

2018.03.19

13 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of the Minister for Housing regarding the average waiting time for Islanders on the Housing Gateway to be housed in a one-bedroom property: [OQ.56/2018]

On average, what waiting times are Islanders currently facing to be housed in a one-bedroom property when they are in the top band priority for the Housing Gateway?

The Deputy of Trinity (The Minister for Housing):

The average waiting time for applicants who require a one-bedroom property, which are registered in a highest priority bands, or the Affordable Housing Gateway band one, is approximately 4 to 6 weeks, varying accordingly to requirements of the applicant.

3.13.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Could I ask what procedures are in place if somebody in the top band priority faces an emergency where they must be rehoused immediately, and when I say “immediately” I mean perhaps with a week’s notice? Are there procedures in place for dealing with these emergency cases?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Yes, they go to the Housing Gateway and put their case forward, the reasons why they have to be top priority, and as soon as if they are top priority - and it all depends on the needs too - then as soon as a flat becomes available and they are top priority they will get allocated as soon as possible.

3.13.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

In those instances, from what the Minister has just said there about finding a property if they can make the case for it, if it is the case that there simply is no property available at that time and that person has a risk of becoming homeless, what would the department do to ensure that does not happen?

The Deputy of Trinity:

It is a difficult situation because sometimes I know that Deputy Mézec had a particular incident, that some tenants have very, very particular needs and sometimes those needs cannot be met at that present moment in time. So we work hard, is someone is in that top priority band, to work hard to achieve, as soon as we can, that they are housed suitably.

3.13.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is it not the case with the new system of choice-based lettings where a property comes up for availability and people are asked to bid, there is no prioritisation happening there, it does not necessarily go to the top most demanding, most urgent case, it could go to any one of 6 people who view the property under the new system and it is not allocation, it is choice-based lettings.

The Deputy of Trinity:

Choice-based lettings does work within Andium and the tenants prefer it because they have a choice of where they are going to go. But there are occasions when that person cannot use choice-based lettings, for example they are elderly or vulnerable or they do not have any internet. But the Gateway and Andium Homes most of the time, but also the housing trusts, will identify and support tenants who require additional support so people are not disadvantaged and they can access accommodation as soon as possible.

[16:30]

3.13.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Could the Minister confirm that, as far as she is concerned, there are no circumstances in which anybody who is in the top band priority would be allowed to become homeless and that her department would make some arrangement, even if that involves temporary accommodation, to make sure that somebody had a roof above their house and that they would not tolerate any prospect of becoming homeless at the end?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I would like to give that guarantee but it has a little bit of a health warning attached to it. I do not want anybody homeless and I would like to think that we can always find somewhere for that person to be because, as you said, having a roof over the head is important and we work with all tenants. But sometimes tenants do have very, very particular needs and sometimes we just do not have that accommodation available, be it on a ground floor or be they need specific mobility problems or they need a wet room rather than a bath; that is why I am encouraging trusts not to put baths in but put wet rooms in so that we can identify it. But some people have particular needs and they are very hard to house. But I hope that everybody never ever is made homeless, and we do it case by case.