

NHAS Criteria Checklist

Criteria relating to type of agency:

1. be a local, or national, voluntary or not-for-profit advice agency
2. provide advice either to the general public or to a group of people with housing advice needs specific to their circumstances, for example, persons from abroad, tenants in the private rented sector
3. must be one of the following:
a specialist housing advice provider; *or*
a specialist advice service in another area of advice, for example, debt advice, immigration and asylum advice, of which housing advice is part or ancillary; *or*
a general help or holistic advice service
4. give a minimum amount of 100 hours per year of substantive advice about housing and homelessness
5. be a properly constituted and managed organisation

Criteria relating to professional standards:

6. professional Indemnity Insurance must be in place, covering advice and casework, as applicable
7. a confidentiality/safeguarding policy must be in place.
8. an equal opportunities/diversity policy must be in place
9. a complaints procedure must be in place
10. the organisation should be open to audit by a recognised body, including Shelter. Advice/casework should be carried out to recognised advice work standards with an adequate advice/casework recording system in place. Advice/casework should be supervised by a suitably qualified/experienced person (either in house or from an external provider) and advice and casework should be open to independent audit
11. the agency's advisers should have access to a comprehensive, up-to-date information resources on housing and homelessness
12. the agency should have the capacity to support advisers' learning and development to an appropriate level, including access to IT for e-learning

Criteria relating to NHAS membership requirements:

13. agree to keep the NHAS Administrator updated with changes to contact details and other relevant data
14. willing to respond to an annual review survey and hold membership/usage review meetings with NHAS.
15. willing to engage with the NHAS and with other local agencies on local and national initiatives, for example, NHAS work with local housing authorities
16. use the NHAS Consultancy Line, Training Service and Housing Debt Casework service on a sufficiently frequent basis to justify membership

If your organisation cannot answer yes to all the criteria above please nhas@shelter.org.uk.