

Does the RAS affect my rights under the Residential Tenancies Act, 2004?

The Residential Tenancies Act, 2004 protects the rights of private rented sector tenants after a period of six months. The RAS scheme will not affect your rights under this law.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about the Rental Accommodation Scheme please contact your local authority. See your phone book for contact details, under the State Directory (green pages) section.

You can also contact your local Citizens Information Centre. See your phone book or phone LoCall 1890 777 121.

For information about the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme please contact:

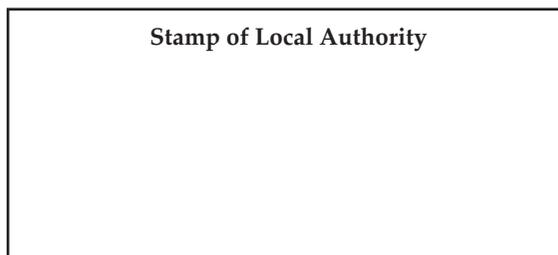
The Community Welfare Officer at your local Health Board/ Health Service Executive. See the green pages of your phone book for contact details or contact:

Supplementary Welfare Allowance Section
Department of Social and Family Affairs
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada
Store Street
Dublin 1
Telephone: (01) 704 3117 or (01) 704 3865
or (01)704 3951



Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

Information for Recipients of Rent Supplement Allowances



This guide was produced using plain English guidelines from the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).



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We are introducing a new scheme called the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS). The scheme is for people who are receiving rent supplement, usually for more than 18 months, and who need long-term housing. The scheme is being run by local authorities. It will provide additional, good quality rented accommodation for people receiving rent supplement and it will help local authorities to provide long-term housing for people who need it.

How will the RAS work?

Under the RAS your local authority will find you suitable accommodation and will pay rent to the landlord directly. You will still contribute to the rent but you will pay it to the local authority, not your landlord. Over time your contribution may be based on your local authority's differential rent scheme.

How will the RAS benefit you?

The RAS will give you long-term housing security. It will also give you access to a range of housing supports. The RAS will also lead to improvements in the quality and standards of private rented accommodation. Finally, if you get a job you can stay in the scheme but you will have to contribute more towards the rent.

Who will qualify for the RAS Scheme?

You will qualify for the scheme if you receive a rent supplement under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme and you are assessed by the local authority to have a long-term housing need. People with short-term needs will continue to receive rent supplement.

The RAS does not apply to:

- asylum seekers;
- non-nationals who do not have leave to remain in the State permanently, or
- people receiving a rent supplement payment under schemes such as the "Back to Work Allowance" scheme.

Will I have to move to new accommodation?

Local authorities will make agreements with private landlords to provide accommodation on a medium to long-term basis. You may transfer to the RAS in your current accommodation if:

- the quality of your current accommodation meets your local authority's standards;
- your landlord is registered with the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB);
- your landlord agrees to move to the RAS, and
- your landlord is tax compliant.

Otherwise your local authority will offer you new accommodation.

What happens first?

Your Community Welfare Officer will contact you to make sure you are still entitled to rent supplement. Then a housing officer in the local authority will discuss your housing needs with you. If you are transferring to the RAS in your current accommodation, the local authority will inspect it and make arrangements with your landlord.

When will I get accommodation under the RAS?

As soon as possible. In some cases, where the local authority has suitable accommodation available, this will happen quite quickly. If suitable accommodation is not available, your local authority will make every effort to house you as soon as possible. In the meantime, as long as you still qualify, you may stay in your current accommodation and continue to receive rent supplement.

When will the scheme start?

The scheme has started and will be extended to all local authorities during 2005. We expect that everyone who is entitled to it will be accommodated under the RAS by September 2008.

What should I do now?

You don't have to do anything at this stage. Your local authority and/or Community Welfare Officer will contact you.

Can I refuse an offer of accommodation?

If you are offered accommodation under the RAS scheme, you can refuse it. However, if you refuse three offers of housing within a set period, you will not be entitled to rent supplement for a period of twelve months.

Your local authority will make sure that any accommodation offered to you will suit your needs and meet their housing standards.

Can I still apply for local authority housing?

Yes. The RAS will not affect your application for a local authority house.