

Thurrock Council – Finding somewhere to live

Medical priority

If you have a severe medical problem that's made worse by your current home, you may be eligible for medical priority on our housing waiting list.

Medical priority banding can help you move to more suitable accommodation.

You will not be eligible for a medical priority due to:

- pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions
- temporary illness where you are expected to make a full recovery

You will not normally be eligible for a medical priority due to:

- asthma
- depression
- dampness
- overcrowding

If your condition is severe, however, your application may be passed to an independent medical service for consideration. Examples of severe conditions are given below, but these are only for guidance.

Full details of both your medical condition and current accommodation will always be considered before any decision is made.

Asthma

Your condition may be considered severe if you:

- have a constant wheeze and have shortness of breath most of the time
- have difficulty leaving the home in certain weather conditions, such as when it is very cold or hot or during the high pollen season
- are dependent upon oxygen, a nebuliser or strong medication

Depression

Your condition may be considered severe if you:

- are taking long-term medication
- have a named worker within the local community mental health team
- are known to a psychiatrist
- have had frequent hospital admissions

Dampness

Your condition may be considered severe if:

- a surveyor, building inspector or environmental health officer has assessed your property as having a damp or mould problem
- the damp or mould cannot be remedied within the next 6 months
- you have a serious respiratory condition

Overcrowding

If you believe you are overcrowded you should contact your estate officer and arrange for them to assess the number of rooms and occupants in your home.

No medical priority will be given for minor coughs, colds and respiratory difficulties resulting from overcrowding. There can be an increased risk of infection due overcrowding for some applicants, however, such as those undergoing chemotherapy.

Applying for medical priority

You should contact us if you want to apply for medical priority:

Housing registration

Thurrock Council, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, RM17 6SL

Phone: 01375 652 880

Email: housing.reg@thurrock.gov.uk

We will discuss with you your housing options and why you want to move. If your case is applicable, we will send you a housing health application to complete.

You should return your completed application by email.

Supporting information should be scanned and emailed with your application. If you cannot scan documents, you should take them to the reception desk of our Civic Offices in New Road, Grays, where we will arrange for them to be scanned and emailed. We will normally ask for your housing bidding number so information can be linked to your file. We will give you a receipt, if needed.

If you cannot use email you will need to send all paperwork to us by post, marked 'private and confidential'. We will acknowledge receipt of your paperwork within 3 working days.

What the housing health application asks

The form is divided into 2 sections:

- **section 1** – about your home: questions about where you live now
- **section 2** – about you: questions about each member of your household, their health, and why your home is no longer suitable for your needs

Your application will be processed more quickly if you provide as much information as possible.

Supporting information must show why your current home is making your medical condition worse.

Processing your applications

Stage 1 – reviewing the information you have given about your health and your property.

We will contact you within 3 working days to tell you whether your application either:

- needs more information
- has been refused
- has been forwarded for medical consideration

Stage 2 – if your application has been passed for the medical consideration, arrangements will be made for your case to be reviewed. Specifically:

- in the majority of cases paperwork will be sent to an Independent Medical Service, NowMedical, for a doctor to look at your application and advise us
- if you are a sheltered housing tenant and have applied to move from a first to ground floor accommodation, an occupational therapist will look at your application
- if your application is not applicable for the medical consideration and an alternative priority route could be used, we will write to you direct

Due to the high number of requests for a medical banding, we only carry out home visits for a random 10% of all applications we receive.

We will process your application within 15 working days and will write to tell you of the decision made and the medical band to be awarded.

More than one applicant in the same house

Medical bands are awarded per household rather than to individual applicants, but an application should be completed for each person within the household who has a health need.

Medical priority bands

We have a very limited number of properties. Only applicants with the most severe health needs will be awarded a medical priority band. A decision letter is sent to all applicants.

Applicants are awarded one of 3 allocation bands:

- **band 2** –the highest band, only awarded for the most urgent of cases, such as where a person cannot be discharged from hospital due to their housing situation
- **band 3** –awarded for less urgent cases, such as where more suitable housing would make a substantial improvement to a person's quality of life
- **refusal** – no medical priority is awarded

After you have been sent your priority in a letter, will write separately to explain happens next.

Asking for a review

Generally only one housing health application is permitted per year. Cases will only be reviewed if there has been a significant change in health conditions.