



06 May 2025

Dear Applicant

Our Ref: FOI 750

Your request for information received on 08 April 2025 has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Request

A copy of operational guidance on how to manage, file and process cases relating to persons being managed by Public Protection Arrangements, in particular, how statistics are prepared and presented to PPANI.

Our response

Please find enclosed Chapter 2 of the Housing Policy Guidance Manual regarding Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland and Dealing with Applications from Persons who are PPANI Eligible. Some staff names have been redacted in accordance with FOI Act Section 40(2) as this is considered to be personal Information of a third party and disclosure would contravene data protection principle (a) in Article 5 of the UK GDPR.

Regarding your query relating to statistics, the Housing Executive is not responsible for the provision of statistics as part of the Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland and therefore does not hold any information relevant to this request.

This concludes our response.

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List of abbreviations and terms

Approved Premises	Hostels which receive Supporting People funding specifically for offenders, allocate bed spaces for criminal justice referrals and apply PBNi standards.
DOJ	Department of Justice
Ex prisoner	A person who has served a prison sentence or has been on remand within a prison or young offenders centre and has been released from custody.
FDA	A Full Duty Applicant being a person who has applied as homeless and who is owed the main duty by the Housing Executive.
MASRAM	Multi-Agency Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management
LAPPP	Local Area Public Protection Panel
OIU	Offender Investigation Unit
PPANI	Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland
PPU	Public Protection Unit
Offender	A person subject to current supervision or license by the Probation Service
Prisoner	A person who has been committed to a prison or young offenders centre by the Courts. For the purposes of this framework this also includes those on remand.
Relevant Offence	<p>Meaning of Relevant Offence - Rule 63 Applicants Convicted or Charged with the Sexual Abuse of Children</p> <p>1. In the present context “a relevant offence” means any of the following offences:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual offences against children which are listed in Schedule 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act (N.I.) 1968. Sexual offences against children which are listed in Schedule 1 of the Sex Offenders Act (N.I.) 1997. Offences relating to indecent photographs of children which are listed in Schedule 1 of the Sex Offenders (N.I.) Act 1997. Offences under the law of some jurisdiction outside Northern Ireland, which, in the opinion of the Designated Officer, are similar in nature and seriousness to any of the offences listed at a) to c) above.
Sex Offender	A person who has been convicted of an offence characterised by a sexual motive or inappropriate sexual behaviour.
Sexual offence	The term “sexual offence” covers a wide range of criminal offences characterised by a sexual motive of inappropriate sexual behaviour as defined by Schedule 2 (Paragraph 2) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
SOPO	Sex Offenders Prevention Order
SSO	Statutory Supervision Order as required by a sentencing Court
VOPO	Violent Offenders Prevention Order

Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland and Dealing with Applications from Persons who are PPANI Eligible

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Section One of this guidance advises staff on aspects of the Housing Executive's work concerning the Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland (PPANI) in working with other agencies in the risk assessment and management of certain offenders through prison pre-release Local Area Public Protection Panels [LAPPP] meetings and community LAPPP meetings which arise after release from prison.

Section Two provides guidance for staff, relevant to their role within the Housing Executive in dealing with applicants who have received a custodial sentence or a suspended sentence in respect of a "relevant offence" or who have been charged with a "relevant offence" which could attract a custodial sentence, who are affected by Rules 62-67 of the Housing Selection Scheme. These Rules allows a participating landlord to restrict offers of accommodation. This section advises staff on the steps to take to restrict temporary accommodation.

This section of the guidance also provides direction for staff in dealing with applicants who have received a custodial sentence, a suspended sentence or been charged with an offence which could attract a custodial sentence in respect to a sexual offence against an adult, a domestic violence offence, a violent offence against a child or a vulnerable adult or a hate crime offence.

On the whole, this document endeavours to ensure that:

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- Housing Executive practice in relation to PPANI is consistent throughout Northern Ireland
- the Housing Executive contributes to the multi-agency ethos with regard to Public Protection.

1.1 Background to PPANI

Multi-Agency arrangements to assess and manage the risk of re-offending posed by sexual offenders were placed on a statutory footing by the Northern Ireland Office (now Department of Justice) Outlined in the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008.

The main changes in these arrangements compared to previous Multi-Agency Sex Offenders Risk Assessment Management (MASRAM) were the inclusion within the arrangements of certain violent offenders. The Public Protection Arrangements implemented on 6 October 2008 now applies to all convicted sexual offenders subject to the requirements of the Sex Offenders Notification and other offenders convicted of certain violent offences against a child or vulnerable adult, Domestic Violence or hate crime.

1.2 Risk Assessment

Agencies such as the Police Service for Northern Ireland [PSNI] the Probation Board for Northern Ireland [PBNI], Northern Ireland Prison Service [NIPS] and Health and Social Care trust [HSCT] along with the Housing Executive collectively determine the offender's level of risk. The Housing Executive are a PPANI agency member therefore NIHE staff attend prison pre-release panel meetings and contribute to the risk assessment process (see 4.2.3). Cases will be placed into one of three categories:

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- *Category 1*
- *Category 2*
- *Category 3*

1.3 Designated Risk Manager

An offender, who is managed under PPANI, has a Designated Risk Manager (DRM), who is responsible for coordinating the risk management plan in respect of the individual offender. The DRM coordinates the risk management plan and is the 'lead' individual in a case; however, agencies have collective responsibility for Cat 2 and Cat 3 cases. Offenders whose offending pre-dates the introduction of PPANI may also have a DRM, due to the nature of their offences. The DRM engages with the offender to identify the key presenting risk and how these risks can best be managed.

Where the offender is subject to statutory supervision the DRM will be a PBNi Probation Officer. Where the person is not subject to statutory supervision, the DRM will be a police officer from the PSNI Public Protection Unit [PPU]. In a very small number of cases the DRM may be a Social Worker from a Health & Social Care Trust e.g. for those offenders who have been discharged from a secure hospital setting.

1.4 Accommodation

Access to sustainable and suitable accommodation is identified as a contributing factor in preventing and reducing the risk of reoffending¹.

When an offender leaves prison, unless conditions relating to their accommodation are ordered by the Court or are part of Licence conditions, the

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offender can, generally speaking, live where they choose. However, if the offender submits an application to be transferred to alternative social housing, to be placed on the waiting list for an allocation of social housing or presents to the Housing Executive and is owed an accommodation duty, there are a number of restrictions which may be applied in relation to the provision of accommodation.

1.5 Restrictions of Accommodation

Rules 62 to Rule 67 of the Housing Selection Scheme [HSS] allow for housing restrictions of accommodation to be applied in relation to those who have received a custodial sentence or a suspended sentence in respect of a “relevant offence”² or who have been charged with a relevant offence which could attract a custodial sentence,”

These Rules are summarised as follows.

[PPANI-Manual-of-Practice-November-2023-Final.pdf](#)

Appendix 5 Best Practice Guideline for PPANI Agencies when Assessing the Suitability of Accommodation for Offenders in the Community [page 127]

²Meaning of Relevant Offence - Rule 63 Applicants Convicted or Charged with the Sexual Abuse of Children 1. In the present context “a relevant offence” means any of the following offences:

- a. Sexual offences against children which are listed in Schedule 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act (N.I.) 1968.
- b. Sexual offences against children which are listed in Schedule 1 of the Sex Offenders Act (N.I.) 1997.

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- c. Offences relating to indecent photographs of children which are listed in Schedule 1 of the Sex Offenders (N.I.) Act 1997.
- d. Offences under the law of some jurisdiction outside Northern Ireland, which, in the opinion of the Designated Officer, are similar in nature and seriousness to any of the offences listed at a) to c) above

- *Rule 62 – Restrictions at permanent housing stage*
- *Rule 63 - Meaning of a relevant offence*
- *Rule 64 – Offers of accommodation*
- *Rule 66 - Exceptions to the General Rule*
- *Rule 67 – Subsequent Acquittal*

Staff should refer to Chapter 5 of the HSS Guidance Manual for policy information in relation to these Rules.

1.6 Temporary accommodation

Under the Housing (NI) Order 1988, pending inquiries in the case of an apparent priority need, the Housing Executive will be under an interim duty to secure that accommodation is available and where, as a result of those inquiries, a Main Duty arises. The restrictions can also apply to the provision of temporary accommodation in relation to:

- (a) Anybody who has been convicted of a relevant offence, regardless of whether or not a custodial sentence was served.
- (b) Any such Applicant who has been charged in respect of any relevant offence (again regardless of whether or not such an offence if proven would attract a custodial sentence).
- (c) Any Applicant who is suspected by Social Services (in light of a Child Protection Case Conference or Risk Assessment Meeting) of currently posing a risk, in terms of sexual abuse, to any child or children generally

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- 1.7 At present the restrictions under Rule 62 to 67 of the HSS do not apply to persons guilty of sex offences against an adult, domestic violence offences, violent offences against a vulnerable adult or child, or hate crimes.

SECTION ONE

2.0 THE OPERATIONAL FUNCTION OF PPANI

- 2.1 The primary purpose of PPANI is to assist in protecting the public from serious harm by reducing the offender's opportunity and or/motivation to re-offend. This is achieved via the risk assessment and subsequent management of the risks posed by sexual and certain violent offenders. The provision of appropriate accommodation is central to this purpose.
- 2.2 Concern for the victims of sexual and violent offending and the public in general is central to the multi-agency assessment and management of risk. Furthermore, the assessment and management of the risk posed by offenders is a key task for all agencies involved. Effective risk assessment and management requires planning and the employment of a positive and proactive multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approach.
- 2.3 The operational focus of PPANI is the LAPPP meeting covered in Section 4.2 **NOTE:** The majority of the information shared at LAPPPs concerns personal or sensitive data. Panel Members will be required to sign a confidentiality nondisclosure agreement.

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3.0 THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING PPANI

- 3.1 The Housing Executive's responsibilities in this area arise mainly from its strategic role (see 4.1).
- 3.2 It also has a role to play in contributing to the risk assessment and management of certain offenders, in terms of the decision to determine the suitability of allocations of social housing tenancies across Northern Ireland (including assisting and liaising with other Participating Landlords). The Housing Executive's policy in relation to the housing of certain sex offenders, with a relevant offence, is set within this context and in preserving the safety of tenants and the public in general
- 3.3 The Housing Executive also assists other agencies such as the PSNI and PBNI, who have a primary role in preventing and detecting sexual crime and other violent crimes.

4.0 THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE'S PRACTICAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE PPANI PROCESS

4.1 The Strategic Management Board

The Strategic Management Board meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by a senior representative from the Police Service for Northern Ireland, the Probation Board or the Prison Service on a three-year rotational basis. The role of the chair is to facilitate discussion between Strategic Management Board members and in doing so promote, drive and encourage the strategic oversight of the operation of the arrangements in line with the Guidance provided by the Department of Justice under Article 50 of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008. The chair does

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not carry accountability for decisions made by the Board. Accountability rests with the individual agencies involved with delivering their role in the Public Protection Arrangements in Northern Ireland.

The following agencies are standing members of the Strategic Management Board:

- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Prison Service
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)
- Health and Social Care Board
- Health and Social Care Trusts

4.2 LAPPP Meetings

4.2.1 Local Area Public Protection Panels - LAPPP

The purpose of a LAPPP meeting is to identify the risks specific to the individual offender and develop a risk management plan to address these risks. A central PSNI “PPANI Links” administrative unit is based at PSNI Seapark, Carrickfergus and is responsible for the coordination and administration of LAPPP meetings throughout Northern Ireland. There are two types of LAPPP meetings:

Prison pre-release LAPPP meetings - These take place in the prison where the offender is serving his/her sentence approximately 3 months prior to the prisoner’s release date. LAPPP reviews in custody are also held when the prisoner is granted an overnight period of Unaccompanied Temporary Release or ‘home leave’, and,

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Community LAPPP meetings - These take place within the PSNI/HSCT area where the offender is currently residing, which in the Housing Executive's case is not necessarily the Outlet where the individual has applied to or indeed where they wish to be re-housed.

The Core members of these panels are PSNI, PBNI and HSCT representatives. Where the offender is in custody the Northern Ireland Prison Service will be in attendance. Other interested parties will be invited to attend the LAPPP meeting, as required, e.g. for those offenders resident in PBNI Approved Premises/Hostels Accommodation the Hostel Manager or key Worker may be invited to attend. Due to the importance of appropriate accommodation post release currently a Housing Executive representative is invited to attend all LAPPP reviews held in the three Northern Ireland Prison Service establishments; HMP Maghaberry, HMP Magilligan and Hydebank Wood. LAPPP reviews are held on a fortnightly basis in HMP Maghaberry & HMP Magilligan and bimonthly in Hydebank Wood. The Housing Executive is currently invited to attend all cases involving release from prison.

Each offender assessed as either Category 2 or Category 3 are reviewed at a LAPPP on a 16-week basis until their case has been recategorised as Category 1.

4.2.2 The Role of the Housing Executive in Attending a PPANI LAPPP Meeting

The role of the Housing Executive's Designated Officer in attending a PPANI LAPPP meeting are:

- To make relevant information available to the LAPPP meeting which would contribute to the process of the assessment and management of the individual's risk – the Housing Executive may possess past or current information about the person's history that may be relevant to a current risk

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assessment, potential risks to Victims and proximity to offenders relative to their Areas of Choice

- To provide the LAPPP with information on accommodation issues relating to temporary and permanent re-housing.
- To carry out any action steps allocated by the LAPPP, in line with Housing Executive policies and procedures.
- To receive and act on information and advice from the LAPPP meeting in accordance with the agreed confidentiality protocol and to disseminate the information shared with the Housing Executive at the meeting to all relevant Local Outlets on a need-to-know basis in relation to the application of the Housing Executive's policies and procedures.
- The Housing Executive representative will be asked to sign a joint confidentiality protocol document prior to discussion of each case at any LAPPP review.

NOTE: Further information regarding the sharing and disclosure of information within the Public Protection arrangements can be found by accessing the link below (via the Publications heading):

[About Us | PPANI \(publicprotectionni.com\)](https://publicprotectionni.com)

4.2.3 Attendance at Prison Pre-Release LAPPP meetings

The Northern Ireland Prison Service is responsible for referring all relevant cases to the PPANI Links Team at least 3 months prior to release in order that a pre-release prison LAPPP can be convened.

In advance of the scheduled LAPPP meeting the DRM prepares an Initial Briefing/DRM Report detailing; offence specifics, where applicable provides

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responses to actions raised at a previous LAPPP, current risk assessments/other reports, outlines contact with/engagement by the offender and makes a recommendation in respect of a proposed category of risk. This report is circulated to all agency representatives at least two working days in advance of the scheduled LAPPP date. Information sharing regarding offence type, areas of risk, support requirements (including mental health needs, etc.), and location of Victims is essential if local outlets are tasked with dealing with a recently released relevant offender - particularly if emergency temporary accommodation is required. Advance notice and up to date relevant information is essential in order to ensure that a crisis situation is eliminated on the day of release from prison and to avoid placing the offender in unsuitable temporary or permanent accommodation.

The Housing Executive currently has two PPANI Representatives located within the Homelessness Policy Unit, one of whom will act as the Organisation's sole representative at Prison Pre- Release LAPPP meetings. These meetings ensure the Housing Executive is kept informed of all relevant prisoners being released into the community. This is particularly helpful with regard to those prisoners who may be homeless on release. Information brought to the Prison Pre- Release LAPPP meeting is set out in section 4.2.6.

The LAPPP meeting's component agencies, PBNI (Chair), PSNI, HSCT, NIPS and NI Housing Executive will assess and agree the category of risk posed by the individual offender.

The subject will be placed into one of three categories:

Category 1

'Someone whose previous offending and/or current behaviour and/or current circumstances present little evidence that they could cause serious harm through carrying out a contact sexual or violent offence'.

(Single Agency Management, no further multi-agency review required)

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Category 2

‘Someone whose previous offending, and/or current behaviour and/or current circumstances present clear and identifiable evidence that they could cause serious harm through carrying out a contact sexual or violent offence’.

(Case reviewed every 16 weeks at a LAPPP until categorised as Category 1. Whilst offender is managed by a Lead Agency (usually PBNI or PSNI dependent upon supervision status) agencies will actively work together to manage the risk.)

Category 3

‘Someone whose previous offending, and/or current behaviour and/or current circumstances present clear and identifiable evidence that they are highly likely to cause serious harm through carrying out a contact sexual or violent offence’.

(Case reviewed every 16 weeks at a LAPPP until categorised as Category 2. Category 3 offenders are the ‘critical few’ and are managed by the Co-located Public Protection Team (PPT), a team consisting of PSNI, PBNI and HSCT staff)

The level of risk assessed will determine the Risk Management Plan and actions will be agreed to address the specific risk factors. Actions may be allocated to all organisations present and completion will be reported upon at the review LAPPP. A minute of the meeting is taken by the member of staff in attendance from the PSNI PPANI Links Team. Minutes will be circulated to LAPPP representatives from PBNI, PSNI, HSCT, NIHE & NIPS. Other attendees may be provided with copies of the minute on receipt of a request. The Housing Executive representative may keep notes of the action steps relating to the Housing Executive (see below re: Data Protection). Other information shared at the meeting can be disseminated to all relevant Local Outlets on a strictly need to know basis, to ensure that procedures are followed in accordance with existing Housing Executive policy. It would be important, for example, that information about the LAPPP is shared with

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the officer managing the offender's housing case if he/she is not the same officer who attended the LAPPP.

PPANI documentation pertaining to individual offenders e.g. LAPPP Minutes/files etc must be treated as 'restricted' in accordance with Government Protective Guidelines 'confidential'. The information must be securely stored and accessed only by agreed persons and for purposes set out in line with data protection legislation.

It is important to maintain the security of information in line with Housing Executive GDPR/Data Protection policy and any information that would identify the subject as a sex offender should not be kept, if possible. An encrypted laptop containing relevant papers and information when attending LAPPP meetings in order that no papers are carried to or from the meeting location is recommended for use. This action would increase data security and reduce the risk of data being lost or stolen.

(See Gateway Procedures for Handling Personal Information under GDPR/DPA 2018)

An example of secure e-mail via government secured internet is as follows;

forename.surname@nihe.gsi.gov.uk

As noted earlier, there are 3 prisons in Northern Ireland – HMP Maghaberry, Magilligan and Hydebank Wood (Women). There is also a young offender's college located at Hydebank Wood

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An existing operational process is in place where any prisoner who wishes to make an application can do so at the local Housing Executive outlet geographically closest to the prison estate, as below;

- HMP Maghaberry – Lisburn / Castlereagh HSST
 - HMP Magilligan – Causeway HSST
 - HMP Hydebank Wood – Belfast HSST
-
- Existing applications made prior to entering prison will continue to be managed by that assessing Area Office.
 - The appointed officer from Homelessness Policy who is invited to attend the pre-release meetings at the prisons can then liaise with the relevant Housing Executive and housing association staff where required.
 - In some cases, the local Housing Executive office may have already received a housing application from the offender who is due to be released or will receive a homeless application <28 days prior to release and will have responsibility for managing the application. Information received at the LAPPP may assist in the assessment of housing need and/or the homelessness assessment and possible provision of temporary accommodation on release.

4.2.4 Housing Rights Service

4.2.4.1 Prison Housing Advice and Peer Project

Specialist housing advisors, based within the prisons in Northern Ireland, help prevent homelessness among people who have been remanded into custody or

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who are serving sentences in prison. At present Housing Rights' service with regards to PPANI is limited to Category 1 cases.

4.2.5 Attendance at Community LAPPP Meetings

The Housing Executive is not normally invited to attend community LAPPP meetings but may be required to provide information on specific cases. The Team leader should be contacted to obtain this information for the relevant case. In exceptional circumstances where attendance is required the Team Leader, with the agreement of their line manager, should identify the most appropriate officer to attend. Where required, the case may also be discussed with the designated officers in Homelessness Policy.

The DRM will contact the Housing Executive appointed officer well in advance of the meeting (at least 5 working days) to facilitate the collation of all relevant information. This information may come from several sources and may require contact being made with other Housing Executive staff who may have had dealings with the individual offender. The Housing Executive Officer must treat this request, and all information brought to and from the meeting, in strictest confidence.

Responsibility for attending Community LAPPP meetings and monitoring a case would only be transferred from one Housing Executive Designated Officer to another if/when the individual moves from one LAPPP area to another.

4.2.6 Relevant information required for Prison Pre-Release or Community LAPPP meetings

On receipt of notification of a LAPPP meeting, the appointed Housing Executive Officer should collate all up-to-date relevant information in relation to the individual's current tenancy and any past tenancies and housing / homelessness

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applications and current circumstances from all Housing Executive sources. This may involve contacting several Housing Executive and Housing Association offices to gather all relevant information. The type of information which the Housing Executive might possess would include:

- Details of the individual's current and past addresses;
- General information on the nature and location of the current accommodation;
- The tenancy status e.g. temporary accommodation; or permanent tenancy – sole; joint or introductory;
- Details of any other members of household, particularly whether there are:
 - Children living at the address (whether listed on forms or confirmed during visits);
 - Vulnerable adults or people with physical or learning difficulties
- Other relevant facts;
 - Any complaints or reports of nuisance or annoyance in the tenancy or temporary accommodation;
 - Any health / welfare issues or special needs in respect of the individual or their household;
 - Details of any recent home visits; interview or contact with individual;
 - Contact the Housing Executive has had with other agencies in respect of the individual;
- For Applicants;
 - Details of housing need assessment - points and ranking on the Waiting List
 - Areas of Choice – prospects for re-housing; identification of potential suitable accommodation and location.

4.2.7 Format of a Prison Pre-Release or Community LAPPP Meeting

When sharing information (facts, not opinions, should be shared) at a LAPPP meeting the Housing Executive representative should ensure that the information shared is relevant to the management of the risks posed by the subject of the meeting as GDPR/DPA 2018 only allows for the sharing of relevant information for specifically stated purposes.

As stated in 4.2.2 above, The Housing Executive representative will be asked to sign a joint confidentiality protocol document prior to discussion of each case at any LAPPP review.

At any community LAPPP meeting day there will be a number of cases for discussion and Housing Executive representatives should only be invited to attend those cases which have an accommodation issue.

4.2.8 Action Required Between Community LAPPP Meetings

Should staff become aware of a change in the circumstances of an individual who has been the subject of a LAPPP meeting, they should notify the Housing Executive Officer who attended the LAPPP. That officer should then share the new information with the DRM as this change may affect the individual's assessed level of risk and impact on the risk management plan. Examples would include:

- Change of address
- Request for a transfer; homelessness application; housing application
- Change in household composition which may indicate a new relationship;
- Possible or suspected presence of children or vulnerable adults or reports of children being in the home or with the individual.

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Where it is not possible to contact the DRM efforts should be made to contact the DRM's Line Manager. However, where this is not possible the police should be informed and the DRM notified at the earliest possible opportunity.

It is the responsibility of the Housing Executive officer attending the meeting to ensure that they follow up on the relevant action steps in line with the Housing Executive's policies and procedures. A report on action taken by the Housing Executive since the last meeting should be forwarded to the DRM via secured email prior to the review meeting.

SECTION TWO

5.0 HOW TO DEAL WITH AN APPLICATION FROM A PERSON WHO IS OR MAY BE PPANI ELIGIBLE

The information contained in this section of guidance is to assist staff in contributing to the management of risk, in terms of obtaining information in relation to Applicants who have received a custodial sentence or a suspended sentence in respect of a “relevant offence” or who have been charged with a relevant offence which could attract a custodial sentence, who are affected by Rules 62-67 of the Housing Selection Scheme, which allows a participating landlord to restrict offers of accommodation, including temporary accommodation.

Further information is set out in this guidance for staff in relation to the management of risk in respect of Applicants with a sex offence against an adult, or domestic violence offences, or violent offences against a vulnerable adult or child, or Hate Crime offences [hereafter referred to as violent offences] although these Applicants do **not** come under Rules 62-67 of the Housing Selection Scheme, which allows for a landlord to restrict offers of accommodation, including temporary accommodation.

Policies and guidance are in place in relation to housing restrictions which should be applied by a participating landlord to those with a relevant offence. Staff should refer to Chapter 5 of the HSS Guidance Manual. In relation to temporary accommodation guidance is contained primarily in Chapter 7 of the Homelessness Guidance Manual, with supplementary information contained in this document.

Staff are also reminded to refer to the Housing Executive’s Safeguarding Policies & Procedures.

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5.1 Assessing Eligibility

The Housing Executive may decide to treat an applicant as ineligible¹ for housing or homelessness assistance as a result of unacceptable behaviour. Please refer to Chapter 2 of the Housing Selection Scheme Guidance Manual for a detailed explanation and policy guidance on Eligibility.

5.1.1 Risk Categories

The assessed risk categories of a person who falls under PPANI is covered earlier in section one, 4.2.3 - they are, however, summarised as follows:

- **Category 1**
- **Category 2**
- **Category 3**

By themselves, the assessed risk categories are not to be used as the determining factor when reaching a decision on Eligibility, i.e. that the applicant is still unsuitable to be a tenant of the Housing Executive on grounds of Unacceptable Behaviour. Considered decisions in relation to eligibility for Unacceptable Behaviour must take into account advice on the likelihood of re-offending, risk factors specific to the individual offender, multi-agency arrangements with the PSNI, PBNI, HSCTs, health professionals and other relevant bodies. Compliance with PPANI processes and the adverse consequences of deeming the applicant ineligible should also be considered.

¹ The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

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5.1.2 Other Information which may be considered in reaching an eligibility decision

Information which the Housing Executive receives, or is provided with through involvement in the PPANI process, may also be taken into account in reaching decisions:

- Is the individual subject to current statutory or voluntary supervision?
- Aspects of supervision:
 - Compliance with Licence requirements, LAPPP Risk Management Plans and Sexual Offences Prevention Orders (SOPOs) or Violent Offences Prevention Order (VOPO) requirements
 - Honesty around disclosure of daily activities
 - Achievement of work plan i.e. attendance at a programme aimed at addressing offending behaviour i.e. Community Sex Offenders Group Programme.
- Consultation with DRM (for those offenders subject to PBNi supervision the DRM will be the supervising Probation Officer; where there is no statutory supervision the DRM will be a Police Officer from the PSNI Public Protection Unit) or other relevant agencies (*and recognising the assessed category of risk*)

Community Safety

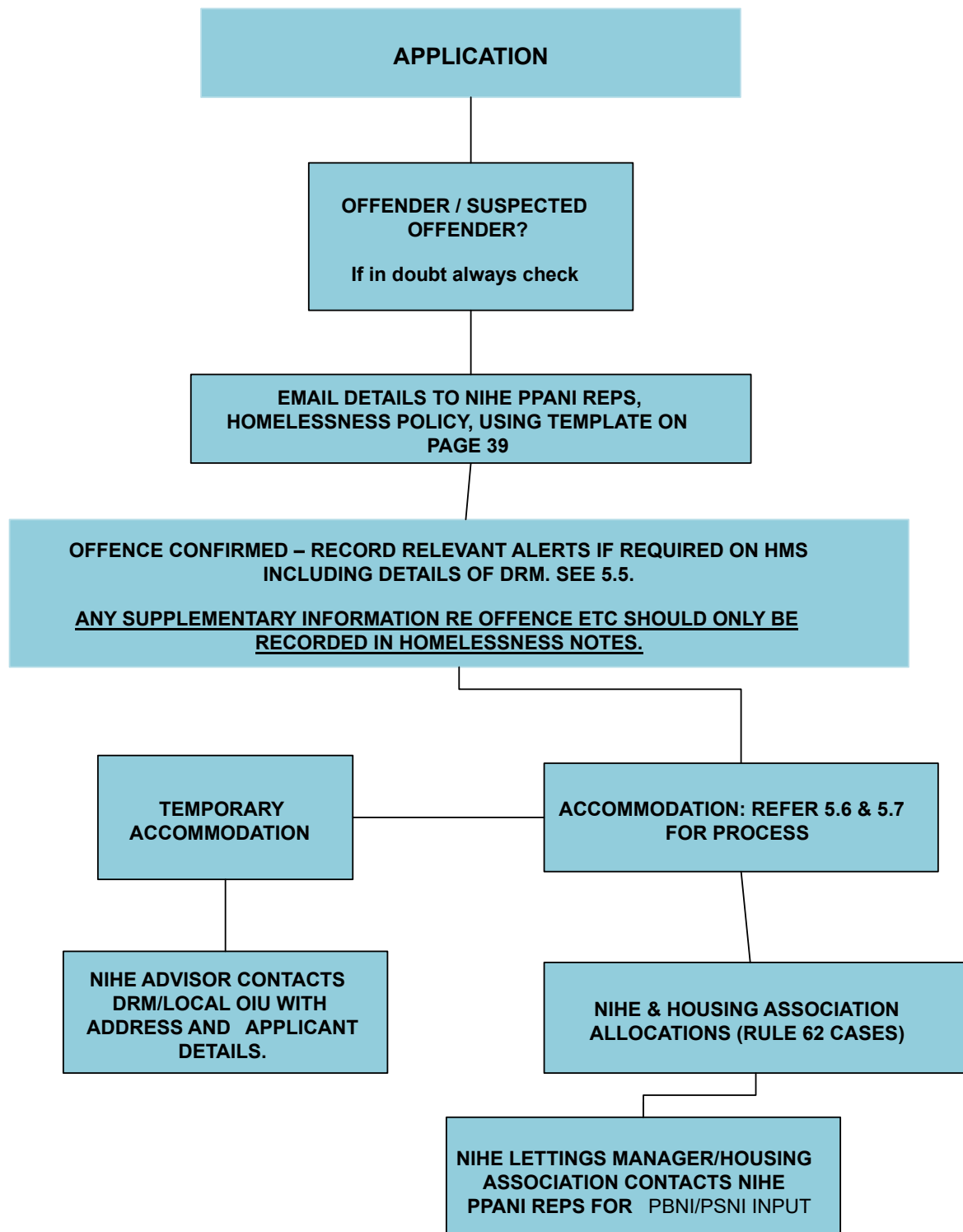
The Housing Executive may consider taking action against existing tenants through injunctions / Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBOs). The decision to invoke such action against an offender may be influenced by the PPANI process and whether the offender is complying with this process. Further information is available in the ASB manual

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5.1.3 In reaching a decision on eligibility, staff must be satisfied they have applied the tests set out in Chapter 2 of the Housing Selection Scheme Guidance.

PROCESS FOR PPANI CASES



5.3 How to make a PPANI enquiry

5.3.1 Staff suspect or know an Applicant is a PPANI eligible offender

During the course of carrying out an assessment of an application, staff may suspect, believe or be advised that the Applicant has received a custodial sentence, a suspended sentence or been charged with an offence which could attract a custodial sentence in respect of a relevant offence⁴.

To verify if the Applicant is PPANI eligible, **staff should contact the Housing Executive PPANI representatives, in the Homelessness Policy team, by completing the pro forma in section 4 of Appendix 1 on page 40.** Arrangements will then be made to contact the PSNI Visor Management Team, in order to clarify the nature of the conviction, if any and ascertain if the person is currently being managed within the PPANI arrangements. At the same time, up to date information on the DRM may also be provided.

If neither of the Housing Executive PPANI representatives are available, staff should email the completed pro forma to HomelessnessPolicy.PPANI@nihe.gov.uk - where the email will be actioned by a member of staff in Homelessness Policy & Strategy

Supplementary information is available in Appendix 1.

5.4 Requests for information by third parties

Under no circumstances should a request for information be sent to the Visor Management Team if a third party, such as a local community development

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worker or a representative from a resident's group requests the Housing Executive to confirm if someone is a relevant offender.

While The Housing Executive is a co-signatory of the PPANI protocol, the sharing and disclosure of information or requests to the Visor Management team should only be made in order for us to carry out our functions in line with our public protection duties.

If the Housing Executive already holds the information, under no circumstances should this information be provided to any enquiring third party. The enquirer should be informed to contact local PSNI and express any concerns they have directly to police.

5.5 HMS Procedures following a response to a PPANI Enquiry

5.5.1 Confirmed as PPANI Eligible (sexual offence against a child) – UDC and Notes to HMS

To ensure that any restrictions are appropriately considered, staff must ensure that the appropriate UDC alert and notes are added to HMS. If the person is PPANI Eligible for sexual offences against children, then the application should be considered as a “relevant offender” - see Housing Selection Scheme Rules 62-67 for further advice.

A Person User Defined Characteristic (UDC) should be keyed on HMS under “See Person Notes” (SPN). The comment should read as follows:

“Rule 62 Relevant Offence-Check prior to allocation” Staff should add to HMS the name and contact details of the Applicant's DRM if known.

ANY DETAILS OR ADVICE REGARDING OFFENCES ETC SHOULD ALWAYS BE RECORDED IN HOMELESS NOTES

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5.5.2 What to do if UDC appears

For general advice or allocation approval checks, Housing Executive and Housing Association Staff will email [NIHE](#) PPANI Representatives, who will contact DRM / OIU on their behalf.

5.5.2 Confirmed as PPANI Eligible (sexual offences against an adult or violent offences against a child or vulnerable adult, Domestic Violence or hate crime) Notes to HMS

At present, housing restrictions cannot be applied to someone who is PPANI eligible for any of the above offences. These will be referred to as “PPANI Other”. However, to allow the Housing Executive to carry out its functions in line with its public protection duties, staff must add an appropriate UDC alert to HMS as follows:

A Person User Defined Characteristic (UDC) should be keyed on HMS under “See Person Notes” (SPN). The comment should read as follows:

“PPANI Other- Check prior to allocation”

Staff should add to HMS the name and contact details of the Applicant’s DRM if known

For temporary accommodation, Housing Executive Staff should contact DRM / Offender Investigation Unit (OIU) and provide details of the proposed allocation / offer of temporary accommodation.

For permanent allocations, Housing Executive and Housing Association Staff should contact the Housing Executive PPANI Representatives, who will contact DRM/OIU on their behalf.

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As advised in 1.8 above, **at present the restrictions under Rule 62 to 67 of the HSS do not apply to persons guilty of sex offences against a vulnerable adult, violent offences against an adult, or child or hate crimes. Under the existing rules we can ask the DRM to consult with the applicant re the allocation's implications on his/her licence agreement or SOPO / VOPO conditions; however, if the applicant wishes to proceed with the allocation we must proceed to offer.**

5.6 Temporary Accommodation

5.6.1 Statutory Requirements under the Housing Order 1988

In line with its statutory provisions under the Housing Order 1988 the Housing Executive provides temporary accommodation in the following circumstances:

- (a)** Pending a final Housing Executive decision under the Homelessness legislation in respect of an Applicant who may be homeless and has a Priority Need.
- (b)** Where the Housing Executive accepts that it owes the Full homelessness duty towards the Applicant, it will continue to house the Applicant in temporary accommodation until an offer of permanent accommodation can be made.

5.6.2 Restrict offers of Temporary Accommodation – PPANI eligible (sexual offence against a child)

Restrictions imposed at the temporary housing stage relate to:

- (a)** Anybody who has been convicted of a relevant offence, regardless of whether or not a custodial sentence was served.
- (b)** Any such Applicant who is currently charged in respect of any relevant offence (again regardless of whether or not such an offence if proven would attract a custodial sentence).

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- (c) Any Applicant who is suspected by Social Services (in light of a Child Protection Case Conference or Risk Assessment Meeting) of currently posing a risk, in terms of sexual abuse, to any child or children generally.

Staff should discuss with the Applicant the suitability of temporary accommodation and the right of the Housing Executive to restrict offers of temporary accommodation. The Housing Executive's advice in connection to this may be welcome. In any event, the advice should be given in a non-confrontational manner, and the Applicant's perspective should be taken fully into account

Advice from the PSNI's Offender Investigation Unit and/or DRM on the suitability of any proposed temporary accommodation. Staff should seek advice from the PSNI/DRM on the suitability of any proposed temporary accommodation. It is important to liaise with the PSNI/DRM and to keep them up-to-date of any temporary accommodation which is accepted by the Applicant. Staff should contact the DRM/OIU to ascertain the level of detail to be disclosed, which may vary from case to case.

In exceptional circumstances, for example where an applicant comes in towards close of business, Designated Officers may have no alternative but to place a Rule 62 Applicant in a hotel or B&B (as a last resort until alternative, more suitable accommodation can be accessed).

GDPR prohibits disclosure of information in these circumstances. If the Hotel or B&B asks for details of offences, we would have to decline to provide it.

Staff should contact the DRM to advise him/her of the potential placement. Where it is not possible to contact the DRM efforts should be made to contact the DRM's Line Manager. However, where this is not possible the PSNI should be informed and the DRM notified at the earliest possible opportunity. As soon as the placement is made, staff should email the local Offender Investigation

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Unit to advise of the placement details using the emails listed in Appendix 3 on page 42 and update HMS with relevant notes.

5.6.3 Restricting Temporary Accommodation – “PPANI Other” [sexual offences against an adult or violent offences against a child or vulnerable adult, Domestic Violence or hate crime]

Restrictions imposed at Temporary Accommodation Stage

Restrictions imposed at temporary accommodation stage do not presently extend to persons who have sexual offences against an adult or violent offences against a child or vulnerable adult, Domestic Violence or hate crime.

However, staff may exercise discretion in terms of safeguarding depending on the offence and the type of accommodation, for example where vulnerable females may be staying there. Again, this should be discussed with the DRM where applicable.

Staff may also discuss with the Applicant the suitability of temporary accommodation where, for example, it is close to the Victim or accommodation which may result in the breaching of their licence agreement, SOPO or VOPO.

The Housing Executive’s advice in connection to this may be welcome. In any event, the advice should be given in a non-confrontational manner, and the Applicant’s perspective should be taken fully into account.

In practice, many such Applicants are only too willing to avoid specific accommodation, either because they are concerned for their own safety or because of a genuine wish to avoid re-offending, or breach their licence agreement, SOPO or VOPO.

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5.6.4 Out-of-Hours Temporary Accommodation Placements

Out-of-Hours Placements should be coordinated through contact with the DRM, if known. Alternatively, the Offender Investigation Unit (OIU) for the area in which the placement is being considered should be contacted. Details of OIUs are listed in Appendix 3, page 42.

Where contact cannot be made, the Out-of-Hours Officer may proceed with the placement and email the relevant OIU and DRM, if known, of emergency placement.

The Officer may also contact Neighbourhood Sgts (in the PSNI station closest to location of dwelling) to request approval/advise of placements.

As with 5.6.2 above, GDPR prohibits disclosure of information to accommodation providers.

Liaising with the PSNI / DRM on the provision of temporary accommodation.

It is important to continue liaising with the PSNI/DRM and to keep them up-to date of any temporary accommodation placement which is accepted by the Applicant

Should staff become aware of a change in the Applicant's address it is also important to inform the PSNI/DRM at the earliest opportunity

5.7 Areas of Choice and Allocations

5.7.1 Applicant is PPANI eligible (sexual offence against a child)

Areas of Choice

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On the basis of information gathered from the DRM and the most obvious concern being proximity of a victim or a relative of the victim, the Areas of Choice for permanent housing should be discussed. The Applicant should be advised to voluntarily restrict their Areas of choices. It is important for staff to liaise with the PSNI/DRM when discussing and determining suitable Areas of Choices with the Applicant. Advice from the Housing Executive and/or the DRM in connection with this may not necessarily be unwelcome by the Applicant as there can be a genuine wish to avoid re-offending, or a breach of a SOPO or VOPO.

Advice in this regard should be given in a non-confrontational manner, and the Applicant's perspective should be taken fully into account.

Prior to Making an Allocation

When an Applicant is being considered for an allocation of accommodation, the participating Landlord should follow the process described in 5.5.2 to gauge the suitability of the proposed accommodation for the applicant.

The Participating landlord should take into consideration the response from the Offender Investigation Unit/DRM. However, offers of accommodation must continue to be made in line with Rules 62 to 67 of the Housing Selection Scheme

5.7.2 Unsuitable Accommodation

"Unsuitable" accommodation is accommodation which complies with sub-paragraphs 1) to 3) of Rule 64, but is unsuitable for a particular Applicant because of exceptional circumstances of one or more of the following kinds:

- 1) The specific location of the particular accommodation.
- 2) The specific circumstances of that Applicant.

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- 3) Detailed advice that, by housing the Applicant in that particular estate, an exceptional risk would be created. Consideration of the circumstances of someone already living at that location (the most obvious being proximity of a Victim or a relative of the Victim) must be taken into account.

See Chapter 5 (5.7.10.5) of the Housing Selection Scheme for further guidance on Rule 58A in relation to a withdrawal of an unsuitable offer of accommodation.

5.7.3 Exceptions to the General Rule

The general rule” referred to in Rule 62 shall be subject to exceptions if the Landlord, in the light of representations made by or on behalf of any affected Applicant, is satisfied that because of that Applicant’s exceptional circumstances, the restriction at permanent housing stage should not apply to that Applicant, on that occasion.

5.7.4 Applicants being considered for Housing Association accommodation

Applicants may be considered for Housing Association accommodation within the general Housing Area containing their area of choice. Again, such accommodation would have to meet the criteria outlined within the HSS. A view has been expressed by some Housing Associations that although sheltered accommodation might well fit the criteria outlined, it is not considered suitable by virtue of young families / grandchildren visiting such complexes on a regular basis. Ultimately this decision rests with the Landlord in question, but in any event effective liaison should occur when dealing with a specific Applicant and the Association must be fully informed of the circumstances.

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5.7.5 Applicant is PPANI eligible (sexual offences against an adult or violent offences against a child or vulnerable adult, Domestic Violence or hate crime)

Areas of Choice

At present, housing restrictions under Rule 62 do not extend to those with a sexual offence against an adult or a violent offence. Nonetheless, the Applicant should be advised to voluntarily restrict their Areas of choices, as there can be a genuine wish to avoid re-offending, or a breach of a SOPO or VOPO. Advice from the Housing Executive may be welcome. However, an Applicant would not be under any direct compulsion to accept the advice.

It is important for staff to liaise with the PSNI/DRM when discussing and determining suitable Areas of Choices for the Applicant. It may also be the case that the PPU and/or DRM can persuade the Applicant to select Areas of Choice which are not at odds with the conditions relative to any VOPOs or SOPOs which may be in place.

Advice in this regard, should be given in a non-confrontational manner, and the Applicant's perspective should be taken fully into account.

5.7.6 Archived PPANI Cases

It is important to note that sexual offences against children are never spent.

In cases where a Rule 62 applicant is archived and no longer subject to notification and management under PPANI, the Local OIU Sergeant may still be contacted to provide a general opinion on the suitability of the accommodation.

5.8 Subsequent Acquittal

Where an Applicant is subject to restriction at permanent housing stage due to criminal charges, every effort must be made to ensure that the Applicant, if

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acquitted, will not suffer any permanent housing detriment as a result of the restriction of choice.

5.9 Sharing and Recording Information

5.9.1 Local Offices and other agencies with a primary role in the PPANI process

Sharing of information is crucial in dealing with such cases and it is therefore imperative that relevant information is shared between Local Offices to enable the policies to be applied. Health and Social Services has also endorsed the proposals consulted upon, as have the Police, and mutual sharing of information between the Housing Executive and these agencies should also be forthcoming. It is important to remember, however, that the Housing Executive must arrive at the appropriate re-housing decision based on the policies outlined. The Housing Executive should share information with Social Services and with the Probation Board and the PSNI whenever law permits the disclosure of such information, and to the fullest extent allowed by law.

5.9.2 GDPR

It is important for Housing Executive Staff to ensure they are compliant with GDPR and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 when applying information on offenders to HMS, bearing in mind that this information may be visible to organisations outside the PPANI arrangements such as Housing Associations. **Staff should ensure that minimal information should be recorded on HMS to satisfy the business need and must only be relevant to the Applicant, not third parties such as victims or their families.**

For further information please refer to:

<http://gateway/Data->

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[Protection/Documents/Policy%20and%20Procedures%20for%20Handling%20Personal%20Data%20Under%20the%20GDPR%20and%20DPA%202018.pdf#search=handling](#)

5.9.3 Voluntary organisations

Certain Voluntary Sector temporary accommodation providers who provide accommodation to offenders may also be advised in any instance where a “restricted” Applicant is being offered / placed in their accommodation. Similarly, voluntary organisations should share relevant information with the Housing Executive when we are considering re-housing of such Applicants.

5.9.3 Media issues

Whenever a relevant incident involving an Applicant becomes a controversial issue in the media, the Communications Department of the Housing Executive will deal with the matter. Staff should contact the Housing Executive Communications Unit to discuss any issues of concern.

5.9.4 Occupants of other properties

It is **NOT** appropriate that the Housing Executive informs tenants/residents when such Applicants are allocated accommodation in a neighbouring area. Social Services are the agency with the primary responsibility for child protection. They will inform individuals where they consider there is to be a need to do so. It will be the responsibility of the DRM to decide on the release of information to landlords/residents.

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5.9.5 Additional Information in relation to PPANI

Staff may also refer to section 14 of the Manual of Practice: [PPANI-Manual-of-Practice-November-2023-Final.pdf](#)

NB: PPANI Manual of Practice is currently under review

APPENDIX 1

PPANI CHECK ENQUIRY FORM

If you suspect an applicant is, or may be, a relevant offender then you should follow the following process:

1	Ask the customer if he/she is currently charged or has ever been found guilty of a sex offence or a violent offence
2	Ask the customer if he/she has ever been risk assessed and managed under the Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland (PPANI)
3	<p>If yes to 1 or 2 above, or if you still have a suspicion regarding a relevant offence or a violent offence, then staff should complete the pro-forma found in 4 below and send it in the body of an e-mail to the following inbox for further processing HomelessnessPolicy.PPANI@nihe.gov.uk</p> <p>For Information purposes the NIHE PPANI Reps are, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] within the Homelessness Policy Unit.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>

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4	<p>In order to assist in our public protection duties I would be grateful if you could inform me if the person detailed below has been found guilty of any sex offences, either pre or post 1997, or has been found guilty of any offences which were below the threshold for inclusion in PPANI, or is currently charged with any relevant sex offences. Can you also provide details of Designated Risk Manager (DRM), if applicable?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="245 613 1310 972"> <tr> <td data-bbox="245 613 778 712">Name</td><td data-bbox="778 613 1310 712"></td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="245 712 778 801">DOB</td><td data-bbox="778 712 1310 801"></td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="245 801 778 891">NINO</td><td data-bbox="778 801 1310 891"></td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="245 891 778 972">Last known recent addresses</td><td data-bbox="778 891 1310 972"></td></tr> </table>	Name		DOB		NINO		Last known recent addresses	
Name									
DOB									
NINO									
Last known recent addresses									
5	<p>Upon receipt of a completed pro forma, a member of staff from Homelessness Policy will forward this to the PSNI Visor Management Team by e-mail. The Visor Management Team will subsequently respond to Homelessness Policy staff with the relevant information – this will in turn be forwarded to the appropriate staff member who submitted the initial enquiry.</p>								
6	<p>If the information confirms that the person has been charged or found guilty of a sexual offence, staff should then contact either the investigating PSNI Officer (for charged cases) or the DRM (for convicted cases) to ascertain if the offences were committed against children and any other information which may be of assistance to the application. Staff should use their secured e-mail address for these enquires – Forename.surname@nihe.gov.uk</p>								
7	<p>If the person is PPANI eligible for sexual offences against children, then the applicant should be considered as a “relevant offender” – see Housing Selection Scheme Rules 62-67 for further advice.</p> <p>A Person User Defined Characteristic (UDC) should be keyed on HMS under “See Person Notes” (SPN). The comment should read as follows:</p> <p>“Rule 62 Relevant Offence- Check prior to allocation”</p>								

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8	<p>If the person is PPANI eligible for sexual offences against an adult, a violent offence against an adult or child, or a hate crime offence, A Person User Defined Characteristic (UDC) should be keyed on HMS under “See Person Notes” (SPN). The comment should read as follows:</p> <p>“PPANI Other- Contact DRM prior to any allocation”</p>
9	<p>If staff require any further guidance on this issue they should contact Homelessness Policy Unit, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]</p>

APPENDIX 2

Accommodation Check Enquiry Template

The applicant below is currently under consideration for the offer of INSERT ADDRESS
HERE and INSERT OFFICE/HOUSING ASSOCIATION HERE are enquiring as to the suitability
of this offer.

Applicant initials	
DOB	
HMS Ref:	
Last known address(es)	
Additional Information re: proposed allocation (type of dwelling, other residents, visitors etc.)	

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APPENDIX 3

Offender Investigation Unit (OIU) Contact Details

Unit	Location	Contact Telephone	Email
Belfast PPU	[REDACTED]	101	[REDACTED]
Northern PPU	[REDACTED]	101	[REDACTED]
South Eastern PPU	[REDACTED]	101	[REDACTED]
Southern PPU	[REDACTED]	101	[REDACTED]
Western PPU	[REDACTED]	101	[REDACTED]