

# Questions and Answers on Access to Housing

September 2008

**housing and welfare information**

## Questions and Answers on Access to Housing

For further information on any of these questions contact Crosscare Housing and Welfare Information.

### 1. How do I get Local Authority/ Council Housing?

You must fill in a Housing Application Form with the Local Authority/ Council. The Local Authority will carry out a Housing Needs Assessment. You will be awarded points. Unless you have very exceptional circumstances surrounding your application you may expect to wait **years** for an offer of housing. Check with Local Authority to find out number of points required in the area of your choice.

### 2. What is Rent Allowance?

Rent Allowance/ Supplement is an income support provided by the Department of Social & Family Affairs to assist towards the cost of your monthly rent when you are renting from a private landlord. You may apply to the Community Welfare Officer in the local Health Centre for assistance with your rent if you are working for less than 30 hours per week, and/or are in receipt of a Social Welfare payment, and/or are on an approved training or education scheme. See [www.welfare.ie/foi/swa](http://www.welfare.ie/foi/swa)

### 3. How do I get Rent Allowance/ Supplement?

You must register as having a housing need with the Local Authority. Your landlord must agree to accept Rent Supplement and must fill in the Rent Supplement form SWA3. This form is available from you local health centre. You may apply to the Community Welfare Officer in the local area for assessment for eligibility for rent supplement.

### 4. What are the rent allowance rates?

At September 2008

Single person in self contained unit -	€563 per month
Single person in shared accommodation -	€425 per month
Couple in self contained accommodation	€800 per month
Parent / Couple with one child	€1000 per month
Parent / Couple with 2 or more children	€1200 per month

The total rent paid should not exceed the rent limits. If rent limits are exceeded a Community Welfare Officer cannot in many cases approve rent allowance at all. There are some exceptions to this rule.

### 5. Am I entitled to a deposit?

You may apply for a deposit from the Community Welfare Officer at your local health centre. A deposit is not an entitlement. The amount depends on you family size and circumstances and is subject to a limit. Check with local CWO.

## **6. My landlord has refused to give me my deposit back.**

A landlord can only withhold your deposit if you are in rent arrears, or if you have damaged the property and it is in need of repair. If you are in dispute about a landlord withholding your deposit there are services that may support you. To find out more about Tenants Rights see [www.threshold.ie](http://www.threshold.ie)

## **7. I am in arrears. What can I do?**

You need to discuss your arrears with your landlord and try negotiating a repayment scheme. If you are on low income or in receipt of a social welfare payment you may be able to apply to Community Welfare at your local Health Centre for additional support. Contact Crosscare Housing & Welfare Information for further information.

## **8. I am having difficulties in my accommodation and am in danger of eviction.**

There are a range of support agencies that can assist you with your difficulties. Contact Crosscare Housing & Welfare Information for further information. To find out more about Tenants Rights see [www.threshold.ie](http://www.threshold.ie)

## **9. My landlord has asked me to leave my private rented accommodation.**

If you are in private rented accommodation and your tenancy has lasted more than 6 months your landlord may only ask you to leave for a number of reasons. If your tenancy is less than 6 months the Landlord does not have to give a reason. In both cases you are entitled to be served with proper notice in writing. For further information go to [www.threshold.ie](http://www.threshold.ie) .

## **10. I have received a letter from the Local Authority accusing my family involvement in anti social behaviour.**

Do not ignore this letter. Seek further advice and support as soon as possible. If the local authority has requested a meeting make sure to go to put your case on record. Being evicted from Local Authority housing will have very serious consequences for your future housing options.

## **11. I am considering giving up the keys of my Local Authority accommodation.**

Seek further advice and support as soon as possible. Giving up your keys will have very serious consequences for your future housing options. It may affect your future access to other Local Authority housing and housing in the private rented sector.

## **12. What is voluntary housing?**

This is a form of social housing. It can be provided by a voluntary housing association or a housing association in partnership with the Local Authority. In most cases in order to apply for voluntary housing a person must be registered with the Local Authority.

### 13. What is RAS?

This is the Rental Accommodation Scheme. It is a form of social housing provided through partnership with the Local Authority and private landlords. In order to apply for the RAS a person must meet a number of criteria. This usually includes being in receipt of Rent Supplement for 18 months. The applicant must attend for interview with the Local Authority. If accepted onto the RAS a person will pay a differential rent to the Local Authority based on their income much the same as any person in Local Authority accommodation. See [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie) for further information.

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#### Contact Details

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Official policy and legislation can change.**