples of evidence:

- Utility Bills
- Bank statements
- Credit card statements
- DWP letters
- Council Tax Bills
- Voter Registration Cards

The documents should cover the past 3 years (one document per year is suffice as long as a 3 year period is covered). All documents should be dated and clearly show your name and address).

Employment - In order to meet the policy local connection criteria based on employment, you will need to evidence that you work in the Borough of Northampton and have done so for the past 9 months continuously for a minimum of 16 hours per week.

In order to evidence your employment you will need to supply the following:

- Contract of Employment clearly showing your name, start date of employment, work location and contracted hours
- Most recent wage slip with all details clearly visible

If you do not have your Contract of Employment, you may submit a letter from your employer on headed paper but it should contain all of the above information. The letter should be dated and signed and include a contact name and telephone number along with the person's job title.

Family Support - If you want to move to Northampton to be near a close relative in order to receive or provide support or care that cannot be received or provided in your local area, you will need to evidence that your relative has resided in the Borough of Northampton for a minimum of five years. The examples of evidence are the same as for **Residence** (please refer to the examples at the top of this page).

The documents should cover the past 5 years (one document per year is suffice as long as a 5 year period is covered). All documents should be dated and clearly show your relative's name and address. Please note that if you are submitting a relative's bank statements, the balance and transaction details may be blacked out.

You will also need to submit a statement outlining the type and frequency of support that is to be received or provided. This should be signed and dated by you if you are to provide the care or by your relative if they are to provide the care.

Medical and Welfare Needs

Applications based on medical and welfare needs will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that the current accommodation is having a detrimental impact on the health or welfare of the applicant or an existing member of their household. The assessment is not based on the seriousness of the condition or situation; it is based on the impact the current accommodation has on that condition or situation and how that would be improved by a move to alternative accommodation.

Examples of Evidence for Medical Needs:

- Current PIP award letter. This should be the **full** award letter including the rates awarded for both the daily living and mobility components
- GP or Consultant letter
- Letter from any other registered Health Professional that is involved in your care (e.g. Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Mental Health Practitioner)

All documents should be dated within the last six months and clearly show your name and address. Letters from Health Professionals should state your confirmed diagnosis and outline how the condition is affected by your current accommodation including any risks. Letters should also state how the condition would improve through a move to alternative accommodation and include recommendations for any accommodation requirements that are considered necessary.

Examples of Evidence for Welfare Needs:

- Social Worker letter/report
- Letters from other agencies who are currently assisting you or providing support (e.g. Sunflower Centre, Women's Refuge, Victim Support)
- Police report

All documents should be dated within the last six months and clearly show your name and address. Letters and welfare reports from professional agencies should be factual and outline how your situation is affected by your current accommodation, including any risks to you or other members of your household. Letters should also state how a move to alternative accommodation would improve your situation.

We hope that you find the above examples helpful. If you are unsure, or have any queries regarding supporting documents, please telephone **0300 330 7003**.