

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 7

meeting date: THURSDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2018
title: IMMIGRATION HOUSING INSPECTIONS FOR UK ENTRY
CLEARANCE
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: KEN ROBINSON, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise and inform Members of the housing standards required for the UK entry clearance.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
- Community Objectives – To address the housing needs in the borough.
 - Corporate Priorities – To be a well-managed Council.
 - Other Considerations – To ensure houses are suitable for UK entry.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 When an applicant from abroad comes to live in the United Kingdom, the Immigration Authority will ask a sponsor to provide certain information. This includes evidence that the house where the applicant will stay is suitable accommodation, which means that it is fit to live in and not overcrowded.
- 2.2 Prior to allowing entry clearance into this country, confirmation is required that the proposed accommodation is safe and suitable for human habitation, and that the property will not become statutorily overcrowded with the additional occupant(s) living there.
- 2.3 We can carry out inspections and supply confirmation to the British High Commission that accommodation is suitable for people looking to gain entry clearance into the UK. The Environmental Health Team carries out the inspections and sends the letter to the Immigration Authorities. We only carry out inspections on properties which are within the District. A survey of the property will only be arranged when the full application and fee has been received.

3 ISSUES

3.1 Inspection

At the time of inspection, the applicant will be expected to provide documentation from the immigration authorities to show that s/he is in the process of making an application. This might take the form of a letter from the relevant High Commission or the Home Office with the proposed immigrant's name(s) and passport/reference number(s) with which to associate the application. The property will be inspected by a member of the Environmental Health Team and the officer must confirm that the property:

- is free from Category 1 and significant Category 2 Hazards under the Housing Act 2004
- is in a good state of repair
- has sufficient space to accommodate both the current occupants and any additional people who propose to live there

The following information will be required to support the inspection:

- name, date of birth and passport/reference number of the person(s) seeking entry to the UK
- copy of a tenancy agreement or proof of ownership of the property
- name and date of birth of other occupants in the property to be inspected
- current Gas Safe Certificate for the property (if rented)

The applicant is then asked to show the officer around the whole property, outlining who occupies the house and which rooms they sleep in. When the inspection is completed the applicant will be supplied with a letter which will state:

- name and the name(s) of the person(s) seeking entry to the UK
- the address of the property inspected
- who owns and who occupies the property
- how the property is occupied and by whom
- whether the property is suitable for any potential occupier or visitor at the time of our inspection
- whether the property would be overcrowded by the addition of the person(s) seeking entry to the UK
- the name of the officer to contact for further information

3.2 Application guidance notes

Room sizes

The bedroom sizes are a very important part of the UK Entry Clearance process. The applicant must make sure that the guidance below is followed to aid a successful application. Applicants are asked to check the bedroom sizes before submitting the application as a refund of the application fee is not provided if the property does not meet the statutory requirements. The room sizes are as follows:

Floor Area m ²	Permitted Numbers
10.23 or more	2
8.37 up to 10.23	1.5
6.51 up to 8.37	1
4.65 up to 6.51	0.5
Less than 4.65	Nil

- 0.5 a person is classed as a child at the ages of 1-10 years; after age of 10 the child becomes 1 person
- babies can share with their parents if under 1
- children of opposite sex can only share a bedroom up to the age of 10 years old
- children cannot share a bedroom with an adult apart from the biological Mother or Father

3.3 Amenities and property condition

In addition to the above, the following basic standards apply:

- there must be at least one toilet and wash basin for every five inhabitants
- there must be a fully-functional kitchen (eg stoves, oven and hot and cold running water into a sink) that can support both the current and proposed number of occupants
- there must be a fixed heating system in the property (eg heating in every habitable room)
- the property must be in a good state of repair with no serious defects (eg electrics, plumbing, roof, gutters, doors, windows etc)

We do not supply any letters unless an inspection has been carried out. The Immigration Authorities will not accept letters that are greater than 12 weeks old. If the letter expires, we will have to carry out another inspection. We reserve the right to request another payment for inspection should submission by the applicant be late.

3.4 If the house is not satisfactory

If the house is unfit to live in and/or will be overcrowded, then a letter will be sent to the sponsor that explains the problems within 2 working days of the inspection.

If the sponsor carries out works to make the house fit to live in, the officer will re-inspect after the repairs are completed (no further charge is made for this visit). If the house is found to be fit to live in, then a letter and a copy of the inspection form will be sent to the sponsor within 2 working days of the re-inspection.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – None.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political – None.
- Reputation – None.
- Equality & Diversity – None.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The Immigration Authority requires confirmation that housing intended to accommodate immigrants is suitable and will not be overcrowded. The Environmental Health Team carries out inspections on payment of a fee and provides a report on its findings. Committee is asked to approve the working arrangements outlined in the report.

6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

6.1 Note and approve the standards required by the Environmental Health team for UK entry immigration inspections.

KEN ROBINSON
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Ken Robinson, extension 4466.