

## STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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The creation by the Government of the A+ category in the medical housing waiting list has proved to be little more than a gimmick which has not done enough to ensure that all those most urgently in need of accommodation receive it more quickly.

It will be recalled that in 2005 the Government sifted through all the category 'A' medical cases which existed at the time and they then invented a new, more urgent category, which they termed 'A+'. The Government said at the time of this change that anyone in this new category would be a case which required immediate action. However, when the meaning of the term "immediate action" was probed further in Parliament at the time by Shadow Housing Minister Charles Bruzon, he was told that the new category simply meant that those urgent cases could have a house whenever one became available.

The Medical category has four classifications, A+, A, B and C. At the last meeting of Parliament Mr Bruzon was told that there were a total of 256 people who were medically categorised. This was broken up into 28 A+, 84 A, 60 B and 84 C. However, it has become obvious over the years that even if someone is categorised A or even A+ this is not a guarantee that their urgent housing issue will be addressed immediately. Indeed, more people have been added to the A+ and A categories than those who have been removed compared to the information which was available from the previous Parliament.

In letters which are being sent to persons seeking to be categorised medically, the Government says that applicants "whose cases are deemed urgent by the Committee are classified as A+." They add that the "Committee endeavours to attend immediately to cases categorised on A+ but it has to be understood that this priority is always dependent on the availability of houses." Given that the position of everyone on the medical list, in whatever category, or indeed in the waiting lists as a whole is also dependent on the availability of houses this explanation is nothing new nor does it guarantee that a house will become available quicker because of the "urgent" medical circumstances of the case.

The situation for the rest of people on the other medical categories is obviously even worse. The Government informs them that applicants "whose cases are placed under categories A, B or C have in the eyes of the Committee, warranted the chosen category although no extreme urgency has been noted and in turn consideration for an allocation is given at the time when no persons classified under A+ remain on the list." This means in practice that if more people are added to the A+ category than those who leave it, then there is little or no

prospect of anyone else in any other category having their accommodation needs met.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Minister for Housing Charles Bruzon said:

“The creation of the A+ category was simply a propaganda exercise designed to give the impression that the Government were on the ball and solving the housing problem. The reality is that this new category has not solved anything. The crux of the matter is that it is the policy of the GSD that is to blame for the housing predicament of people who find themselves waiting for a flat whether they are medically categorised or not. For many years the GSD Government has given permission for the construction of luxury flats at prices that people could not afford and abandoned the construction of low cost homes for our people. It is manifestly unfair and unacceptable that those most in need should have to suffer the consequences because there are no flats available for them at present no matter how medically urgent their case has become.”

ENDS