

23.09.12

**9 Deputy C.D. Curtis of the Minister for Housing and Communities regarding the criteria for the affordable rented Housing Gateway (OQ.170/2023)**

Will the Minister confirm whether there are any plans to alter the criteria for the affordable rented Housing Gateway to permit those who currently have a lease to be added to the waiting list, and if not, why not?

**Deputy D. Warr of St. Helier South (The Minister for Housing and Communities):**

I thank the Deputy for her question. The Gateway already accepts Islanders who have leases for homes in the private rental market. Anyone unsure about whether or not they qualify can always contact the Gateway.

**5.9.1 Deputy C.D. Curtis:**

I have been given responses to applications and that is not the case. I can quote some to you. I would ask if the Minister could check up on this, please, because in answer to applications people are told: "We are unable to consider your application, reason being you are bound to a rental lease. In order to be considered for social housing you need to be actively looking for properties." This would mean that people would have to refuse to leave their properties and be evicted or become homeless to get on the waiting list.

**Deputy D. Warr:**

My officers certainly do not agree with that. I would also say that if we take a look at band 3 on the Social Housing Gateway, the band reflects applicants whose current accommodation is unaffordable, given their personal circumstances or who are deemed to be adequately housed but meet the eligibility criteria. So band 3 suggests that what the Deputy is suggesting is not the case. However, as I say, if there is a query, I am happy to take that away after the Assembly, if the Deputy would like to put those to me directly outside of here.

**5.9.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Like Deputy Catherine Curtis, I have seen with my own eyes an application turned down because that person was in a lease, which would have meant if they wanted to become eligible they would either have to break that lease or squat in their home and risk facing eviction action before being able to become eligible. Since that clearly is at odds with what the Minister and his team think is the intention behind the eligibility criteria of the Gateway, will he therefore agree as a matter of urgency to go to his team and ask them to reconsider applications that have been turned down on that basis, since it is clearly one he does not agree with?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

I would say that I am not aware of this scenario, so I absolutely advise that this individual gets in touch with us and I will follow up and let the Assembly know what the outcome is.

**5.9.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

It may not be an individual, it may be more systemic if somebody in one of the government offices somewhere seems to think that that is a rule. Will he endeavour to make sure that that message is sent out loudly and clearly that that cannot be grounds for turning someone down from the Gateway?

**Deputy D. Warr:**

Of course.

**5.9.4 Deputy C.D. Curtis:**

I would like to say that the wording does seem to be quite standard in the responses that I have seen. I will forward that information to the Minister and would like him to check up on that, thank you.