**FACT SHEET: Immigration property Inspection**

**This guide explains how to make an enquiry and how your enquiry will be processed.**

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council provides a service to inspect a property at the request of a member of the public for immigration purposes. The charge for this service from **1st April 2024 is £134.40 including VAT** and covers the costs of undertaking the survey and production of the letter.

The Immigration Service needs to know that the accommodation available to enable an immigrant to join their families in Sandwell is suitable both for the number of occupants and for human habitation. Inspections are undertaken with reference to the Housing Health and Safety Hazard Rating System [HHSRS] and overcrowding provisions of the Housing Act 2004.

**How do I make an enquiry for an Officer to visit?**

A request for a survey can be made to the Private Sector Housing team by using our customer portal.

**Determining suitability- How will you decide if my property is suitable?**

During the survey, the inspecting officer will need access to all rooms in the property and to all the external sides of the property to assess whether the property is suitable for habitation and free from serious hazards that may present a risk to occupiers, including:

• Hydrothermal Conditions – damp, excess cold and heat

• Pollutants – Asbestos, Carbon Monoxide and Lead etc.

• Space, Security, Light and Noise

• Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply

• Falls – on stairs, between levels and on the level

• Electric Shocks, Fires, Burns and Scalds Collisions, Cuts and Strains

**Determining overcrowding**

The inspecting officer may need to measure the rooms to establish whether the property is suitable for the proposed number of occupants. The officer will ask for the names and relationships of everyone living in your property together with the ages of any children under 18 years. The officer will inspect your property to ensure that the rooms are of an acceptable size (the space standard) for the number of occupants sleeping in them (living rooms are also included in the calculation). There must also be adequate number of rooms (the room standard) so that no-one over the age of ten years and of the opposite sex must share a room unless they are co-habiting.

If the property is in a satisfactory condition and would not be overcrowded if the applicant were to move in, a letter will be sent to the applicant’s sponsor in this country and the relevant high commission.

**Properties considered unsuitable**

If there are problems with the property, the Officer will confirm in writing to the applicant’s sponsor why the property is unsuitable and make recommendations on the necessary work needed to bring the property up to standard. The Officer may revisit the property, on request and if advised that the works have been completed.

Should the property be in a satisfactory condition at this stage, then this will be confirmed in writing.

**Properties which are overcrowded**

If the Officer determines that the property is / or would become overcrowded with the proposed number of occupants, this will be confirmed in writing to the applicant’s sponsor and alternative accommodation may have to be considered.