

Increase your points

This information is for people in Northern Ireland applying for social housing.

The more points you have, the higher you are on the waiting list to get a home from the Housing Executive or a housing association. This is often called a 'social tenancy.'

Your housing officer decides how many points you have based on your situation and needs. This is often called [the housing selection scheme](#).

Working out your points

Sometimes it can be hard to prove why you should get certain points. [We can help](#) explain which points you can get and why. Our advisers may also be able to help find ways to get more points.

If you want to speak to our advisers about points, be ready to talk about all parts of your situation and your needs. The more we know, the better they can help.

Before you contact us:

1. find out how many points you have – call the Housing Executive ([03448 920 900](tel:03448920900)) to get a breakdown of your points
2. check the breakdown of your points – [look through the points list](#) and check where your points match the items on the list

3. gather your information and documents – for example, if you have a letter from the Housing Executive, make sure to have a copy with you

If you still do not have enough points for a home, you can:

- ask your housing officer to review your points and make sure everything is up to date
- check if you can get points for social issues
- [contact housing associations](#) with properties for groups of people with specific needs

Being on the waiting list can be hard. You may want to know where you are on the list or how soon you will get a home. You can contact your housing officer to check roughly how many points you need for homes in your area.

Reasons you can get points

You get points for different needs and situations.

There are four main reasons you can get points, for:

- losing your home – people might call this ‘insecurity of tenure’
- the condition of your home – for example, your home is in a bad state
- your health and wellbeing – for example, you have mobility issues such as trouble using the stairs
- social needs – for example, you need to move to be closer to family for support

You can review the four categories of points in more detail below. You can get points for things like:

Losing your home

Passing the homelessness assessment

You get 70 points if you pass the Housing Executive’s homelessness assessment (also called an ‘investigation’). Sometimes people call these ‘Full Duty Applicant’ or ‘FDA’ points.

- if you do not pass the investigation, you can still get 50 points if:
- you do not have housing for certain reasons, and
- the Housing Executive can't expect you to find your own housing

Being unable to stay in your home

You can get points if:

- you have no home, or
- you cannot stay in your home because it is unsuitable or someone asked you to leave

A threat or attack

You can get 200 points if:

- your home was destroyed in an attack, or
- you may be killed or injured in an attack

You can only get these points if:

- the police, or similar agency confirms the threat, and
- the threat is against you for a specific reason or because you are part of a certain group

Living in temporary housing

You can get 20 points if:

- you already have the 70 FDA points, and
- the Housing Executive gave you temporary housing, and
- you've been in temporary housing for six months or more

Condition of your home

Sharing a home

You can get points if you share a home with other people who will not be moving with you. For example, you are living with a family member while you wait for a home.

You can get more points if you are sharing a home and you have dependent children.

You cannot get these points if you invited someone to live with you.

Overcrowding

You can get points if you do not have enough bedrooms for everyone in your household. You can get 10 points for every bedroom you are missing. To count as a bedroom, [the room must be a certain size](#).

These points depend on the number of:

- people on your housing application, and
- rooms you have for those people at your home

For example, Jack is single and lives in a one-bedroom flat with his parents and two siblings. Jack gets 10 points because he only needs one bedroom for himself.

Extra bedrooms

If you applied for a transfer, you could get 10 points for every extra bedroom you have. The maximum is 30 points.

For example, Erin has three children, but they are adults and living in their own homes. She has two extra bedrooms since her children do not live with her anymore. Erin can get 20 points for the extra rooms.

Poor housing state

You can get points if the council agrees that your home has certain problems. You get 10 points for each problem the council recognizes.

Being on the waiting list

You get two points if you:

- already have other points, and
- have been on the waiting list for at least two years

You get two more points for every extra year you are on the list, up to 10 points. For example:

- three years on the list is four points

- five years on the list is seven points
- eight years on the list is 10 points

Health and wellbeing

Mobility problems

You can get points if you or someone in your household has mobility needs or requires care. For example, needing a walking aid or struggling to move in your home.

To get these points, you may need to show that:

- you get disability benefits for mobility issues
- an occupational therapist confirms your mobility issues
- you get physical therapy with the trust

Needing support in your home

You can get points if you:

- live in sheltered or supported housing, and
- need help taking care of yourself or your home

Complex needs

You can get 20 points if you or someone in your household needs a lot of health support and your:

- housing officer decides you need the support, or
- the trust confirms you need the support

Social needs

Physical or environmental needs

You can get up to 40 points for urgent needs such as leaving a home where you experienced trauma.

You can get up to 40 points for other less urgent needs such as problems with a neighbour or if you can't afford to live in your home.

Video: How housing points work in Northern Ireland

Housing Points video transcript

Understanding the selection scheme and working out your housing points.

Everyone who applies for a Housing Executive or housing association home goes on a waiting list. When a property becomes available the housing officer will look at this list to decide who should get this home. The housing officer will check who has asked for a property in this area who needs a property of the size and type and who out of these people has the most points.

The points system can be confusing, especially if no one's ever explained it properly to you. You can get points if you've been intimidated, if you're homeless, for your housing conditions, for your ability to manage in your current home and for certain social problems you're having in your current home or area.

You could get 200 points if you've been intimidated from your home but you will only get these points if the police or certain other organisations confirm that you could be killed or your home could be destroyed in a violent attack because of this threat. The Housing Executive will carry out a really detailed investigation to make sure that your life or home is under serious threat before you'll be awarded those points.

You can get points if you are homeless but you'll need to satisfy certain other conditions too, these are explained in detail on our website. If you've passed all four homelessness tests you'll be given 70 points and the Housing Executive will help you with temporary housing if you need this. If you've got these points and you've been living in temporary housing arranged by the Housing Executive for more than six months you'll get a further 20 points.

If you don't pass all four tests you might still get 50 points for being homeless, but only if you're homeless for certain reasons like a relationship breakdown, because your home is too expensive, or because you're leaving hospital.

There are other reasons that allow you to get these 50 homeless points so have a look at our website for details.

Before you'll get these 50 points you'll need to show that there's nowhere else that you can live and that you can't be expected to find somewhere else to live without help from the Housing Executive. You may get points if your current housing conditions aren't great, you could get points if you're sharing a kitchen, bathroom, living room, or toilet with people who won't be moving with you.

You can get points if you don't have enough bedrooms for everyone in your household and you can also get points if you've got too many bedrooms in your current home, but these will only be given if you're already a Housing Executive or housing association tenant who's applied for a transfer. Check our website to find out how many people could live in each room in your home.

If your home doesn't meet the basic fitness standard you might be entitled to points. Most homes will pass this standard but if the council says your home doesn't you could get more points.

You don't really get many points for the amount of time you've been waiting on the list. If you've already been given other points you'll get two points once you've been on the list for two years and a further two points each year after that until you've been given the maximum of 10 points for time on the list. People with mobility problems should get points for these. If you or anyone else in your household needs help walking around your home climbing stairs or steps you may get points. The amount you'll get depends on exactly how difficult you find it to manage in your current home. If you need help looking after yourself and doing basic chores around the house you can also get points, but these will only be given to you if you want to go into supported housing.

If you are someone who lives with you has very specific care needs you should ask for a complex needs assessment. If the Housing Executive agrees that your needs are complex you'll be given 20 points.

If you've been experiencing certain social problems in your home or the area you're currently living in you may get points for these things like harassment, neighbour problems, vandalism, or a recent trauma in your home. But you'll usually need to provide some kind of proof of these problems like a police report.

There are also points available if you need to move to a different area for a specific reason. Say you need to move to a different part of Northern Ireland to support a family member or so a family member can help you. Or maybe you're

moving to another area to start a new job or to start a full-time course. These points will only apply for offers of a property in that particular part of Northern Ireland.

You could get points if your home is unsuitable for other reasons like it's too expensive, you're not able to look after it properly, you've got young children living in an upper story flat, or because social services have said that you need to move.

The list on our website explains all the different types of scenarios that can attract points, but the main thing to remember is there's not a lot of point sending in lots of letters from a social worker or another support worker unless these letters explain which of these scenarios apply to your situation and why.

If you've got questions about your points, give the Housing Executive or Housing Rights a call. If you've applied for housing in a popular area and you've been given all the points that you're entitled to you might have to wait a very long time before you get an offer but we can discuss your other housing options with you.

[Housing points list](#) (164.38 KB)

More advice

- [Increase your points](#)
- [Homelessness assessment](#)

Footnotes