



## Eligibility Criteria Process for Independent Living Schemes

### Introduction

WDH promotes access into our independent living schemes for **older and vulnerable people, on a choice basis.**

Before applying, applicants must have a proper understanding of what Independent Living Schemes offer and how such schemes could meet their needs.

This does not include just physical or medical needs. It could include other needs such as:

- Companionship.
- The peace of mind that help will be on hand if and when needed.
- The security of living in a more supportive and safer environment.
- A carer, who is often a spouse / partner, also being able to get support.
- Wanting to move in ahead of a crisis and be better prepared for their older age. Some applicants may wish to be considered for independent living before they have a specific or immediate support need. This approach is also supported.

To make sure the service is used appropriately, applicants need to be assessed. This is so that applicants are not moving in purely on the basis of wanting a specific property, without having any interest in the support service or other benefits that the schemes offer.

As part of this, the applicant:

- Needs to understand the service, so they can make an informed decision as to whether they feel it will help them retain their independence.
- Should want the overall package of housing with support.

The assessment arrangements are also in place to ensure that applicants are capable of living within their own home and do not need extra support that cannot be offered either directly or indirectly by the service.

If extra support is needed, the assessor would recommend one of our Extra Care Schemes as a more suitable rehousing option.

Applications for Extra Care Schemes are processed outside of Homesearch and must go through a separate allocations and assessment process. This process is known as the Allocations and Extra Care Protocol.

## **Eligibility Criteria**

The eligibility criteria for our Independent Living Schemes are set out below. The associated assessment process will be fair, equitable, open and transparent.

Applicants who wish to be considered for an Independent Living Scheme must be:

- In housing need.
- Considered vulnerable due to their:
  - Age;
  - Health;
  - Welfare;
  - Support needs.
- In receipt of a package of care prior to any allocation being made, where such support is required.
- Able to manage within the scheme without being a risk to self or others.
- No threat of physical violence, nuisance or anti social behaviour to others within the scheme.

## **Allocations Process**

Eligibility will be established by the completion of a:

- Homesearch Application Form (housing needs).
- Independent Living Assessment (support needs).

## **Homesearch Application Form**

General information about the applicant will be gathered through the Homesearch application form. The Homesearch Team will also gather information about medical or special needs and make any necessary referrals.

Information about our Independent Living Schemes is also sent to applicants who specifically request the service or could be considered appropriate for the service when they apply.

## **Independent Living Assessment**

The Independent Living Assessment will take place with all applicants who have expressed an interest in an Independent Living Scheme.

Support needs are dependant on the service user, so some areas will not apply to everyone. The assessment is carried out with the full involvement of the applicant and should be signed off by them. Carers and advocates, where appropriate, should also be involved.

Once the assessment and all relevant information has been gathered, the Senior Independent Living Officer and Independent Living Manager will then make a joint decision about any prospective offer based on the information provided by the applicant. To ensure that this information is kept current, reassessments are undertaken should six months elapse before an offer is made.

## **Who is eligible?**

Applications are invited from people who suffer from depression and / or the effects of isolation and / or mental health problems.

Applicants for independent living who are in the early stages of dementia must still be able to establish relationships, function within a daily routine and have some knowledge of their surroundings.

Applicants who have a learning disability must be able to cope within independent living without due risk or disruption to others.

Couples are eligible to apply where one or both meet the criteria.

Applicants may currently live in a range of housing, including other independent living schemes, rented or owner occupied accommodation.

Whatever the applicant's specific needs, they must be able to cope within the setting of their 'own home', albeit with the help they need to maintain an independent life.

## Who is not eligible?

- Applicants who are not of an age or vulnerability that demonstrates a particular need.
- Applicants whose needs exceed that which can be reasonably met by the support provided by the service.
- Applicants who have a level of physical or mental frailty which is likely to lead to violent or severely challenging behaviour or serious risk or disruption to others, or will require high levels of support and / or care.
- Applicants who are not interested in support or any of the other benefits that our independent living schemes can offer.

## Lettings Procedure

1. WDH invites applications / referrals for our independent living schemes from a variety of sources including client application / enquiry, Social Services, relatives, carers, GPs and health professionals.
2. The Homesearch Team co-ordinate the completion of a WDH application form and the sending of relevant information leaflets to applicants.
3. The Homesearch Team also co-ordinates any other relevant information if required, such as information from the Special Needs Panel and the Medical Assessment.
4. Applicants will not be considered for any vacancy until they have had an Independent Living Assessment, as well as completing a Homesearch application form.
5. The Independent Living Team will consider each application and decide if the applicant complies with the set eligibility criteria.
6. The Independent Living Team will send the tenant a recommendation letter to advise if we support their application for an Independent Living Scheme. If the application has been refused, you will receive a letter explaining the reasons for this decision along with details of alternative service providers.
7. The applicant has the opportunity to appeal against any decision made. Appeals will be considered by the Care and Health Manager who has been independent from process. The decisions will be made with additional employees to those who carried out the assessment.