

## Additional duties to homeless persons

This information is for professionals working in housing and homelessness.

### Duty to protect homeless applicant's property

The Housing Executive has a duty to protect the property of a person if:1

- The person may be homeless or threatened with homelessness
- There is a risk that the person's belongings may be lost or damaged because the applicant is unable to protect them and
- No other suitable arrangements have been or are being made to secure them
- The Housing Executive is not under a duty to protect the person's property if it is immediately clear that [they are ineligible](#).

### Furniture storage

The Housing Executive can take any steps they consider reasonable to protect a homeless applicant's belongings.2 When deciding if a duty exists, the housing officer should consider:

- If personal items were left in a secure property
- If the person has any other place, they can store items
- If the person's financial circumstances mean they would struggle to make their own arrangements

- Whether the person's vulnerabilities mean they would struggle to make their own arrangements
- What support the person has from family or friends

## Transporting items to storage

The Housing Executive will contact an approved storage company to arrange for collection and storage of items. They cannot store:

- Perishable items
- Illegal items
- Medication
- Items affected by damp
- Wet garden furniture

Items will be stored in a specialist facility.

The person will not usually be able to access items until they move to a permanent address. The person should not store any important documents or items they may need to use in the immediate future.[3](#)

## Taxi and transport costs

The Housing Executive can pay to transport a homeless applicant and their household from their offices to a temporary accommodation placement by taxi.[4](#)

The Housing Executive will do this if it is reasonable bearing in mind:

- The circumstances of the person and the household
- What access the person has to their own transport

The Housing Executive must use a pre-approved taxi company and they will provide a voucher to pay the taxi fare.

## Footnotes

- [\[1\]](#) The Housing Order (Northern Ireland) 1988, Article 13(1).
- [\[2\]](#) The Housing Order (Northern Ireland) 1988, Article 13(2).
- [\[3\]](#) Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Homeless Guidance, Chapter 9.3.
- [\[4\]](#) Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Homeless Guidance, Chapter 10.