TOP
HOUSE

Towards Person Centered Housing Services in Europe

Pack on Individual Needs and Allocation of Housing

IO3 - Pack on Individual Needs and Allocation of Housing

Table of Contents

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1. Introduction

1.1. What is the Housing Allocation System (HAS)

There are a multitude of stakeholders that have an involvement in housing and support - government departments, local government, municipal authorities, state, voluntary and private health care providers, voluntary organisations, front line and managerial staff and, of course, the service users themselves. With the variety of stakeholders as well as divergences in history, culture, policy, etc., systems for allocating housing vary widely across Europe and can even vary within countries.

Existing systems for allocation and assessment of housing and supports can be inflexible and are not equipped to accommodate the range of people applying for housing with supports and their diverse needs.

The Housing Allocation System (HAS) is intended to work in partnership with other intellectual outputs from TopHouse and will collate criteria from individual needs and rights assessments, support needs assessments and eligibility assessments. Best practice examples from across Europe will be studied and learning from other contexts will be drawn on to ensure that HAS is a system through which housing and supports will be appropriately allocated to applicants, effectively meeting their needs and done so in a way that is transparent and person-centred.

1.2. Aim of HAS

The aim of HAS is to put in place a system of housing and support allocation for persons with a disability or in need of additional supports. It is intended that HAS will incorporate person-centred planning and will be underpinned by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

It is intended that HAS will be used by front line housing staff and will be of use across Europe in all types of organisation, to provide fair and transparent housing allocation decisions. Managerial and organisational awareness and acceptance will also be crucial for HAS to be adopted in a meaningful way. There are other outputs from TopHouse on the assessment of individual needs and rights,

support needs assessments and inter-agency co-operation. It is intended that, as far as practicable, HAS will be used in conjunction with other TopHouse outputs.

In particular, it is anticipated that IO4, THSUNA (TopHouse Support Needs Assessment) will be used in conjunction with HAS so that support providers and allocations officers can work in partnership with a service user and coproduce their ongoing housing and supports. THSUNA is available in full as an annex at the end of this document.

1.3. Opportunities and limitations of HAS

The issue of transferability is an aspect of HAS that represents both an opportunity and a potential limitation. The system must be flexible enough to fit into existing housing allocation systems across Europe. If this is successfully done, it will create a fair and equitable system of allocation that is person-centred and underpinned by the UN CRPD and recognised across Europe. The benefits of this will be experienced by service users as the end users of such a system of allocations. It will also be of great benefit to housing allocation officers who may be willing to work in a person-centred way and implement person-centred policies but who may lack clear tools and guidance on how to put person-centred planning into practice in terms of housing allocations or feel ill-equipped to properly and appropriately accommodate people with additional support needs through existing systems.

Keeping in mind the concept of transferability, it is vital that while HAS is flexible, it must also be specific enough to be meaningful. A loose collection of standards or guiding principles will not provide the robust system necessary for HAS to be a useful tool.

It is also necessary for users of HAS at frontline and middle-management level to have a willingness to work differently and, in some ways, take on a slightly different role. The role of the allocations officer in housing can be one where there is only a short amount of time spent with the applicant. It is hoped that all housing and support workers carrying out assessments will recognise the benefits of working differently, in a more collaborative and supportive way, and that this can lead to an effective use of HAS and, hopefully, better allocations and outcomes for all.

2. Background

2.1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) is a human rights convention written by and for people with disabilities. It is intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with a disability. While it does not provide any new rights, it is an important document in that it recognises and explicitly states that a person with a disability has the same rights, entitlements and expectations as someone who does not have a disability.

This impacts on areas of life such as:

- Housing and the ability to choose where and how you want to live
- Choosing and deciding on your own support services
- Access to information
- Employment and education
- Health services and the right to the highest attainable standard of health
- Full participation in society

The UN CRPD has now been signed and ratified by all EU countries and HAS will be created in line with the principles of the Convention.

2.2. The UN CRPD and Integrated Housing & Support

Across Europe, just under 20% of people live in social housing and a sizeable number of these social housing tenants require and access integrated housing and support. There are thousands more who have applied for such housing in addition to people living in congregated institutional settings who want and require independent housing with supports. Such tenants and applicants have needs around disability (physical, intellectual, sensory, autism spectrum, mental health), homelessness (with additional needs around disability or addiction) or related to age (reduced mobility, dementia, etc.).

Across Europe, the policy direction in recent years has slowly taken a more person-centred approach when it comes to supported housing, along with a gradual adoption of the "housing first" philosophy for housing for homeless persons. There have been large-scale reviews of disability services moving from institutional settings to support people with disabilities in community-based living, with maximum independence and choice. This reflected the policy shift towards the delivery of care and support to people with disabilities in the community and was another step away from the historical practice of the Department of Health and Health Service Executive funding housing as part of a person's overall care in a large residential congregated setting.

Although Ireland only ratified the UN CRPD in 2018, policy has been moving more towards a person-centred model. In July 2012, the Irish Department of Environment, Community and Local Government published the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016, the first policy document in Ireland to provide clear guidelines specifically on best practice in housing people with a disability. It is part of a wider government policy (legislated for in the Disability Act 2005) for all public services to meet the needs of people with disabilities as an integral part of their function i.e. mainstreaming of services to people with disabilities. The full extent of the role of the UN CRPD in Ireland has not yet been assessed comprehensively and although policy is moving towards a person-centred model, there is likely to be much work to do to ensure full CRPD compliance.

Other European countries have found the same. In Austria, a report by the Austrian Disability Council stated that although the Austrian government assumes that the rights of people with disabilities in eh UN CRPD are already enshrined in the Austrian legal system, he National Action Plan on disability lists 250 measures requiring implementation to meet CRPD compliance.

In Finland, the Advisory Board for the Rights of People with a Disability, VANE, published an action plan to strengthen the UN CRPD in Finland. Although ratified, this report highlights the lack of tools to implement UN CRPD in Finland or to assess its effects.

2.3. Person Centred Approaches for Housing

Recent policy across Europe has taken a person-centred approach with people living in congregated settings moving to more dispersed housing in the wider community. Such housing has been delivered by housing associations, local authorities, private care providers, municipal authorities and others. In housing people with a disability, their community housing will give them access to mainstream community services such as doctors, public health nurses as well as wider social, cultural and sporting services that enable people with a disability to lead more independent lives as fully active members of society in the way that they wish.

In social housing, Person-centred Plans (PCPs) are completed by the individual with support from a service provider as required. PCPs support and enable a person to make informed choices about how they want to live their life, now and in the future. They support the person to identify their dreams, wishes and goals and what is required to make these possible. The PCP process requires that the supports available are responsive to the person and focus on the outcomes they want to achieve. An individual's PCP deals with all aspects of their future transition. The plans include the housing needs and choices of the individual and are developed before a person presents to the local authority for assessment of need. The PCPs will help to inform this process.

PCPs should be reviewed on a continual basis by service providers to ensure that they reflect the current needs, will and preference of the individual. It is important that if there are substantial changes to the person's support needs, that may affect the nature and/or sustainability of the tenancy that these are incorporated into the PCP. Following agreement with the individual and their advocate, if appropriate, such information should be shared between housing and service providers to ensure that the individual's changing needs are appropriately met.

2.4. Role of the housing applicant and co-production in housing allocation

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) defines co-production as "inclusive working practices between Experts by Experience and organisations…every person involved in the process of

co-production is valued, respected and listened to, with everyone involved in designing, developing and delivering ".

Co-production in housing is arguably carried out to some extent through the person-centred approach to housing and the creation of Person Centred Plans (PCPs). Where this is likely to fall down, and co-production be lost is in the housing allocations process where front-line staff working within an inflexible system that is ill-equipped to meet the needs of people with additional support needs.

HAS will be developed with the principles of co-production in mind and try to incorporate these in a meaningful way.

It is also intended that the training delivered as part of TopHouse will incorporate an element of co-production, providing opportunities for service users to provide input and give their lived experience of the housing allocation and assessment systems.

3. Housing Allocations

3.1. Organisations involved in housing allocation and their role

As mentioned in section 1a, there are a multitude of organisations with an involvement in housing allocation. Below is an overview of some of their functions in relation to housing and support. Please note this list is not exhaustive and there are areas where organisations and their roles overlap:

Organisation	Role
Central government	Creating national housing policy Steering policy to create and communicate a vision for housing in country Allocating national budgets for housing and supports
Local / regional / municipal / government	Assessing numbers of people in housing need Assessing types of housing need Allocating funding for housing projects Providing housing management services

	Allocating housing
Health / support / care services	Providing health, care and support services
	Advocating on behalf of the tenant / client
Voluntary organisations	Developing housing projects
	Providing housing management services
	Advocating on behalf of the tenant / client

IO5 of TopHouse focuses on setting up cross-sectoral co-operation. This is an essential element of successful housing allocation and tenancy sustainment. All agencies using HAS should incorporate cross-sectoral co-operation, ensuring that individuals seeking integrated housing and support are fully supported by all agencies throughout the process, the allocations and support process is streamlined and each organisation is fully aware of their area of responsibility and implements it. Cross-sectoral cooperation can take place through formalised structures or individuals can be empowered to develop and draw support from their own networks.

The transferability of TopHouse resources is paramount to its success and long-term usability. Where cross-sectoral or inter-agency co-operation is not possible at an official level, clients should be encouraged to build networks where they can through community-orientated work. This is elaborated on in IO5 which outlines ways of encouraging and empowering individual service users to create their own support networks.

3.2. Legal basis for allocation of housing

The registration of housing need and allocation of housing is carried out in different ways across Europe. HAS should be used as a tool within each country's legislative framework and operating principles.

3.3. Rights of housing applicants

The legal rights of housing applicants may differ across jurisdictions. It is intended that the tools in TopHouse and the Housing Allocations System (HAS) would work within the existing legal and allocations framework.

4. Housing Allocations System (HAS)

Housing Allocations System or HAS outlines in a step-by-step process, how to allocate housing with integrated supports to an applicant with additional support needs.

In all aspects of the assessment and allocation process, where permission for co-correspondence has been provided, an applicant's advocate should be copied on correspondence. The sensitive and personal nature of many aspects of the assessment should be kept in mind and used and stored strictly in accordance with GDPR.

It can be summarised in the following chart:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           THINA assessment is carried out            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│             HAS assessment takes place               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           THSUNA assessment is completed             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│            Needs and preferences summarised          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           Suitable property becomes available        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          HAS and THSUNA  assessmenst reviewed        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Ensure necessary supports are in place      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  Allocation made                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
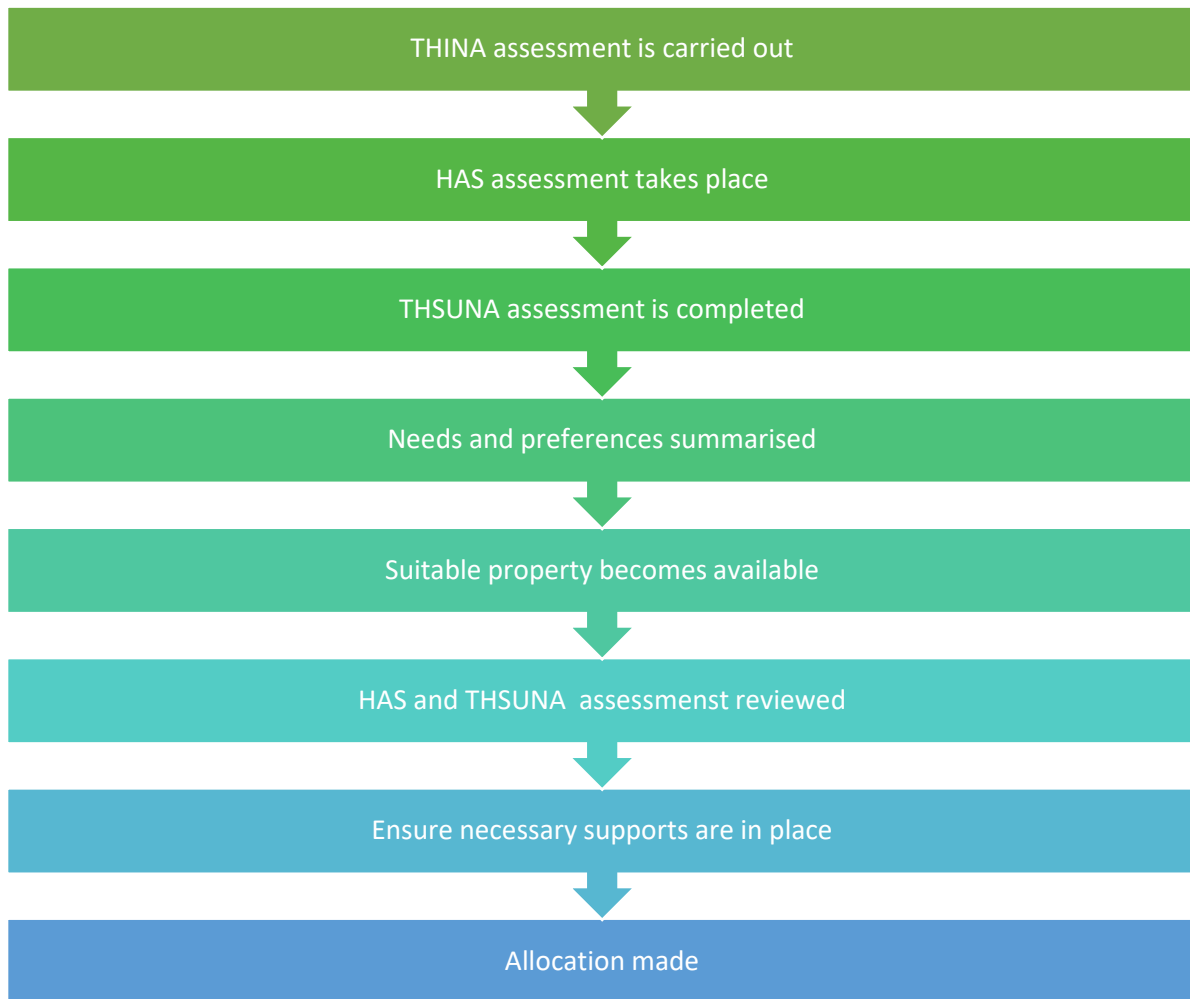
The following text outlines how to carry out each one of these steps in more detail.

4.1. Step 1: THINA

Please refer to previous chapter for a full overview of THINA, TopHouse Individual Needs Assessment. The results of THINA will illustrate clearly an individual's needs and rights. It may refer to the supports they require to live in their allocated housing, but it is important to note that the next step, the housing assessment can be carried out whether or not these supports are currently in place.

4.2. Step 2: Housing Assessment Survey

The assessment of an applicant's housing needs preferences is central to them being allocated an appropriate unit. In submitting an application for social housing support, it is essential that a detailed description of the applicant's disability and support needs is provided so that an assessment of suitability and allocation can be made.

For applicants with physical disabilities or other disabilities that would require housing units to be specially adapted, it is important that these needs are clarified early in the process. This may be in the form of a letter from a doctor, occupational therapist (OT) report, service provider or consultant / specialist. The letter must document the nature and extent of the disability. If specific adaptations or features are required, then an OT report should also accompany the application.

In addition to this, for applicants with all additional support needs, the following survey tool is to be used by frontline housing staff and allocations officers to ensure all applicants are given the opportunity to fully express their wishes in relation to their future housing. This tool should be used in conjunction with existing housing application forms in your country / region. It should also be used in conjunction with THINA, the TopHouse Individual Needs Assessment and THSUNA, the TopHouse Support Needs Assessment. Through these three frameworks, it is proposed that a clear, full picture will be created of an individual's rights, needs, supports, housing needs and preferences; that they can be allocated a suitable property within the existing allocations procedures and that cross-sectoral co-operation will be in place to ensure relevant agencies all work together to provide appropriate supports. What is vital is that the individual applicant is involved at all assessment stages.

It is important at this stage that the applicant is made aware of the limitations of the allocations system and the length of time it would be typical to wait for allocation of a unit. They may express a preference as part of the survey that cannot be met by the allocating body and / or they may be waiting months or years for a suitable allocation. It is important to manage expectations.

At the point at which an individual with additional support needs is applying for housing, this questionnaire should be completed by them, with a support service provider and allocations officer in attendance also to clarify questions or to provide assistance if required.

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12

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The following survey draws extensively on 2012 work by John Cowman we would like to acknowledge his assistance with this.

FIRST I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR PRESENT LIVING SITUATION

1. WHERE ARE YOU LIVING RIGHT NOW?

☐ in a general hospital

☐ on a psychiatric ward in a hospital

☐ in a rehabilitation unit run by a support service

☐ in a high support hostel or house run by a support service

☐ in a group home run by a support service

☐ in other accommodation run by a support service

☐ in a homeless hostel

☐ in a homeless B+B

☐ in other accommodation run by the homeless services

☐ in transitional accommodation

☐ in prison or other custodial institution

☐ sleeping rough/on the street

☐ temporarily with friend or relative

☐ in the family home

☐ local authority housing

☐ supported / voluntary housing

☐ private rented housing

☐ housing association

2. DO YOU LIVE ALONE OR WITH OTHER PEOPLE?

☐ alone

☐ with other people

3. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED THERE?

☐ years and ☐ months

(If less than a year, ask # 3a and # 3b; if more than a year, skip to # 4)

3a. IN THE PAST YEAR HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU MOVED?

☐

3b. IN THE PAST YEAR, HAVE YOU EVER BEEN HOMELESS?

□ yes

□ no

4. DURING THE PAST YEAR, WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR MONEY FROM? (Check all that apply)

□ employment

□ social welfare (name of payment _____)

□ support from family

□ other (specify) _____

□ I have no income (skip to 6e)

4a. HOW MUCH A WEEK WAS THIS? (Record the answer here:)

_____

4b. HOW MUCH A WEEK DO YOU PAY IN RENT? (if not paying rent skip to # 6). (record answer here:)

_____

4c. DOES THIS AMOUNT INCLUDE HOUSING RELATED UTILITIES? (electricity, rubbish, heating etc)

□ yes

□ no

4d. ABOUT HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU SPEND A WEEK ON UTILITIES?

(record answer here:) _____

4e. DO YOU GET HELP WITH YOUR RENT? E.g. rent supplement / housing benefit?

□ yes

□ no (if no skip to # 5)

4f. WHO HELPS YOU WITH YOUR RENT?

□ support service provider

□ community welfare officer

□ family, spouse

□ Other (specify :) _____

5. I'D LIKE TO KNOW HOW SATISFIED YOU ARE WITH WHERE YOU ARE LIVING RIGHT NOW. WOULD

YOU SAY THAT YOU ARE: (Read these out loud and check the one that applies).

    □ VERY SATISFIED

    □ SOMEWHAT SATISFIED

    □ NEITHER SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED

    □ SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED

    □ VERY DISSATISFIED

6. WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR PRESENT LIVING SITUATION? (Record the

answer here:) _____

_____

_____

7. WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT YOUR PRESENT LIVING SITUATION? (Record the

answer here:) _____

_____

_____

8. THE LIST BELOW (A TO K) CONTAINS SOME THINGS THAT PEOPLE SAY THEY LIKE OR DISLIKE ABOUT

THEIR LIVING SITUATION. TELL ME HOW MUCH YOU LIKE OR DISLIKE EACH OF THESE THINGS IN

YOUR PRESENT LIVING SITUATION. PLEASE TICK THE RELEVANT BOX FOR EACH

	Like it a lot	Like it somewhat	Not care about it	Dislike it somewhat	Dislike it a lot
Amount of room / space					
Condition or state of repair					
Location					
People you live with					
Neighbours					
Living alone					
Landlord					
Support staff visiting					

Amount of privacy

Cost

Anything else (specify)

9. ARE PETS ALLOWED WHERE YOU CURRENTLY LIVE?

□ yes

□ no

10. DO SUPPORT STAFF COME INTO YOUR HOME TO PROVIDE SERVICES ON A REGULAR BASIS?

□ no (if no, skip to # 12)

□ yes (continue)

11. IF YOU RECEIVE SUPPORT SERVICES WHERE YOU LIVE ON A REGULAR BASIS COULD YOU
DESCRIBE WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW OFTEN YOU GET THEM? (Record the answer here:)

_____

_____

_____

12. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THIS SITUATION? (Read out loud and check the one that applies).

□ VERY SATISFIED

□ SOMEWHAT SATISFIED

□ NEITHER SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED

□ SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED

□ VERY DISSATISFIED

13. CAN YOU CONTINUE LIVING WHERE YOU ARE AS LONG AS YOU WANT TO OR WILL YOU HAVE TO
MOVE?

□ yes, I can stay as long as I want to (if yes, skip to # 14)

□ no, I will have to move (continue)

13a. WHY WILL YOU HAVE TO MOVE? (Record the answer here:)

_____

_____

_____

14. WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTINUE TO LIVE WHERE YOU ARE RIGHT NOW OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO MOVE SOMEWHERE ELSE?

□ stay (skip to # 15)

□ move elsewhere (continue)

14a. WHY WOULD YOU LIKE TO MOVE? (Record the answer here:)

_____

_____

_____

15 IS THERE ANY OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUE YOU WOULD LIKE TO MENTION ABOUT YOUR CURRENT LIVING SITUATION THAT WOULD HELP YOU TO EXPLAIN YOUR HOUSING NEED?

_____

_____

_____

_____

===

GO TO SUMMARY 1 TO SUMMARISE THE HOUSING NEEDS

===

NOW THAT WE'VE TALKED ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE CURRENTLY LIVING, LET'S TALK ABOUT WHERE YOU WOULD LIKE TO LIVE AND WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORTS OR SERVICES YOU FEEL YOU WOULD NEED IN ORDER TO LIVE THERE

16. IDEALLY, WHAT KIND OF PLACE WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE IN?

(Check one answer. If the answer is not clear, ask the participant to choose one).

  □ in a group home run by a support service

  □ in a nursing home

  □ in a homeless hostel

  □ in a homeless B+B

  □ in other accommodation run by the homeless services

  □ in transitional accommodation

  □ on the streets/sleeping rough

  □ independently in an apartment

  □ independently in a house

  □ in my family's home

  □ with a friend or relative,

  □ other (specify) _____

17. WHAT IS IT ABOUT THAT PLACE THAT WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

(Record the answer here:) _____

_____

_____

18. WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE:(Read out loud and tick the one that applies).

  □ WITHIN THE AREA YOU CURRENTLY LIVE

  □ OUT OF THIS AREA BUT STILL IN [name of area]

  □ OUT OF [name of area]

  □ IT DOESN'T MATTER

19. WHAT IS IT ABOUT THAT LOCATION THAT WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

(Record the answer here:)_____

_____

_____

20. IF YOU HAD TO LIVE WITH SOMEONE, WOULD YOU PREFER TO LIVE WITH OTHER SUPPORT SERVICE USERS OR NOT? (Read the 3 choices out aloud and ask person to choose the one that suits most)

    ☐ yes, I would prefer to live with other support service users

    ☐ no, I would rather not

    ☐ it doesn't matter

20a. WHY DO YOU FEEL THIS WAY?

(Record the answer here:) _____

_____

_____

21. IF YOU HAD THE CHOICE, WOULD YOU RATHER LIVE ALONE OR WITH OTHER PEOPLE?

    ☐ I would rather live alone (skip to # 23)

    ☐ I would rather live with others (continue)

22. WHO WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO LIVE WITH? (Check one answer. If the answer is not clear, ask the participant to choose one).

        ☐ my relatives

        ☐ my friends

        ☐ my spouse

        ☐ support staff

        ☐ any other person? (Specify) _____

23. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD ABOUT YOUR CHOICE OF HOUSING AND WHO YOU WOULD LIKE TO LIVE WITH?

_____

_____

_____

24. WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORTS OR SERVICES DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT NEED IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO LIVE WHERE YOU WANT TO?

(Record the answer here:) _____

_____

_____

25. DO YOU HAVE ANY PARTICULAR DIFFICULTY OR NEED WHICH INFLUENCES YOUR CURRENT

CHOICE OF HOUSING? (Circle)

   □. MEDICAL (heart, breathing, etc)

   □ PHYSICAL (difficulty with stairs etc)

   □. LEARNING (mild learning difficulty etc)

   □. SENSORY (hearing, sight difficulties)

   □ FINANCIAL (cannot pay rent, bills etc)

   □ LEGAL (separation, barring order, will etc)

   □ Other yes / no If 'other' specify _____

25a. IF 'YES' TO ANY PARTICULAR DIFFICULTY, DO YOU WANT TO TELL ME MORE?

(Record answer here) _____

_____

_____

26. IN GENERAL, HOW URGENT DO YOU THINK YOUR HOUSING AND SUPPORT NEEDS ARE?

      □ High

      □ Medium

      □ Low

27. HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THESE SITUATIONS IN THE PAST? PLEASE FEEL FREE TO TELL ME

ABOUT THIS SITUATION IF YOU FEEL IT IS RELEVANT TO YOUR APPLICATION.)

   □ Homelessness

   □ Abuse

   □ Deteriorating Mental Health

   □ Deteriorating Physical Health

   □ Posing a Risk to Yourself

   □ Posing a Risk to Others

Further information provided _____

_____

_____

_____

28. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ISSUES YOU WOULD LIKE TO MENTION IN RELATION TO YOUR HOUSING
AND SUPPORT NEEDS? _____

_____

29. HAVE ANY OF THESE PAST ISSUES AFFECTED YOUR ABILITY TO ACCESS HOUSING? IF SO, COULD
YOU SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE OF WHAT HAPPENED?

_____

_____

WE'RE DONE. DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK ME, OR ANY COMMENTS
YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THAT WOULD PLAN HOUSING AND SUPPORT OPTIONS IN THIS AREA? (If
so record below)

_____

_____

_____

_____

===
GO TO SUMMARY 2 TO SUMMARISE PREFERRED HOUSING AND SUPPORTS
===

4.3. Step 3: Summary of housing and support needs and preferences

The survey that has been conducted with the applicant is lengthy, so the next step involves
summarising their housing and support needs and preferences. The following summary sheets allow
for the key elements of the applicant's needs and preferences to be clearly communicated. It's
important to remember that the allocations officer who was present when the survey was carried
out may not be involved in making the allocation, so it is vitally important that the applicant's needs,
and preferences are clearly understood.

This housing allocations tool, HAS, should be used in conjunction with the next TopHouse tool, THSUNA, which will allow for a full exploration of an applicant's support needs and preferences. Some key elements of supports are covered in HAS, but these are developed much more in THSUNA which should be used also.

SUMMARY 1: CURRENT HOUSING

You are living in _____ for the past _____ months/years.

You live with _____.

You are (very / somewhat dis / satisfied) living there because _____
_____
_____.

However / consequently you (want to / have to) move because _____
_____
_____.

Other things you like about where you are living are _____
_____
_____ _____.

And things you dislike about where you are living are _____
_____
_____.

 You receive your money from _____(name of employment/benefit etc). Your weekly income is _____, and you currently spend _____ per week on rent and _____ per week on utilities.

SUMMARY 2: PREFERRED HOUSING AND SUPPORTS

You would prefer to live in (type of housing)_____ as that place would offer you _____.

Your preferred location is _____ because
_____.

You would prefer to live (alone or with others) because _____
_____. If you had to live with others your

preference is / is not to live with other service users because _____

_____.

The person / people you would most like to live with is / are _____,

because _____.

You require supports with _____ to help you live where you

would like. You feel that your housing and support needs are _____ and , in the past you

have experienced _____ which you feel has had an impact on your ability to

access your preferred type of housing.

4.4. Step 4: Matching an applicant to a suitable property

HAS is intended to complement existing allocations structures and procedures, therefore it should be
used to emphasise the needs, preferences and voice of the housing applicant in the process, but still
work within existing allocations and property matching systems. HAS (and other TopHouse tools
should be used by the housing provider, the support provider or by a combination of both,
depending on how housing allocations are made in your jurisdiction.

It is important to remember that the core aim of HAS is to make the housing allocations system as
person-centred as possible and to make the preferences of the housing applicant expert by
experience an integral element of the housing allocations process. HAS can be used in any way that
leads to this and the following is an example of one way it could be utilised.

Example of how HAS could be used

IHS applicants should be matched with potential units according to the organisation's existing IT
system and based on the basic features of the unit – number of bedrooms and location primarily.
While a unit may meet all the preferences of an applicant, it should not be considered if basic
features of the unit do not match an applicant's needs or preferences, for example, if it is in a
different area to where they have expressed a wish to live or if it is the wrong size for their
household.

Existing allocations systems should all be capable of categorising applicants according to size of property required and preferred location.

When an HIS applicant is relatively close to the top of the allocations list - through a points system, a system of time spent on the list or another waiting list system – their summarised needs and preferences should be reviewed and allocations officers reminded of them so they can be kept in mind for upcoming vacancies.

If the allocations system was to wait until an IHS applicant was at the very top of the waiting list, there may be undue delays caused to the applicant. The nature of their support needs and preferences may make many properties unsuitable for them. There needs to be some level of flexibility and adaptability to ensure best outcomes for all applicants.

In such cases, the use of an 'Offer Zone' can be helpful. The housing authority shall contact the individual in writing when they enter the 'Offer Zone' stating that it is likely that the individual will be offered a property within the next 6 months and that they should apply/ensure that the supports that they require to live independently will be in place at that time. Confirmation of the availability of these supports to allow the individual to take up the housing opportunity will be required prior to the offer being made and this requirement will be clearly communicated to the individual and their advocate, as appropriate.

If no supports are available within the 'Offer Zone' timeframe then the client returns to the housing authority when the supports are in place, their place on the Waiting List will not be affected.

In matching an applicant to a property, the following scoring matrix is available to determine suitability:

	Yes	No	Comments / Points (5 points for yes, 0 for no)
Location of property matches applicant preference Size of property matches applicant eligibility			
	Yes	**No**	**Comments / Points**

	Yes	No	Comments / Points (5 points if both answers match, 0 if they do not)
Is wheelchair accessibility required? Is the property wheelchair accessible?			

	Yes	No	Comments / Points (5 points if both answers match, 0 if they do not)
Are support services required? Are supports available to the applicant and in this location?			

	Yes	No	Comments / Points (3 points if both answers match, 1 if they do not)
Does the applicant wish to live with others? Is this possible in this property?			

	Yes	No	Comments / Points (3 points if both answers match, 1 if they do not)
Is the property furnished? Does the applicant want a furnished property?			

	Yes	No	Comments / Points (3 points if both answers match, 1 if they do not)
Are pets allowed in the property? Does the applicant want or have a pet?			

14 points or fewer: Property is not suitable for this applicant.

15-20 points: This property may be suitable for this applicant. Requires further discussion with applicant and support service.

21-29 points: This property is a likely match for this applicant. An offer or allocation can be made.

4.5. Step 5: Review of needs and preferences

When a suitable property is available and an allocation is about to be made, the applicant should be contacted and a support worker and allocations officer should meet again with the applicant to review the needs and preferences expressed in the previous survey as they may have changed.

Changes may be extensive to the point that the allocation would no longer be suitable or they may be relatively minor. It is important that the applicants is fully briefed on the nature of the proposed allocation and for them to decide whether or not it is a suitable nomination and sufficiently meets their needs and preferences.

4.6. Step 6: Ensure supports are in place

As stated previously, it is recognised that although an individual may have support needs, these supports do not need to be in place at the point when a person is making a social housing application or during the assessment process. However, these supports must be in place at the time of the allocation of the property to ensure the individual can move into the property in a timely manner.

Before a final allocation is made, the allocations officer should receive confirmation that all required supports are in place for the applicant. If this does not happen, the allocation can be deferred until such a time as the supports are in place. THSUNA should be used to accurately assess an individual's support needs and preferences and this should be used at this stage of the process.

4.7. Step 7: Make allocation

The applicant is allocated their property and they become a tenant of the housing provider with all necessary supports in place.

5. Key success factors to put HAS into practice

5.1. Dispute resolution and transparency

HAS relies on existing allocations procedures and protocols across jurisdictions and it is expected that the survey on housing and supports needs and preferences will work in addition to the existing information gathering and waiting list system maintained by each allocating authority.

As a result, it is expected that disputes over allocated properties will be dealt with according to each allocating authority's dispute resolution process.

The main factor that determines an applicant's readiness for an allocation will be their place on the waiting list. Secondary to that will be their preferences and support needs expressed through the survey.

While TopHouse aims to improve the experiences of applicants in need of IHS, the project also must be realistic in acknowledging that not all allocations will be made to IHS applicants and the project must work within existing systems.

Where an applicant was the next IHS applicant on the list and was made an appropriate allocation, there is less likely to be a dispute from another applicant. Where an applicant requiring HIS was next on the list but someone further down the list than them received an allocation, there is perhaps more likely to be a dispute over this. The allocation scoring system is an objective way of measuring suitability of a property for an applicant and this can be used to demonstrate how the needs and preferences of the applicant higher up the list would not have been sufficiently met by the property in question.

5.2. Transferability

The transferability of HAS as an assessment tool will be vital for its success. It needs to strike a balance of being prescriptive enough so that it is understood by front line staff and can be put into effect, while also being flexible enough so that local differences can be incorporated.

It will allow for the applicant to clearly communicate their needs and will define clear procedures for frontline allocations staff, hopefully allowing for better outcomes for both. However a key element of HAS is that it will work alongside existing assessment and allocations procedures. HAS does not propose entirely new allocations systems and it is a tool that can be easily adapted to different circumstances and amended as necessary.

5.3. Understanding the benefits of HAS at individual frontline, individual managerial and organisational level

As stated at the outset, the aim of HAS is to establish an agreed system of housing allocation that is fair and transparent and built on principles of person-centred planning, allowing the housing applicant as much input as possible into their housing allocation in a safe and supported environment in which they are encouraged and empowered to express their housing preferences.

Housing policy across Europe supports the move away from congregated housing for people in need of housing and support, towards a more person-centred, collaborative and, at times, co-produced form of housing delivery and allocations. From an organisational and strategic level therefore, a tool such as HAS that allows for the implementation of already agreed policies is likely to be accepted.

From a middle management and individual frontline level, the benefits are that HAS provides a clear set of steps and an easily-understood structure to deliver allocations in a more person-centred way. The role of the allocations officer in an individual's journey towards independent person-centred living is often quite a fleeting one. While an individual may build strong, long-lasting relationships with support workers, housing officers and allocations officers may have very few meetings with such an applicant and may be lacking in skills and knowledge as to how to best incorporate best practice principles around person-centred planning and co-production into an allocations process.

HAS can assist frontline workers by providing the structure in which an applicant can express their housing preferences and an allocations officer can meaningfully use these preferences when making an allocation.

Through this process, it is hoped that more appropriate housing allocations are made, ultimately leading to fewer tenancy breakdowns and greater tenant satisfaction.

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7. Annex

THSUNA – TOPHOUSE SUPPORT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

31. I'm going to read you another list. Please, answer the questions honestly and thinking in your current situation (read the list out loud and circle the answer that suit your situation).

Budgeting money - Financial

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you know how much you earn as income weekly/monthly? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you consider that you administer well financially? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► With your current financial situation, do you get to the end of the month without issues? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you have savings? Comments:	☐	☐	
► Do you borrow money? (Neighbours, friends, bank) Comments:	☐	☐	
► Do you understand the financial information that you get or receive? Comments:	☐	☐	☐

Shopping

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you know how much things are worth money-wise? Provide examples in comments Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you do the basic shopping in the same place every time? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you shop with a shopping list? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you consider that you manage your money to make ends meet at the end of the month with all your basic needs covered? Comments:	☐	☐	☐

Housekeeping

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Are you able to accept and respect rules and norms established when sharing a household? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you do your household chores correctly? (Bedding, order and organization, etc.) Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you do clean the house on a regular basis? Comments:	☐	☐	☐

► Do you know how to do basic maintenance tasks on your house? (Purge the radiators; remove pressure from the boiler, fixing the sink, unfreezing a refrigerator, changing a light bulb, etc.) ☐ ☐ ☐

Comments:

► In case of experiencing any problem at or with your home, do you know to who and how to ask for help? ☐ ☐ ☐

Comments:

Cooking

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you know how to use a microwave / oven / stove / other kitchen appliances?	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you cook for yourself on a daily basis?	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

► Do you buy ready-to-eat meals? Specify how many meals a week ☐ ☐

Comments:

Laundry

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you know how to use the washing machine?	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

► Do you know how to dry your clothes properly? ☐ ☐ ☐

Comments:

Family

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you maintain contact with your family or relatives? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you need help to see them or talk to them? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Would you like to re-connect with them? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you want to inform your family about your situation? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► In case of family conflict, do you know how to solve it or do you want to solve it? Comments:	☐	☐	☐

Making friends – Getting along with people

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Are you satisfied with your network of social relationships? Comments:	☐	☐	
► Do you want to keep them or improve the situation? Comments:	☐	☐	☐

► Do you participate in activities in the community where you live? ☐ ☐ ☐

Comments:

► Do you want to keep them or improve the situation? ☐ ☐ ☐

Comments:

► Do you often encounter problems when interacting with other individuals (neighbours, colleagues, friends, et al.)? ☐ ☐

Comments:

► If yes: can you solve them? ☐ ☐ ☐

Comments:

Health

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you attend to regularly to the doctor or follow-up visits? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you know when you have visits? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you get the medication correctly prescribed? Do you administer it as prescribed? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you know how to prepare the medication prescribed? Comments:	☐	☐	☐

► Do you know how to schedule a doctor appointment?

Comments:

| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

► In case of a medical urgent situation, can you ask someone for help? Specify who

Comments:

| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Hygiene

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you shower frequently? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you change your clothes frequently? Specify in the comments section Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you spend time doing personal care activities (nails / hair / shaving / hair removal)? Comments:	☐	☐	☐

Mobility - Transport

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you have a personal vehicle? (bike, car, motorbike, other) Comments:	☐	☐	

► Do you know how to use public transport? (metro, train, bus, taxi)

Comments:

► Do you experience problems following map directions or going to places you don't know?

Comments:

Work & Employment

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you work?	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

► Do you want to work?	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

► Have you experienced difficulties in your work last year (punctuality, etc.?)	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

► Do you think you could find a job on your own?	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

► Do you want to increase your employability or work-related abilities? In which capacity?	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

Formation & Education

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you want to participate in courses / workshops / educational tasks?	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you know the channels to look for specific training courses and/or formation? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► If you don't want to participate in formation activities: Do you know the purpose/usefulness of the formation activities? Explain in the comments section Comments:	☐	☐	

Legal & Administrative

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT
► Do you know how to interpret legal documentation that affects you or is addressed to you? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you understand legal procedures in your country? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you understand administrative procedures in your country? Comments:	☐	☐	☐
► Do you understand and do by yourself the administrative/social benefits/bureaucratic procedures related to housing or getting support? Comments:	☐	☐	☐

Leisure & Culture

	YES	NO	WITH SUPPORT

► Are you motivated to participate in leisure/cultural/sport and/or other recreation activities? ☐ ☐ ☐

Comments:

► Do you know the channels to look for these activities? ☐ ☐ ☐

Comments:

Anything else (please specify)

Comments:

32. Please, from the following list, select the areas or tasks where you would like to receive support (read the list out loud and circle the amount of help).

Would you like support with

	NO SUPPORT	MEDIUM SUPPORT	INTENSE SUPPORT
Budgeting money - Financial	☐	☐	☐
Shopping	☐	☐	☐
Housekeeping	☐	☐	☐
Cooking	☐	☐	☐
Laundry	☐	☐	☐
Family	☐	☐	☐
Making friends & Social relations	☐	☐	☐
Health	☐	☐	☐
Hygiene	☐	☐	☐
Mobility & Transport	☐	☐	☐
Work & Employment	☐	☐	☐

Formation & Education	☐	☐	☐
Legal & Administrative	☐	☐	☐
Leisure & Culture	☐	☐	☐
Anything else (please Specify)			

_____

34. And finally, I'm going to read you another list. Please tell me if you have been in contact with those services within the last five years. Please specify the professional. (Read the list out loud and write the contact details).

☐ Social Services (Basic, Specialised)

☐ Primary Health Centre:

☐ Mental Health Centre:

☐ Residential facility

☐ Hospital / Clinic:

☐ Sociosanitary Centre:

☐ Other Professional(s) / Service(s):

We're done. Do you have any questions you would like to ask me, or any comments you would like to make that would plan housing and support options in this area? (If so record below)

_____

_____

_____

_____

==

GO TO SUMMARY 3 TO SUMMARISE SUPPORT NEEDS

==

Step 3: Summary of housing and support needs and preferences

The following summary sheet allows for the key elements of the applicant's support needs and preferences to be clearly communicated. It's important to remember that the allocations officer or support worker who was present when the survey was carried out may not be involved in making the allocation so it is vitally important that the applicant's needs and preferences are clearly understood.

Summary 3: Support Needs

The first person/place you contact for help is _____.
When you need to, you also make contact with _____
_____. In general you are (very / somewhat dis/satisfied) with the help you receive. You receive _____
support(s) from _____ services in your home and you are (very / somewhat dis/satisfied) with this.

You (do / do not) think that the money you receive is enough to live on. Your particular difficulties are; medical, physical etc. _____
_____. You have (High / Medium / Low) urgency in relation to your housing and support needs. You consider yourself to be particularly at risk of homelessness/poverty/abuse/deteriorating mental and /or physical health/harm to self/others.

You think the most important support(s) and service(s) that you would need to help you to live in your preferred housing is / are _____
_____. In addition, you think you would also need help with _____
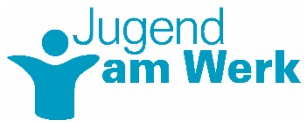_____.
Your preferred supports from the _____ service are _____
_____.

ANNEX II - THSUNA Data Gathering Tool

DOCUMENTATION NEEDED/REQUIRED TO ASSUME THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT		
Name:		
Date:		
SOCIAL DOCUMENTATION		
Document	Status (Received/Pending)	Observations
ID Card		
Passport / Residence Visa		
Disability Certificate		
Health Card		
Social Security Number		
Medical Report		
Pharmacological treatment		
Residential / Facility Contract		
Social Benefits Resolution		
FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION		
Bank account details (Extracts, others,…)		
Social Benefits Resolution (Economical)		
Labour/Work Contract		
Payslip		
Insurance Contracts (car, home, personal)		
Other Contracts (Mobile Phone, services,)		
Rental Contract		
Property Scriptures/deeds		
Inheritance Documentation		
Will		
LEGAL DOCUMENTATION		

Criminal Causes		
Civil Causes		
Legal Documentation		
OTHER DOCUMENTATION		