



# THE PROCESS OF APPLYING FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

A GUIDE WRITTEN BY CIRCLE VOLUNTARY HOUSING  
ASSOCIATION (VHA)





# Introduction to Social Housing

Local authorities are the main providers of social housing for those who are eligible, but are having difficulty securing their own home or renting on the private market. Local authority housing is allocated according to eligibility and need.

Approved Housing Bodies (AHB's) also provide social housing for people in housing need, for those who are eligible, but are having difficulty securing their own home or renting on the private market. These organisations are sometimes called housing associations, housing bodies or housing co-operatives, for example, *Circle Voluntary Housing Association (Circle VHA)*.

## ***General Rules for applying to social housing via the local authority:***

- You can only apply to one local housing authority. An example of a local housing authority would be Dublin City Council or Fingal County Council.
- You will only be considered for social housing if your household income is less than the threshold that applies in the local authority's area.



## What are Approved Housing Bodies (AHB's)?

Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) are independent charities who are subject to statutory regulation by the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority. They provide affordable rented housing for people who are having difficulty securing their own home or renting on the private market. AHBs are also known as housing associations.

## What do AHB's provide?

There are approximately 500 approved housing bodies in Ireland. They vary in size and in the services that they provide. As well as providing affordable rented housing, AHBs aim to encourage and promote community engagement and development.

AHBs get government funding from local authorities to provide affordable rented housing. They use this funding to:

- Build new homes
- Buy existing homes

## How to apply for housing with an AHB?

If you want to be housed by an approved housing body, you cannot apply directly to an AHB. You need to be on the local authority housing waiting list in your area. To get on the waiting list you need to apply for housing with your local authority and select housing provided by "Approved Housing Bodies", this is achieved by ticking the relevant box on the application form. Please note that this does not mean you will not get a local authority house, it is simply increasing your options on where you may be offered a house. To qualify for social housing support you must be eligible for and in need of social housing. You must be able to show the local authority and or AHB that:

- Your income meets the criteria
- You do not have suitable alternative accommodation
- Your current accommodation is unsuitable



## Completing the social housing form

If you want to be considered for housing provided by an AHB, make sure you tick the box marked 'approved housing body (AHB)' in the 'Housing Requirements' section of the social housing application form.

**PART 8: HOUSING REQUIREMENTS**  
Please indicate type of social housing support that best meets your needs.

Adapted housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement Works In Lieu scheme (IWILs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Site for private house	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved Housing Body (AHB)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transfer (include rent account number below if applicable)*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demountable dwelling (see below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rented local authority accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Extension to local authority house	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single level housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Traveller group housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single rural dwelling (see below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Traveller halting site bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheelchair livable	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fig.1.1 Application form for SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT by Dublin City Council.

Your local authority will be able to tell you if there are approved housing bodies in your applied area. In most cases, the local authority will refer you to an AHB if an appropriate home comes up. This is where your application for housing will continue in line with the selected AHB.





## Qualifying for social housing supports

In order to qualify, you must be eligible for social housing and you must be in need of social housing.

- The housing authority will assess your eligibility first
- If you are eligible, it will then assess if you need social housing

### Eligibility

To be regarded as eligible for social housing you must satisfy the income criteria. You must also show that you do not have suitable alternative accommodation.

### Income Criteria

The "Household Means Policy" provides details of how your household income is assessed by local authorities for social housing support. It includes information about what income is taken into account and what income is disregarded (not taken into account). For example, certain social welfare payments are not considered in these assessments.

**For more information you can view at:** <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/fb1f2-social-housing-support-household-means-policy/>

There are 3 maximum income limits that apply to different housing authorities. On the 1st January 2023, the basic income limits increased by €5,000 for all local authority areas.



## Basic maximum income limits per area

To be regarded as eligible for social housing you must satisfy the income criteria. You must also show that you do not have suitable alternative accommodation.

Areas	Maximum net income limits for a single person
Cork City, Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, Galway City, Co Meath, South Dublin, Co Kildare, Co Wicklow	€40,000
Co Carlow, Co Clare, Co Cork, Co Galway, Co Kerry, Co Kilkenny, Co Laois, Limerick City and County, Co Louth, Waterford City and County, Co Westmeath, Co Wexford	€35,000
Co Cavan, Co Donegal, Co Leitrim, Co Longford, Co Mayo, Co Monaghan, Co Offaly, Co Roscommon, Co Sligo, Co Tipperary	€30,000

These are the **maximum net income limits for a single person**.

**NOTE** - These limits are increased if there are other members of your household. You get an additional:

- 5% of the basic maximum income limit for every adult member of the household. This is up to a maximum of 10% or 2 additional adults.
- 2.5% of the basic maximum income limit for every child in the household.

The local authority looks at your household's average net income for the 12 months before they received your application when assessing if your household meets the income criteria. Net income is the amount you are left with once income tax, Universal Social Charge, Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC) and PRSI are deducted from your income.





## Identifying the "need" of housing

When deciding whether your household is in need of social housing, the housing authority must consider:

- Is your current accommodation an institution, emergency accommodation or hostel?
- Are you homeless within the meaning of section 2 of the Housing Act 1988?
- Is your current accommodation overcrowded?
- Is it fit for human habitation?
- Does it meet the accommodation requirements of a household member with a disability?
- Is it unsuitable for your household's adequate housing on exceptional medical or compassionate grounds?
- If it is shared with another household, have you a reasonable requirement for separate accommodation?
- Has your household's current mortgage been classified as unsustainable as part of the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP) laid down by the Central Bank?
- Is your household dependent on Rent Supplement to meet its housing need?
- Is your current accommodation unsuitable because it does not adequately house your household in any other way, having regard to particular household circumstances?

## Areas of choice for housing

You can specify up to **3 areas** where you would choose to live. At **least one** of them must be in the area administered by the housing authority that you apply to (its functional area) and the others must be either in that functional area or within the same county.

If you do not live in or have a connection with the housing authority's own functional area, but the authority has agreed to accept an application from you, you can only pick areas of choice within that particular authority's functional area.



## The application for social housing

- To apply for local authority housing, download an application form from your local authority's website, or contact your local authority's housing department and ask for an application form.
- You will need to provide additional documentation with your application form. For example, you need to include photo identification, proof of address and proof of income. There is information about proof of income above.
- The application form has a checklist that includes details of all additional documents you need. We recommend you tick it as you go along to avoid delays.
- If you want to be considered for accommodation provided by a housing association or other approved housing body, **tick the box marked 'approved housing body (AHB)' on the application form.**

**PART 8: HOUSING REQUIREMENTS**  
Please indicate type of social housing support that best meets your needs.

Adapted housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement Works In Lieu scheme (IWILs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Site for private house	<input type="checkbox"/>
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			<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheelchair livable	<input type="checkbox"/>

- If you are a wheelchair user or need accessible accommodation you should tick the box marked 'wheelchair liveable accommodation' in the section of the form that asks about your housing requirements. There is also a supporting Disability/Medical form for people applying for social housing with a medical or disability need.





## What happens to my application after I apply?

The local authority has **12 weeks** from receiving your completed application form to assess it and make a decision on whether you qualify for social housing or not. This timeframe can be extended if the local authority needs additional information, which they will request from you. You must submit the additional information in the required timeframe outlined in the correspondence, or your application may be refused.

### If your application is accepted

If you are accepted by the housing authority as being eligible for and in need of housing, you are placed on its housing list or record of qualified households. It will also notify any other housing authority in whose functional area you have specified an area of choice.

## In summary of applying to social housing - Circle VHA

- When applying for social housing tick the box marked APPROVED HOUSING BODY (AHB).
- The form will also ask you to select the areas that you would like to live in. It is important that you think about this and consider work, schools, where your family, friends, and supports are, before making your final choices.
- Your local authority will consider your application and information.
- If you are eligible for social housing, the local authority will place you on its waiting list. Housing is generally allocated on a priority basis; you can ask your local authority about your position on the waiting list.
- When a vacancy arises in Circle VHA, applicants are then nominated by the local authority.
- When we receive the applicant's name, we phone or write to the applicant inviting them to an interview.



## Who are Circle Voluntary Housing Association

Circle Voluntary Housing Association (CVHA) was set up in 2003 and has been a leading provider of social housing in Ireland since. Circle VHA's vision is to make a real difference by delivering quality homes and innovative integrated housing solutions to individuals and families in Ireland.

Circle works together with local authorities, state agencies, developers, and funders to deliver new-build social and affordable housing solutions. Currently, Circle manages and owns over 2,500 homes nationally.

## Our company values

Circle is more than housing and is passionate in ensuring tenant's needs are at the heart of everything we do. Through our commitment to our tenants and the services we deliver, we empower tenants to be involved in running their homes and communities while having a say in the shaping of the areas where they live. We at Circle VHA embody our **We Hear Values**.

**Willingness, Empowerment, Honesty, Excellence, Accountability and Respect.**





## CIRCLE VHA HOMES DELIVERED

Recently completed Circle VHA homes



**Fairfields, Old Tramore Road,  
Waterford x 40 units**



**Fairgreen Manor, Dunlavin,  
Co. Wicklow x 40 units**



**Butterfield, Mount Neil,  
Gracedieu, Co. Waterford x 57 units**



## CIRCLE VHA HOMES DELIVERED



**Castlecourt Apartments,  
Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath x 8 units**



**Station Manor, Portmarnock,  
County Dublin x 11 units**



**Scholarstown Wood,  
Rathfarnham x 24 units**





## CIRCLE VHA HOMES DELIVERED



**Wilkins Court, Limekiln Lane,  
Dublin 12 x 6 units**



**Wilkins View, Walkinstown,  
Dublin 12 x 3 units**

# CIRCLE VHA INTERNAL LAYOUT EXAMPLE



**Butterfield, Mount Neil,  
Gracedieu, Co. Waterford x 57 units**



**Ground floor layout.**



# CIRCLE VHA INTERNAL LAYOUT EXAMPLE



**Ground floor layout.**



**Ground floor layout.**



## CIRCLE VHA INTERNAL LAYOUT EXAMPLE



**Bedroom one.**



**Bedroom two.**



## CIRCLE VHA INTERNAL LAYOUT EXAMPLE



**Bedroom three with ensuite.**



**Upstairs bathroom and hot-press area.**







## For more information



***For further information on social and affordable housing you can visit:***

Applying for local authority/social housing.

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/local\\_authority\\_and\\_social\\_housing/applying\\_for\\_local\\_authority\\_housing.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/local_authority_and_social_housing/applying_for_local_authority_housing.html)

***For further information on Circle VHA:***



[www.circlevha.ie](http://www.circlevha.ie)



CIRCLE VOLUNTARY HOUSING ASSOCIATION



CIRCLE VHA



CIRCLE VHA



Circle Voluntary Housing Association are a registered charity. **Charity**

**number 20053840.** Circle VHA is compliant with the Charities Governance

Code and is included on the Register of Charities which is available at

[www.charitiesregulator.ie](http://www.charitiesregulator.ie).