



GARRION PEOPLE'S HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

**AS WITH ALL OF THE CO-OPERATIVE'S POLICIES, THIS GUIDE, IN FULL
AND IN PART, IS AVAILABLE IN SUMMARY, ON TAPE, IN BRAILLE,
AND IN TRANSLATION INTO MOST OTHER LANGUAGES –**

**PLEASE ASK A MEMBER OF STAFF IF YOU WOULD LIKE
A VERSION IN A DIFFERENT FORMAT**

DATE PASSED AT COMMITTEE – 20 JANUARY 2004



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REVIEW DATE – JANUARY 2005

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Garrion People's Housing Co-operative is a registered social landlord, set up to operate in the Gowkthrapple estate in Wishaw in 1990 to improve housing conditions in the area by providing good quality, affordable rented housing to those in housing need. It operates on a "not-for-profit" basis, and is run by an elected Management Committee consisting of local residents who employ a small staff to manage the Co-operative on a day-to-day basis.

1.2 This document outlines the Co-operative's Allocations Policy, one of the key documents we produce. In line with good practice, the underlying principle is to allocate our housing stock to those households displaying the highest levels of housing need.

1.3 The Co-operative is committed to:

- Providing quality rented accommodation affordable to those in housing need
- Contributing to the physical, social and economic regeneration of the area
- Providing a safe environment in which all residents can live

1.4 Housing Stock

1.4.1 The Co-operative owns 219 properties in the Gowkthrapple Area, and provides a management service for a small number of sharing owners. The type of housing presently provided by the Co-operative is mainly for general needs, although housing developed in recent years observes the principles of barrier free design, and we have managed to provide 15 houses to amenity standard and 28 sheltered units. The development programme is complete for the time being, with no definite funding commitment from Communities Scotland for further units.

1.5 Formulation of Policy

1.5.1 This policy takes account of good practice documents such as, Performance Standards for Social Landlords (November 2001) and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations' Raising Standards document, Chapter 1, as well as seeking to comply with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

1.6 Equal Opportunities



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- 1.6.1 Garrion People's Housing Co-operative aims to be an equal opportunities organisation. To this end we have a separate equal opportunities policy, supplemented by an Equality Action Plan.
- 1.6.2 This means that we will seek to ensure that all applicants have an equal right to access of this policy, and that:
- The Co-operative will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any applicant, on the grounds of ethnic origin, sex, religion, marital status, gender, disability, sexuality or political belief as detailed within the Co-operative's Equal Opportunities Policy
 - In the provision of housing services, employment of staff and access to Membership of the Co-operative we will seek to ensure equality of opportunity and equal treatment of everyone
 - The records of the racial origin, gender and disability of each applicant will be monitored to fulfil the Co-operative's commitment to equal opportunities
- 1.6.3 Other legislation governing Equal Opportunities for all applicants is within the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
- 1.7 **Consultation**
- 1.7.1 Consultation with the community and resident participation has always been one of the key aspects of the way in which the Co-operative operates. We therefore welcome the new statutory provisions in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which require all social landlords to take tenants' views into account when formulating key service delivery policies.
- 1.7.2 At the present time, there are two strands to policy consultation within Garrion People's Housing Co-operative:
- firstly, we believe it is important to inform all tenants when a policy review is due, together with some information on how what changes are likely to be proposed by the Co-operative
 - the next stage is to invite feedback from tenants on (i) how well they feel the proposals address the needs of the community and (ii) whether there are any particular amendments they would like to see.
- 1.7.3 In 2002/03, the Co-operative carried out a comprehensive Resident Satisfaction



Survey, and part of this asked residents their views on how they would like to participate. This will be taken into account in future reviews of this, and all other key, policies.

2.0 HOW THE POLICY WORKS

Methods of Assessment and Allocation

- 2.1 The Co-operative operates a points system for allocating its housing. This is a system, which is easily understood and simple to administer. It is a fair system of assessment and does not discriminate against any applicant.
- 2.2 Each application for housing with the Co-operative will be assessed and applicants will be notified of the number of points they have been awarded within 7 working days of receipt of a completed application.
- 2.3 In operating this system the Co-operative will ensure that priority is given to applicants who are in most housing need.

3.0 ADMISSION TO THE HOUSING LIST

- 3.1 Anyone who is 16 years or older has the right to apply for housing and to be admitted to our Housing List. This has always been the way the Co-operative has operated its lists, but this is now a legal requirement introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

What Does Admission to the Housing List Mean?

- 3.2 Applicants must understand the difference between the right to be admitted to the Housing List and the right to be allocated a house. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives anyone over the age of 16 the right to be admitted to the Co-operative's list. However, the number of allocations that we are able to make each year depends on the number of houses becoming empty – “voids”. We are therefore unable to provide offers for the majority of applicants interested in housing in our area. Consequently, we cannot provide any guarantees that any applicant will be successful in being made an offer of housing.
- 3.3 All applicants will be advised of the likelihood of being housed by the Co-operative once their points total has been assessed. This may be of particular importance to households whose applications attract few or no points and, unless there is a change in circumstances, it is extremely unlikely that the Co-operative is going to be able to



make an offer in the foreseeable future.

Periodic Review of the List

- 3.4 In order to help ensure that the information held is up-to-date and that each applicant still wishes to be considered for housing by the Co-operative, the lists will be subject to review. There will be two review cycles – one year and three years – and the length of the cycle will depend on whether applicants are above or below a needs-based threshold, sometimes known as a “cut-off” point (as outlined in the procedures).
- 3.5 At the time of the review, the Co-operative will ask applicants to confirm that (i) all details held are still relevant or (ii) a change in circumstances has occurred and this needs to be taken into account. This will initially be done by post, but applicants can respond by telephone if this is an easier option. Where there is no response, the Co-operative will try to make contact by telephone as well as sending a second letter. If there is no response to this within 21 days, the application will be removed from the list. All of this will be made clear in the correspondence sent out.

4.0 ALLOCATING SHELTERED HOUSING

- 4.1 The Co-operative has 28 sheltered housing units in ownership within its stock, the aim being to let these units to older people who, whilst they can live independently, have some limited level of dependency. All applicants must be at least 60 years of age (in the case of joint applicants, at least one must be 60 years of age).
- 4.2 So long as the above basic criteria are met, applications will be accepted at all times from people irrespective of where they presently live, whether they have previously been on Garrion's housing list, or whether they own or rent their present accommodation.
- 4.3 Where an application form specifies that sheltered housing is sought, a member of the Co-operative's staff team will contact the applicant to arrange a convenient time to visit. This will allow the Co-operative to explain the allocation process in more detail.
- 4.4 The application is then assessed and placed on the list in the same way as applicants for mainstream housing.



5.0 INTERNAL TRANSFERS

- 5.1 Internal transfers occur where a current tenant wishes to move to another one of the Co-operative's properties. As with Housing List lets, allocations are made principally on the basis of housing need. All applicants for an internal transfer must therefore complete an application form, following which a number of points will be awarded.
- 5.2 All current tenants have the right to apply and be admitted to the Internal Transfer List. However, given the level of turnover of stock, it is not possible to guarantee that any offers will be made. Applicants will be made aware of this.
- 5.3 Transfer applicants should also note that those with significant arrears may be suspended from the list. Each case will be looked at individually. It is generally acceptable to expect transfer applicants to be able to demonstrate a commitment to clearing current arrears.

6.0 MUTUAL EXCHANGE POLICY

- 6.1 Co-operative tenants may arrange Mutual Exchanges:
- (i) With other Co-operative tenants in Garrion People's Housing Co-operative area
 - (ii) With other public sector landlords in the United Kingdom
 - (iii) Through the HOMESWAP scheme for exchanges across the country
- 6.2 The Co-operative will maintain a register for persons seeking a Mutual Exchange, and this will be available to all tenants at the Co-operative's office. Conditions of the Co-operative's Mutual Exchange Policy are as follows:
- (i) A tenant wishing to exchange houses with another tenant must first obtain the Co-operative's written consent to the exchange, although this will not be unreasonably withheld. The person with whom they wish to exchange with



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must also obtain permission from his/her landlord who may have certain conditions regarding Mutual Exchanges.

- (ii) The Co-operative's tenant must have been resident in the property for at least 6 months.
- (iii) The Co-operative will not approve a Mutual Exchange if the property would become overcrowded. However, consideration may be given if the property became under occupied.
- (iv) Any necessary repairs or replacements, which are the responsibility of the outgoing tenant, must be attended to the Co-operative's satisfaction before an exchange can proceed. The Co-operative will not carry out any redecoration.
- (v) Both tenants wishing to exchange will be visited by the Co-operative's Housing Officer. The Co-operative tenant's house will be inspected. Any repairs required to bring the property up to a reasonable standard must be carried out before permission to exchange will be granted.
- (vi) If the exchange is approved the incoming tenant must occupy the property within a reasonable period. Failure to take up residence within one month will result in ending the tenancy of that property.
- (vii) The incoming tenant must occupy the property for at least six months
- (viii) In the event of any of the parties giving false or misleading information or deliberately withholding relevant information, the Co-operative will take action for recovery of possession or to reverse the exchange through the courts.
- (ix) The new Tenancy with the Co-operative will be Scottish Secure Tenancy in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

7.0 THE TENANCY AGREEMENT

7.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST), and the vast majority of lets after 30 September 2002 are made on this basis.

7.2 In certain very limited circumstances, however, the Co-operative may decide to let on the basis of a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy. The circumstances are:



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- where the tenant/joint tenant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the past three years
- if the tenant or member of the household is subject to an anti-social behaviour order
- accommodation let on a temporary basis to someone in receipt of housing support services

7.3 The short SST will be let for a period of at least six months and is subject to tacit relocation in the same way as a Short Assured Tenancy was. We will, however, aim to convert any short SST to a full SST within 12 months.

7.4 The main change here is that owner occupiers who have yet to sell their previous home will be given a full, and not a Short, Scottish Secure Tenancy. It must, however, be the owner's intention to sell (for example, it would be contrary to the Co-operative's aims to help individuals to become private landlords by providing them with scarce social housing). To this end, we will require a declaration noting the intention to sell. If this is subsequently not honoured, the Co-operative may consider taking legal action on the basis of providing false or misleading information.

7.5 The Co-operative will not unreasonably reject a request for a joint tenancy with another household member.

8.0 HOMES MOBILITY SCHEME

8.1 HOMES is an exchange scheme operated throughout the United Kingdom to assist local authority and social landlord tenants to be nominated by their landlord to another similar landlord, assuming that the move relates to one of the following criteria:

- the applicant needs to move in order to take up a job which is outwith reasonable daily travelling from their present address
- the applicant wishes to move to give or receive support from relatives or friends
- the applicant needs to move for medical, health or other social reasons (for example, violence or harassment)

8.2 The Co-operative supports the principles of the scheme and will give assistance to:

- any Garrion tenant needing to move to another area
- a tenant of another local authority or social landlord wishing to move to the Wishaw area

8.3 The Co-operative is able to give advice and assistance on the HOMES scheme on



request and anyone interested is encouraged to contact the Housing Officers in the first instance.

9.0 SUCCESSION, ASSIGNATION, SUB-LETTING AND LODGERS

Succession

- 9.1 Succession to a Scottish Secure Tenancy normally occurs when a tenant dies and there is at least one other person left in the household. The law is very clear on who is eligible to succeed to a tenancy (the **qualified person**) and also specifies the order in which each category is given priority.
- 9.2 Where there is a joint tenancy, the tenancy automatically remains with the other joint tenant(s).
- 9.3 In all other circumstances, the order is:
- a) the tenant's spouse or partner, providing that the house has been their only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death
 - b) if (a) does not apply, then the tenancy may be offered to a member of the tenant's family, providing that it was their only or principal home for the six months prior to the tenant's death
 - c) if neither (a) nor (b) applies, then the tenancy may be offered to the carer, providing that the carer gave up their only or principal home in order to move in with the tenant at least six months before his/her death
- 9.4 The type of tenancy given after succession is a full Scottish Secure Tenancy.
- 9.5 Where a house has been designed, or substantially adapted, for the use of someone with special needs, only spouses, partners, joint tenants or persons with similar special needs can succeed to the tenancy. Others who would otherwise be eligible to succeed to the tenancy will be offered alternative accommodation by the Co-operative.

Assignment

- 9.6 Assignment occurs when a tenant/joint tenant gives up their tenancy in favour of someone else who occupies the house as their only or principal home.
- 9.7 Under normal circumstances, the Co-operative will agree to the assignment provided that the person intending to take over the tenancy has had permission to reside with the applicant. The assigned tenancy will be on the basis of a full SST.



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Sub-Letting

- 9.8 Tenants may normally sub-let their house to another person for a period of up to one year if they are going to be absent on a temporary basis (for example, extended holiday, working/training/studying away for up to one year). At all times, however, the tenancy remains in the name of the tenant and cannot be succeeded to by sub-lessee.
- 9.9 The tenant remains responsible for the rent, even although he/she may have come to an arrangement with the sub-lessee for reimbursement. The tenant must also ensure that the sub-lessee does not behave in a manner that would constitute a breach of the Tenancy Agreement (for example, anti-social behaviour) or the Co-operative may take steps to remove the sub-lessee or even take legal action to end the tenancy.

Lodgers

- 9.10 Tenants may have lodgers, providing that the Co-operative's prior written permission has been granted – this will not be unreasonably withheld. Tenants should note, however, that we will not permit lodgers to move in if overcrowding results, if the proposed lodger has an outstanding ASBO, or if he/she has been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the past three years.
- 9.11 Lodgers have no rights of succession, nor can the tenant assign the tenancy to a lodger.

10.0 WORKING WITH NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

Nominations Agreement and Homelessness

- 10.1 The Co-operative works in partnership with the Council in two main ways:
- (i) via a Nominations Agreement whereby the Council is asked to provide nominations for 50% of our annual lets
 - (ii) by assisting the Council in re-housing homeless applicants. The exact way in which this will operate is presently being discussed with the Council and all the social landlords operating in the area. Once this has been agreed, this policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.
- 10.2 In the meantime, it is the Co-operative's intention to comply fully with the duty under Section 5 of the 2001 Act which requires the Co-operative to comply with any request



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made by the Council to provide accommodation for a homeless household, unless there is good reasons for not doing so.

Sex Offenders

- 10.3 The Co-operative will work in very close liaison with the Council's Homeless, Social Work and Police divisions when a known sex offender is to be re-housed. This will involve identifying a link person from the Co-operative's staff team who will consider re-housing options with the Council, with particular reference to the risk assessment carried out under the Sex Offenders Act 1997. This means that, for example, a sensitive approach to the location of potential offers.
- 10.4 The Co-operative will ensure that it follows Raising Standards and any other good practice (or legislative requirements) applicable at the time.

11.0 LETS TO STAFF OR COMMITTEE OR MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES

- 11.1 The staff and Committee of the Co-operative (and their families) are prevented by law from obtaining any benefit as a result of their connection with the Co-operative. The appropriate legislation is Schedule 7 Part 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. This means that any lets made to staff, Committee or their families **must only be done** on the basis of housing need as defined in Appendix I and II of this guide.
- 11.2 In other words, the let would have been made to that person in any case as he/she exhibited the greatest housing need at the time the selection was made. Approval is sought at Management Committee meetings for all Schedule 7 Part 1 allocations.
- 11.3 The Co-operative has a Schedule 7 Part 1 Register in which it details every allocation made in this way. This provides additional safeguards to our tenants and members as this Register is inspected by Communities Scotland as part of its regulatory function and our internal auditor as part of any audit visit, with individual allocations being selected at random and checked for appropriateness by either of these parties. Penalties for breaching this legislation are significant.

12.0 DENIED ACCESS, SUSPENSIONS & EXCLUSIONS and REMOVAL FROM THE LISTS

Suspensions from the Housing List

- 12.1 Garrion People's Housing Co-operative will ensure a continuous opportunity for people to apply for housing, be assessed using the needs-based points system and be



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able to access the housing list. **This means that, in the vast majority of cases, we will not deny access to, or suspend anyone from, the Housing List.** (It is important to note that the Co-operative will no longer **exclude or refuse** an application, the difference being that a suspension will be for a specified period of time and we will retain the applicant's details during this time).

12.2 However, in the following circumstances, the Co-operative **will suspend** an application:

- Where an applicant has rent arrears equivalent to one month's charge and where an arrangement to repay this amount has not been adhered to for a period of three months.
- Where there is a current Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) against the tenant or a member of the household to be re-housed, an eviction in the last three years or violence to staff in the past three years. (Evidence and legal advice sought on an individual case basis).

12.3 Applicants who are suspended from the list will be notified of this in writing. An explanation will be provided on the reasons and the time period that the suspension is to apply will be clearly noted.

Suspensions from the Transfer List

12.4 In addition to the above, internal transfer applicants with rent arrears of over three months' rent **OR** where a Notice of Proceedings for rent arrears is outstanding will require to have kept a repayment arrangement for at least six months, otherwise their application will be suspended until these criteria have been met.

Removal from the Lists

12.5 It will not be usual practice for the Co-operative to remove applicants from the lists and, where this does occur, it will be confined to the following circumstances:

- the applicant has been offered a tenancy by us or another landlord and this has been accepted
- the applicant has requested to be removed from the list
- the applicant has died
- the applicant has not responded to the review process
- information repeatedly requested from applicant has not been provided within reasonable timescales



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- information has been deliberately withheld or falsely provided

13.0 THE QUOTA SYSTEM

- 13.1 In order to maintain a balance between the various categories of lets, the Co-operative operates a quota system. Target percentages within the different categories are as undernoted:

Category	Target % age
Housing List	25%
Internal Transfers	25%
Nominations/Section 5 Lets	50%
HOMES	See below
Referrals from Other Agencies	See below

It is difficult to set a meaningful target for either HOMES lets or referrals given the low number of lets carried out each year. Instead, we will make such lets on an ad hoc basis. We would expect to let only a small number in this way over the year and, where this does occur, a report, prepared by the Housing Officer, will be retained for audit inspection within the house file. Details on numbers only will be passed to the Management Committee as part of the annual report on the allocations policy.

- 13.2 The percentages outlined in the quotas are not absolute figures which must be attained. Rather, they are indicative percentages to help ensure that there is some balance within the lets made. If there is an imbalance towards the end of a year, for example, this does not mean that all subsequent lets will be made in order to “catch up”.
- 12.3 Housing Officers will make selections throughout the year on a rotational basis (as outlined in the allocations procedures) to help ensure that the target percentages are broadly achieved on an ongoing basis.
- 12.4 The Nominations category of 50% **includes** lets made under Section 5 – ie to provide accommodation for homeless people on request of the Council. We have decided to combine these two categories for the purposes of the quotas for the current year. This is principally because the outturn percentage under the Nomination Agreement (50% on its own) has historically been very low. This category will be kept under review and can be amended as required following discussion with the Council.

14.0 MEASURING THE OUTCOMES OF THE POLICY



- 14.1 This policy was reviewed in 2004 and will be reviewed on an annual basis thereafter. In order to do this effectively, the Management Committee must be able to assess how well the ways in which the policy has been operated in accordance with the agreed objectives.
- 14.2 The current reporting framework used by the Management Committee provides quarterly reports and an annual report on numbers on the housing lists and details on lets made. This will continue to be the case, however, the annual report will contain the following **additional** information:
- the number of cases where points have been awarded in the “exceptional circumstances” category
 - details on any Short Scottish Secure Tenancies let in the year
 - details on any instances where the Co-operative has not complied with a request from the Council to provide accommodation to a homeless household
 - the number of suspensions applied in the year and the reasons for these
 - the approximate number of summary leaflets requested/taken in the year
 - details of alternative formats requested
 - equal opportunities monitoring information (this will be supplementary to the outturn report on the Equality Action Plan)
 - number of lets to internal transfer applicants, housing list applicants, council nominees, mutual exchanges, successions/assignments and HOMES applicants
- 14.3 There will also be a commentary on how the main objectives of the policy have been achieved, together with suggestions on any improvements that need to be made at the next review (or immediately if this is required).
- 14.4 A summary of this report will be disseminated to the tenants and members as part of one of our regular newsletters and will also be used as part of the consultative process. Other interested parties can receive this on request.

15.0 WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY WITH OUR DECISION ON YOUR APPLICATION

- 15.1 The Co-operative is committed to getting it right every time and providing a first class service to all of our tenants, applicants and potential applicants. The allocations process can, however, be complex and, occasionally, mistakes can be made or there can be differences of opinion where an element of judgement is required.
- 15.2 Every applicant therefore has the right to appeal against any of our decisions. The



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preferred way of doing this is for the applicant (or someone contacting us on their behalf) to raise the query informally with the member of staff concerned. For example, if an applicant feels that they should have medical points but none have been awarded, the Housing Officer who processed the form should be contacted in the first instance.

- 15.3 If the query cannot be dealt with informally to the applicant's satisfaction, then contact should be made with the Depute Director. We would prefer the contact to be in writing, but this is not a requirement and choosing not to do so will not in any way affect the outcome of your appeal. All decisions will be provided in writing (in the applicant's preferred format/language) with our reasons explained as clearly as possible. A copy of the Complaints Procedure will also be passed to the applicant at this point, if this has not been done earlier.
- 15.4 If the applicant remains dissatisfied, there is a right of appeal to the Management Committee. This will be delegated to a small sub-Committee comprising three or four members of the Committee. The applicant has the right to be represented, but can choose not to. The decision of the sub-Committee will be conveyed in writing.
- 15.5 If the applicant is still unhappy, there is a final recourse to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman – please refer to the Co-operative's complaints procedure.



APPENDIX 1

HOW THE POLICY WORKS

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT AND ALLOCATION

The Co-operative operates a points system for allocating its housing. This is a system, which is easily understood and simple to administer. It is a fair system of assessment and does not discriminate against any applicant.

Each application for housing with the Co-operative will be assessed and applicants will be notified of the number of points they have been awarded within 7 working days on receipt of application.

If after assessment it appears that an applicant would have to wait an unrealistic time before housing could be allocated the Co-operative may place the application on a reserve list. These applicants will be advised of other local housing organisations who may assist them in finding accommodation.

In operating this system the Co-operative will ensure that priority is given to applicants who are in most housing need.

HOUSE TYPES AND SIZES

The number of apartments needed by a householder is calculated as follows: -

- One living room for each household
- plus
- One bedroom for the applicant and his/her partner
- plus
- One bedroom for each person of different sex aged 8 years or over
- plus
- One bedroom for up to 2 persons of same sex who are both under 12 years of age
- plus/or
- One bedroom for each remaining member of the household

The above table is a general guide to the size of houses offered by the Co-operative and indicates how allocations are determined for families with children.



APPENDIX II

ALLOCATION OF POINTS

Points will be allocated under the following categories.

HOMELESSNESS/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/RACIAL HARASSMENT 80 POINTS

Applicants who fall into any of the above categories will be assessed based on the information provided on their application form. Checks will be made and may include police and medical reports, tenancy reports taken from previous/current landlords, visits being made by the Co-operative's Housing Officer, and in the case of homeless applicants, a letter of award of priority homelessness from their local authority. Applicants applying suffering from domestic violence may also submit supporting documentation to assist their application. When all checks are completed, and the Housing Officer is satisfied that all information required has been received in order that the application may be assessed, then the maximum points (80 inclusive) may be awarded. If after investigations the applicant is refused priority homeless status from the council then their application will be assessed as normal.

In all cases where English is not an applicant's first language, a translator will be offered and all documentation will be provided in a language of the applicant's choice.

HOMELESSNESS

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on Registered Social Landlords to comply with a request from the Local Authority for accommodation for a statutory homeless applicant. (Section 5)

A protocol has been set up between North Lanarkshire Council and Registered Social Landlords in the area in relation to a landlord's duty to house statutory homeless households under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. A copy of the Protocol is available at the Co-op's office.

If an applicant, who may be homeless, approaches the Co-op directly, they will be invited to make an application for housing but also encouraged to contact the Local Authority so that an assessment within the terms of homeless legislation can be made.

If an applicant is deemed statutory homeless by the Local Authority, they will be awarded 80 points (inclusive)



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If an applicant can provide a date within the next three months when they will be made homeless, they will be awarded 25 points. The maximum of 80 points will be awarded when they are deemed statutory homeless.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/RACIAL HARASSMENT

Raising Standards in Housing defines Domestic Violence as any form of physical, sexual or emotional abuse which takes place within the context of a close relationship. In most cases, the relationship will be between partners (married, co-habiting or otherwise) or ex-partners. The Co-operative takes this view in dealing with applications.

The Co-operative within this Allocation Policy believes that people have the right to have a life free from violence and abuse and recognises that any form of abuse is not the victim's fault but the perpetrators.

The policy gives priority to people who fall into this category and will ensure that victims of abuse will be dealt with quickly, sensitively, and in confidence to ensure their safety.

This category is reserved for applicants who are experiencing any form of severe harassment at their current address, including that which is racially or religiously motivated or domestic violence.

In conjunction with Scottish Federation Housing Association Model Procedures on Harassment/Racial Harassment the Co-operative will offer emergency rehousing where there is damage to the property or injury to the tenants or members of the tenants household.

We recognise that victims of harassment may wish to move immediately from the property/area where problems are being experienced. We will deal with each case sensitively and on its merits based on the evidence it is possible to gather.

INSECURE TENURE

25/80 points

This category shall include those applicants who are currently on a short-term private lease or applicants who are experiencing difficulties with Mortgage payments. These applicants shall be initially awarded points as with other applicants but shall then be awarded a further 25 points following receipt of the relevant documentation. The maximum of 80 points shall come into force when the property is lost. Applicants in this category are assessed on the basis of need and their financial situation will not be taken into account.

MEDICAL



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Points will be awarded for health factors where a household includes a person who is ill or disabled and whose health would be significantly improved by re-housing. The points shall be allocated depending on the degree of Medical Priority. Applicants in this category will be required to complete a medical self- assessment form in order to determine priority. In all cases the forms will be passed onto an independent medical advisor to assess. Any other medical documentation, which the applicant wishes to provide, will be taken into consideration.

Medical points will be awarded as follows; (see appendix 1)

PRIORITY A 40 POINTS
PRIORITY B 30 POINTS
PRIORITY C 20 POINTS
PRIORITY D 10 POINTS
PRIORITY E 5 POINTS

Information and explanation of the medial priorities is explained in Appendix IV, award of points for Medical Conditions.

OVERCROWDING

The number of apartments needed by a household is calculated as follows: -

One living room for each household
One bedroom for the applicant and his/her partner
One bedroom for each person of different sex aged 8 years or over
One bedroom for up to 2 persons of same sex who are both under 12 years of age
One bedroom for each remaining member of the household

Points are awarded for the applicants family composition as follows: -

1 bedroom short	10
2 bedrooms short	15
3 bedrooms short	20
4 bedrooms short	25

OVERNIGHT/WEEKEND ACCESS/PREGNANCY

Overnight/weekend access to a child will be counted as part of household. The Co-operative will encourage the applicant to seek/provide documentary evidence in support of the application in this instance.



LACKING AMENITIES/PROPERTY CONDITION

Applicants will qualify for points in this category if they presently live in below Tolerable Standard Accommodation. Points awarded as follows:

- No inside WC
- No bath/shower
- Inadequate hot water supply/No hot water supply
- No access to kitchen facilities
- Rising or penetrating dampness/serious condensation or mould growth

20 points in total, 10 points if only one

PROPERTY DUE FOR DEMOLITION 40 points

CHILDREN/ELDERLY PERSONS LIVING IN FLATS

These points are awarded where a dependent child or someone over pensionable age lives on the second floor or above. The level awarded is as follows:

- Second floor and above with **No** lift access 10 points
- Second floor and above with lift access 5 points

SHARING AMENITIES

Applicants who as households are forced to share basic amenities such as WC, bath or shower shall be awarded 15 points.



GARRION PEOPLE'S HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD

APPENDIX III

NOTES ON POLICY

APPEALS

Any applicant who is dissatisfied with the way their application has been assessed or in the allocation process can appeal against

- The points total awarded
- The decision to prevent access
- The decision to remove the applicant from the waiting list

In the first instance, an informal appeal can be made to the Housing Officer.

Where the applicant remains dissatisfied they should appeal in writing to the Depute Director. Failing satisfaction, the Director will review the case. If the matter is not resolved by this stage, the applicant may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the Management Committee.

Where, after following the above procedures the applicant still disagrees with the decision, they may appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for Scotland based at 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH4 7NS. Telephone no. 0870 011 5378.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Confidentiality of applicants and tenants personal circumstances will be respected by Co-operative Staff at all times. However applicant and tenant information is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 and to the Access to Personal Information Act.

POLICY REVIEW

To take account of any changes in the Co-operative's Housing Provision, statutory codes of guidance and legislation the Co-operative will undertake to review its policy and procedures annually to ensure effectiveness of the policy.

ARREARS

An applicant who is in arrears with his/her existing landlord will not be barred from housing with the Co-operative. However, the Co-operative will ensure an arrangement for the outstanding arrears will require to be made and maintained for three months between the applicant and the current landlord before an offer of housing is made.



GARRION PEOPLE'S HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD

FALSE INFORMATION

In the event of any applicant giving false or misleading information or deliberately withholding relevant information the application will be cancelled. If the applicant has already been housed by the Co-operative an Action for Recovery of Possession of the house will be raised.

MATRIMONIAL HOMES ACT

The Co-operative will consider applications from applicants who are homeless as a result of marital or relationship breakdown.

If the applicant falls into this category, the Co-operative will provide advice to the applicant on conditions of the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Anyone requiring further information on this or any other Co-operative policy should contact our office at 3 Heathfield, Wishaw, ML2 0LY.

Telephone number 01698 360740

Fax number 01698 375321

Email GPHCOOP@aol.com



APPENDIX IV

AWARD OF POINTS FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS

The Co-operative recognises the link between poor housing and health problems.

The award of medical points will only apply where the applicant's (or a member of his/her household) present accommodation is adversely affecting the medical condition suffered and the property sought will ease or improve that medical condition.

It is not the medical condition, which is of importance but the relationship between the housing condition and the health problems.

The Co-operative has five categories of medical award.

- Priority A 40 points
- Priority B 30 points
- Priority C 20 points
- Priority D 10 points
- Priority E 5 points

The Independent Medical Advisor will award medical priority points as follows:

AWARD OF POINTS FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS

PRIORITY A - 40 POINTS

Severe degenerative condition/special circumstances

“severe mobility problems or extreme medical conditions where the present accommodation is greatly detrimental to that person's health”

e.g. motor neurone disease, severe deteriorating multiple sclerosis, acute degenerative Parkinson's, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, terminal cancer/illness, etc.



PRIORITY B - 30 POINTS

Degenerative conditions

“mobility problems or medical condition where the present accommodation is detrimental to that person’s health”

e.g. slow progressive MS, spinal/head injury, peripheral vascular disease (depending on severity), kidney failure, emphysema, amputation (non limb fitted - wheelchair dependant), etc.

PRIORITY C - 20 POINTS

Chronic deteriorating conditions

e.g. long term deteriorating osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, ME, peripheral vascular disease, amputation (limb-fitted - non wheelchair dependant), heart failure, CVA - depending on degree of stroke, etc.

PRIORITY D - 10 POINTS

Slow deteriorating conditions

e.g. arthritis, CVA, myocardial infarction, etc.

PRIORITY E - 5 POINTS

Long standing, static condition

e.g. angina, arthritis, asthma, hearing/visual impairment (no physical difficulty), psoriasis, epilepsy, depression, eczema, colostomy, colitis, crohn’s disease, etc.

Consideration should also be given to people with learning disabilities whose physical abilities are affected by their medical condition.