

Appendix 1

Gypsy & Traveller Sites
Pitch Allocations

DRAFT
Policy, Procedure and Practice

March 2012

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INFORMATION SHEET

Service area	Housing Solutions (Gypsies & Travellers)
Date effective from	March 2012
Responsible officer(s)	Principal Manager, Housing Solutions Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer
Date of review(s)	March 2014
Status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandatory (all named staff must adhere to guidance) ▪ Optional (procedures and practice can vary between teams) 	Mandatory
Target audience	Operational staff involved in the allocation of pitches on Council owned Gypsy & Traveller sites
Date of committee/SMT decision	SMT: 11.04.2012
Related document(s)	Gypsy & Traveller Site Operational Procedures Site Licence Agreement
Superseded document(s)	Riverview Admissions Policy
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) completed	03.04.2012
Adult Safeguarding Audit Tool completed	09.03.2012
File reference	TBC

1.0	POLICY	PRACTICE
1.1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Halton Borough Council owns and manages two residential caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers, both of which have a residential site warden. The Riverview permanent site, located in Widnes, has 22 pitches for rent. The Warrington Road transit site, located in Astmoor, Runcorn, has 13 pitches for rent. Each pitch can accommodate a maximum of two caravans and two vehicles.</p> <p>The Council is committed to the provision of residential pitches for Gypsy & Traveller communities and the aim of this document is to ensure that pitches are allocated on a clear, fair and transparent basis.</p>	<p>Communities and Local Government (CLG) published a 'Gypsy & Traveller Site Management Good Practice Guide' in 2009, which states that <i>'it is essential that local authorities have a published scheme which sets out the policies and procedures for allocating pitches'</i>.</p>
1.2	<p>Criteria</p> <p>Eligibility</p> <p>In order to be considered for allocation of a pitch on the Riverview site, applicants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be aged 18 or over; ▪ Be from a Gypsy or Traveller background; ▪ Not have any serious criminal convictions (where 'serious' is considered to mean any crime for which a custodial sentence of two years or more was served and/or any violent offence); ▪ Not be intentionally homeless; ▪ Not have been excluded from any Local Authority site in the past. <p><i>In addition, those applicants who are adequately settled within permanent accommodation will not normally be considered for the allocation of a pitch on the Riverview site.</i></p> <p>Consideration will only be given in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Principal Manger, Housing Solutions. Such circumstances may include an element of risk for the applicant in their existing accommodation, the applicant having an overriding medical/health need or a need for the applicant to reside at Riverview in order</p>	<p>The CLG Guide states that <i>'qualification criteria may be set and evidence sought in relation to this.'</i></p>

	<p>to care for an existing Riverview site resident. Those living in bricks and mortar housing who have a preference for living in a caravan are eligible to apply but will not normally be offered a pitch above those without any accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy.</p> <p>Assessment of Need Applications for a pitch will be prioritised in line with the homelessness assessment criteria (as contained in the Housing Act 1996 Part VII and amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). Therefore, applicants falling into the following categories will be given priority:</p> <p><i>Homeless/threatened with homelessness in the next 28 days, meaning:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ They have no accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy; ▪ They have accommodation but cannot gain entry to it; ▪ They live in a moveable structure but have nowhere to place it; ▪ They have accommodation but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy it; ▪ They face the risk of violence from someone who lives in their home or with whom they are associated; OR ▪ There is good reason to believe that continuing to occupy their home is likely to lead to violence from another person. <p><i>In a priority need category, meaning:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ They or their partner are/is pregnant or have dependant children; ▪ They are homeless because of an emergency, for instance fire or flood; OR ▪ They are vulnerable as a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Old age, mental illness, physical disability or another special reason; ▪ Having served a custodial prison sentence; ▪ Having had to leave accommodation because of actual violence or threats of violence that are likely to be carried out; OR ▪ Other special reasons. 	<p>The CLG Guide includes the following relevant points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>'waiting lists should include a system of prioritisation and pitches allocated in accordance with the scheme'</i> - <i>'the method of prioritisation should relate as closely as possible to the scheme for allocation of all other forms of social housing'</i> - <i>'priority should be given to those in greater need'</i>.
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	<p><i>Applicants who have a local connection will also be given priority. This would include having close family members residing on the Riverview site.</i></p>	
2.0	PROCEDURE	PRACTICE
2.1	<p>Riverview permanent site</p> <p>Anyone interested in being considered for allocation of a pitch on the Riverview site should contact the Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer on 0151 423 5849/0303 333 4300 to express their interest. They will be asked to complete an <i>Application for Allocation of Pitch Form</i> (see Appendix 1). Assistance will be available with completion of this form on request from the Site Warden/Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer.</p> <p>Details will be recorded on a <i>Pitch Interest List</i> and when a pitch becomes available on the Riverview site those on this list will be contacted and asked to complete a <i>Gypsy & Travellers Assessment Form</i> (see Appendix 2). Again, assistance is available with completion of the form on request. There will be a closing date for receipt of completed <i>Gypsy & Travellers Assessment Forms</i>.</p> <p>Applicants should be aware that there is a high level of demand for pitches on the Riverview site and there is limited movement with pitches rarely becoming available.</p> <p>Both the <i>Application for Allocation of Pitch Form</i> and the <i>Gypsy & Travellers Assessment Form</i> are available to collect from the Site Wardens and the Council's one-stop-shops (in Halton Lea, Church Street Runcorn and Brook Street Widnes). The forms can also be requested by calling the Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer on 0151 423 5849 or the Council's contact centre on 0303 333 4300.</p> <p>The <i>Pitch Interest List</i> will be reviewed annually and when a pitch becomes available to determine whether interested</p>	<p><i>'Applications should be acknowledged and assessed as soon as possible after receipt and applicants should be placed on a waiting list if no suitable pitches are currently available' (CLG guidance).</i></p> <p><i>'Waiting lists should be regularly reviewed' (CLG guidance).</i></p>

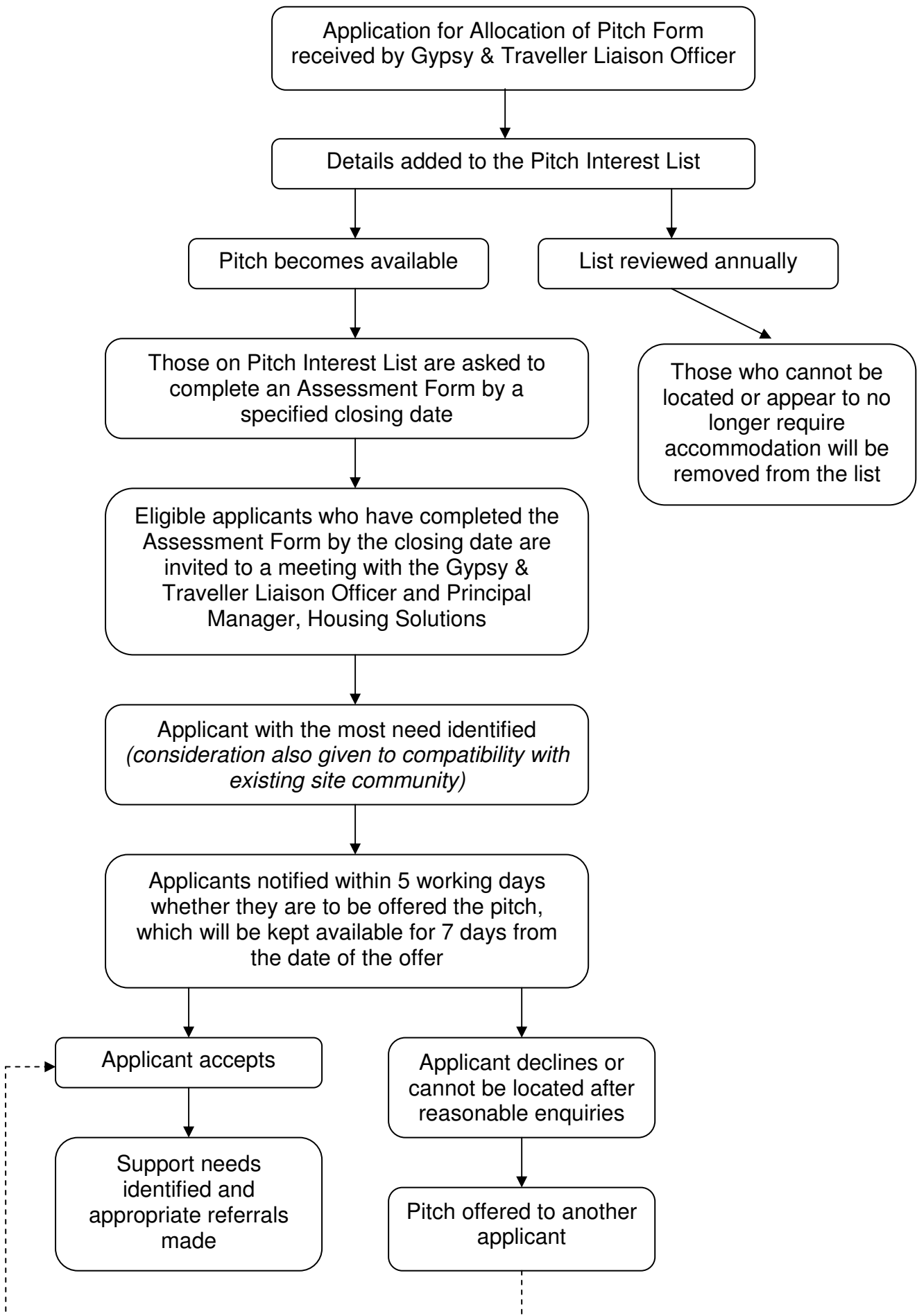
	<p>persons still need/wish to be considered for a pitch. The council reserves the right to remove those who, upon reasonable enquiry, appear to no longer require accommodation or cannot be located.</p> <p>The information provided on the <i>Application for Allocation of Pitch Form</i> and the <i>Gypsy & Travellers Assessment Form</i> will be retained for a period of five years and used to inform Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments, which assess the amount of unmet need for pitches.</p> <p>Applicants must complete the <i>Gypsy & Travellers Assessment Form</i> in order to be considered for a vacant pitch. Information may be provided verbally but must be recorded on the form, which must be signed by the applicant to confirm that the information detailed on the form is correct.</p> <p>Anyone found to have given false information on the form will not be offered a pitch or in cases where they have already taken residency of a pitch they may be evicted.</p> <p>All eligible applicants who have completed a <i>Gypsy & Travellers Assessment Form</i> by the closing date specified will be invited to a meeting with a panel composed of the Site Warden, Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer and Principal Manager, Housing Solutions in order to discuss their application for a pitch further.</p> <p>The purpose of the panel meeting is to determine which applicant is most in need in accordance with the criteria outlined above. In the event that two or more applicants meet the same criteria, applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis in order to determine which applicant is most in need. Consideration will also be given to the compatibility of the applicant (and their family) with the existing Riverview site community and the potential for disruptive/anti-social behaviour and there will be an assessment of risk in this respect. However, the assessment of need will</p>	<p>The CLG Guide outlines that <i>'in some circumstances, management may take account of factors which would adversely affect the suitability of the site as a social unit'</i>, as it is acknowledged that <i>'sites are often occupied by extended family groups and this can help to ensure</i></p>
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	<p>always be the most important factor in deciding who will be allocated a pitch.</p> <p>As part of the assessment process, any support needs (i.e. aids/adaptations required) will be identified and the appropriate referrals made upon the acceptance of the offer of a pitch.</p> <p>All applicants will be notified within five working days as to whether or not they are to be offered a pitch. The pitch will be kept vacant for a period of seven days from the date of the offer. If the applicant does not take up occupancy of the pitch and cannot be located after reasonable enquiries, the offer will be withdrawn and the pitch allocated to another applicant. Any applicant who refuses the offer of a pitch will need to go through the application process again before any subsequent offers will be made.</p> <p>The decision of the panel is final. The council has a formal complaints procedure through which any issues can be raised and addressed (a complaint can be lodged by calling the Council's contact centre on 0303 333 4300 or filling in the online enquiry form on the Council's website).</p> <p>Upon acceptance of the pitch, the successful applicant will be issued with a Licence Agreement detailing fees and charges and the conditions that must be adhered to along with information regarding site management procedures.</p>	<p><i>good community relations on site'.</i></p>
<p>2.2</p>	<p>Warrington Road transit site</p> <p>There are no applied criteria for the allocation of pitches on the transit site – applicants will simply be offered a pitch if there is one available unless there are significant reasons for not doing so (e.g. serious criminal convictions, a record of arrears/anti-social behaviour or previous exclusion from a Local Authority site).</p> <p>In cases where there is more than one applicant being considered for a pitch on the</p>	<p>The CLG Guide advises that transit site pitches should be considered for short-term use in order to meet the immediate accommodation need of the applicant, especially in cases where there is no other authorised</p>

	<p>transit site, the criteria will be applied as for the permanent site to determine which applicant has the most need. Similarly, in the event that two or more applicants meet the same criteria, applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis in order to determine which applicant is most in need and most suited to taking residency of the pitch.</p> <p>The maximum length of stay on the transit site is three months, after which time a minimum of three months must be spent away from the site before another period of residency will be considered.</p> <p>As with the permanent site, once the pitch is accepted, a Licence Agreement will be issued, which details fees and charges and the conditions that must be adhered to. Information regarding site management procedures will also be provided.</p>	accommodation.
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Process for allocation of pitches on the Riverview site



GYPSY & TRAVELLERS APPLICATION FOR ALLOCATION OF PITCH FORM

Personal details – applicant					
Title	First name	Family name/surname	Date of birth	Age	National Insurance number
Current address (including postcode):					
Date moved in:					
Contact telephone numbers:		Home:	Work:	Mobile:	
Email:					
Why do you need help with your housing situation?					
Is your contact address the same as your current address? If no, please write contact address below:					
Details of anybody else in your household wishing to live with you					
Title	First name	Family name/surname	Date of birth	Age	National Insurance number
If any member of your household is pregnant please state their name and the date the baby is expected to be born:					
Have you or anyone on this form previously resided at a site in Halton? If yes, please give details:					

GYPSY & TRAVELLERS ASSESSMENT FORM

Personal details – applicant					
Title	First name	Family name/surname	Date of birth	Age	National Insurance number
Current address (including postcode):					
Date moved in:					
Contact telephone numbers:	Home:	Work:	Mobile:		
Email:					
Why do you need help with your housing situation?					
Is your contact address the same as your current address? If no, please write contact address below:					
What type of accommodation do you live in? Please tick one of the boxes to indicate:					
House	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caravan/mobile home	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Bungalow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Care/rest home	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Ground floor flat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Upper floor flat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Multi-storey flat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prison	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Maisonette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hostel/night shelter/rough sleeper	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Bed-sit/studio	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other – please state:			
What type of tenure do you have? Please tick one of the boxes to indicate:					
Owner-occupier/leaseholder	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hostel	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Private tenant	<input type="checkbox"/>	B&B	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Tied accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rough sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Housing Association tenant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of association:			
Council tenant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of local authority:			
Living with relatives/friends/others	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specify which and provide name and contact number:			

Appendix 3

If any member of your household is pregnant please state their name and the date the baby is expected to be born:	
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Have you or anyone on the application been in care? If yes, please give details:

Name of person who was in care	Dates from and to	Where/name of local authority	Name of Aftercare Worker

Do you have any pets? Yes No

If yes, please give details:

Have you been asked to leave your accommodation? Yes No

By what date?		Has the landlord applied for a court order?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please list all addresses you have lived at over the last five years (most recent first):

Applicant addresses	Type of accommodation	Date from	Date to	Landlord's name, address and contact number	Reason for leaving
Spouse/partner addresses	Type of accommodation	Date from	Date to	Landlord's name, address and contact number	Reason for leaving

Appendix 3

Income – you will need to provide proof of income/benefits				
	Applicant	Spouse/partner	If weekly, please tick	If monthly, please tick
Hours worked each week	hours	hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wages	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company pension	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Income support	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobseeker's Allowance	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment Support Allowance	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Benefit	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Tax Credit	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Living Allowance – Mobility High / Medium / Low	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Living Allowance – Care High / Medium / Low	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incapacity benefit	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pension/Pension Credit	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bereavement	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carer's Allowance	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other state benefits – please specify:				
	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money from anyone that lives with you	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Benefit	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council Tax Benefit	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student loan/grant	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance payment	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other – please state:				
	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For office use only – TOTAL INCOME:	£	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detail below any bank/building society accounts and other savings/valuable assets:				
Name of bank/building society	Account number		Amount held	
			£	
			£	

Appendix 3

Please detail below any further information that you think we may need to know:			
TO BE COMPLETED BY HOUSING SOLUTIONS ADVISER:			
Has the applicant ever approached this or any other Council for assistance with housing advice before?			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please give details:			
Is the applicant or anyone else on this form currently on a housing waiting list?			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please provide further details below:			
Where?		For how long?	Any offers?
Does the applicant or any member of their household have any drug and/or alcohol issues?			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please give details:			
Does the applicant or any member of their household have or have they previously had any of the following conditions?			
Tuberculosis <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health related illness <input type="checkbox"/>	Hepatitis A / B / C <input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other health issues? Please state below:			
Has anyone ever taken action against the applicant or anyone on this form for anti-social behaviour?			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please give details:			
Has the applicant or anyone on this form had an Anti-Social Behaviour Order granted against them?			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please give details:			
Name of person with the order	Granted by (Local Authority, Housing Association etc.)	Court Action – please give details	Less formal action, i.e. a written warning – please give details

Appendix 3

Has the applicant or anyone on this form ever been convicted of a criminal offence?				
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please give details:				
Name of person convicted	Crime (please include arson, sexual offence, violent offence)	Date of sentence	Length of sentence	Length of time served
Has the applicant or anyone on this form served in the Armed Forces?				
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please give details:				
Name of person who has served	Name of service	Dates served	Service number	
Does the applicant or anyone on this form have a medical condition or disability that is made worse by their current housing situation and/or that may affect the suitability of any future accommodation they may be offered?				
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please give details:				
Note details of any contacts, where appropriate:	Name	Support provided	Telephone number	
Family Doctor				
Consultant				
Social Worker				
Community Psychiatric Nurse				
Solicitor				
Health Visitor				
Probation Officer				
Youth Offending Team				
Tenancy Support Officer				
Next of Kin				
Other(s) – please state				

