



## Eligibility criteria for enhanced PAE support

### Background

Planning Aid England (PAE) offers independent, professional planning advice to the public to help individuals and communities engage with the planning system. PAE is part of the Royal Town Planning Institute, a registered charity. It is separate from both local and central government.

PAE provides free advice via:

- 1 A dedicated planning guidance/information website - [www.planningaid.co.uk](http://www.planningaid.co.uk)
- 2 An email advice service that can be accessed via the website.

Those using the email advice service are entitled to up to 15 minutes of free, professional planning advice by email. This service is delivered by volunteers, all of whom are chartered planners.

In some circumstances, PAE is able to offer additional support to people who have contacted our advice service. This enhanced support is for individuals who are least able to effectively access the planning system, and for communities/groups located in areas of deprivation and/or who have traditionally not been involved in the planning process. The criteria we use to decide upon eligibility for enhanced support is set out below.

### Eligibility criteria for individuals

We will take into account a range of factors when considering whether it is possible for us to offer additional support. These include but are not limited to:

- Whether you are on low-income (as evidenced by receipt of certain income-related government benefits)
- Whether you live within an area ranked within the top 30% most deprived in England as identified by the [2024 Index of Multiple Deprivation Map](#)
- Whether you are in receipt of certain non-means tested government benefits e.g. Personal Independence Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, New Enterprise Allowance. See case study [here](#).

In addition to this, we will also consider:

- Whether you have already received professional advice or employed a professional (e.g. solicitor, planning consultant)
- Whether you will make significant financial gain from our assistance. For example, we would be unlikely to offer further support for:
  - Developing new properties
  - Developing business premises
  - Home-owners seeking to extend or enhance their home for commercial gain.

## Eligibility criteria for community groups/organisations

We may be able to provide support to the following community groups or organisations who would otherwise not be able to afford professional planning advice:

- Local (as opposed to national) charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations or groups who represent tenants or residents. These organisations/groups must be constituted and have less than 6 months free reserves (or undesignated funds) or an annual income of less than £10,000. See case study [here](#).
- Whether you live within an area ranked within the top 30% most deprived in England as identified by the [2024 Index of Multiple Deprivation Map](#). See case study [here](#).
- Those from communities/groups who have traditionally not been involved or who are under-represented in the planning system e.g. Gypsy and Travellers, youth groups. See case study [here](#).

If you think you could be eligible for enhanced PAE support, please make this clear in your request to the advice (access the request form [here](#)), explaining how you or the group/organisation that you represent meet the criteria.

**Please note:** We do not provide free planning advice to professionals working within the planning, development and built environment sectors or organisations who can afford to employ professionals. If you fall into this category and require professional planning support you may wish to consider engaging a chartered town planner. The [RTPI Directory of Planning Consultants](#) can help you find a professional planner in your local area. We reserve the right to decline to give advice or limit the advice or support we offer.