

# Lochfield Park Co-operative Limited

## Allocations Policy

| FUNCTION           | DOCUMENT           | DATE         |              |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Housing Management | Allocations Policy | Review:      | September 03 |
|                    |                    | Approved:    | September 03 |
|                    |                    | Implemented: | September 03 |
|                    |                    | Next review: | September 05 |

## PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

To clarify the system and procedures by which properties are allocated to meet all relevant requirements, and comply with SFHA / Communities Scotland Performance Standards and Guidance Notes.

### Communities Scotland Performance Standards

- A61.1            **Access to housing.** We ensure that people have fair and open access to our housing list and assessment process. We work with others to maximise and simplify access routes into our housing.
- A61.2            Lettings. We let houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need; makes best use of available stock; maximises choice; and helps sustain communities.

## INTRODUCTION

Lochfield Park Co-operative operates in the eastern suburb area of Easterhouse known as Lochend area.

The Co-operative provides housing for rent, shared ownership and provides factoring services to a number of owners in the area.

### Current Housing Stock (September 2003)

- 272 - New Build / Modernised Properties
- 82 - Unimproved Tenemental Properties
- 20 - Shared Ownership Properties

### 374

Within its housing stock the Co-operative has a number of properties suitable for applicants with special needs i.e. ambulant disabled, and amenity properties.

Due to the relatively small housing stock and the fact that the area is stable the turnover in housing is not high.

Applicants to the housing waiting list can therefore expect to be on the list for a significant period of time before an offer of housing may become available.

## **1.0 Key Principles**

### **1.1 Raising Standards in Allocations**

“Raising Standards in Housing Allocations” SFHA 1999, highlighted 3 key principles which should underpin any allocation policy.

#### **1.1.1 Housing Need**

RSL's should generally allocate their housing to people with high levels of housing need (and or support need, where appropriate).

#### **1.1.2 Open Access**

Access to the allocation process should be open at all times to all sections of the Community, with any unfairly discriminate restriction eliminated.

#### **1.1.3 Balanced Communities**

RSL's should make the best use of available stock and use the allocation process to assist in the creation and maintenance of balanced, stable communities (SFHA 1999)

## **2.0 Policy Objectives**

- To assist in the creation and maintenance of a stable community
- To recognise and respond to the varying housing needs of applicants
- To make the most effective use of available housing stock in line with good housing management practice
- To maximise revenue by ensuring the efficient turnover of housing
- To operate a system which addresses housing need, is easily understood and can be administered effectively
- To meet the aspirations of tenants and prospective tenants
- To comply with all legislation, Performance Standards as laid down by Communities Scotland / SFHA and Good Practice Publications.

## **3.0 Access To The Housing Waiting List**

- Lochfield Park aims to operate a non-discriminatory policy and therefore access to the housing waiting list will be open to any person irrespective of their colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, age, disability, social background, marital status, religion, sexual orientation or political opinion.

- The Co-operative participates as a “Common Housing Application Form” with other Registered Social Landlords in Easterhouse. Applicants are able to apply for housing with all of the participating RSL’s by completing one form.
- The Co-operative will operate an ‘open’ housing waiting list to allow those in housing need access to the list.
- Priority for allocation will be determined by means of a points / needs based system whereby points will be awarded for each Housing Need Indicator.
- Priority for housing will be assessed under the following categories
  1. Internal Transfer (Severe Medical Disability)
  2. Internal Transfer (Housing Need) 50% / Waiting List 50%

Where the housing needs of applicants are equivalent, the length of time that unsatisfactory conditions have prevailed will be the determining factor for allocation.

- Applicants to the Housing Waiting List must be 16 years of age.

#### **4.0 Priority For Housing**

##### **4.1 Internal Transfers (Severe Medical Disability)**

Internal applicants who require housing due to severe medical problems will be prioritised.

##### **4.2 Internal Transfers (Housing Need) / Waiting List**

Any housing which becomes available after the needs of the first priority group have been met shall be made available to Internal Transfers (Housing Need) 50% and Waiting List Applicants 50%.

#### **5.0 Internal Transfer Criteria**

Existing tenants of Lochfield Park Co-operative will require to meet the following criteria to be considered for internal transfer.

- There must be a specific housing need. i.e. the existing accommodation no longer meets the needs of the applicant or rehousing is required for medical reasons
- The applicants rent account should be clear or no more than one month’s rent in arrears or there is a satisfactory rent arrear agreement in place which has been adhered to.

- The tenancy must have been held for 3 years (unless rehousing is required due to severe medical problems)
- The tenancy must have been conducted in a satisfactory manner (i.e. no breaches of tenancy agreement) and the property maintained in line with the tenants responsibilities contained written in Lochfield Park Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.
- Internal Transfer applicants will then be pointed via housing need indicators and points categories.

## **6.0 Equal Opportunity Policy**

As part of its drive towards equality of opportunity the Co-operative will monitor housing applications received and allocations made to ensure a fair distribution of allocations across all groups.

- Housing application forms will therefore include equal opportunities section relating to:
  1. Ethnicity
  2. Domestic Circumstances
  3. Gender
  4. Age Categories
  5. Disability
- This information will be totally confidential and have no bearing on an individuals access to the housing waiting list nor any subsequent offer of housing.
- The information gathered will be used to inform the review process to ensure the Co-operative's Allocation Policy continues to meet its aims and objectives.
- Quarterly reports on the information gathered will be provided to the Property Management Sub Committee for their consideration.

## **7.0 Audio & Translations**

- The Co-operative can provide an abridged version of the Allocation Policy and application form on tape should this be required.
- Applicants who require a translation service may also have this provided.
- Both these services will be provided free of charge.

## **8.0 Publicity**

The Co-operative will publicise the availability of its housing to as wide an audience as is practicable. This will include via the distribution of posters and leaflets to Glasgow City Council, other Social Landlords, the Social Work Departments and Community facilities.

Information and publicity materials will also be made available to Positive Action in Housing.

## **9.0 Confidentiality**

All information contained within applications will be treated in the strictest confidence and access will be restricted to staff only.

Any information contained on computer will be treated in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **10.0 Applicants Responsibilities**

### 10.1 Behaviour

Any applicants who are the source of nuisance / anti social behaviour towards officers of the Co-operative will have their applications cancelled.

### 10.2 Information

Any applicant found to have provided false information will have their application cancelled. Should this come to light following a tenancy having been taken up, then the Co-operative will pursue recovery of the property.

### 10.3 References

The Co-operative will obtain references from previous landlords prior to any offer of tenancy. Allocations will generally be refused where an unsatisfactory landlords reference has been received.

### 10.4 Schedule 7 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

Applicants who are related to any officer or Committee member of the Co-operative must notify the Co-operative by completing the appropriate section on the Application for Housing. Provision of this information will not affect the application for housing in any respect.

## **11.0 Decision Making & Appeals**

- Decisions on most cases will fall within the procedures in this policy and be made by staff

- Applicants refused access to the housing waiting list or refused an offer of housing will be given the reason for the decision in writing and may appeal.
- Applicants who wish to appeal against any decision should appeal to the Director in the first instance by sending details of their reasons for disputing the decision in writing.
- The Director will respond in writing within 2 weeks.
- If the applicant is still not satisfied with the decision then the matter should be presented to the Housing Management Sub-Committee.
- Any case presented to the Committee will be treated as strictly confidential and will be referred to by a reference number only, names of applicants will not be used.
- The Committee will respond to the applicant within 2 weeks of the Housing Management Sub-Committee at which the appeal was presented.

## **12.0 Type of Tenancy**

New tenants of the Co-operative will sign a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. Information on the Tenancy Agreement will be provided prior to signing the Agreement.

## **13.0 Monitoring / Performance / Review / Equal Opportunities**

- This policy will normally be reviewed every 2 years to ensure that it is addressing the needs outlined in the policy and that objectives are being met.
- The Co-operative will also review the Allocation Policy and Procedures in light of material changes in:
  1. Legislation
  2. Communities Scotland Guidance
  3. Raising Standards in Housing
  4. Internal Auditing
- The Housing Management Sub-Committee will receive monthly reports on allocation issues and will monitor the housing Waiting List, voids, time to relet and new vacancies.
- An annual review of allocations will also be presented to the April meeting of the Housing Management Sub-Committee summarising the previous 12 months activity.

- To ensure compliance with our equal opportunities policy, the ethnic origin of all applications for housing will be monitored.
- The SCORE (Scottish Continuous Recording) system will be used to collect information about the letting activities of the Association.

#### **14.0 Mutual Exchanges**

The Co-operative will permit mutual exchanges internally within its own housing stock and with tenants of other RSL's. This is to assist tenants in addressing issues of housing need where internal transfers are not available. Mutual exchanges will only be permitted in accordance with the Mutual Exchange Policy and Procedures of the Co-operative.

Tenants wishing a Mutual Exchange must apply for permission on the appropriate application form and may not exchange homes until permission is granted and confirmed in writing.

#### **15.0 H.O.M.E.S Mobility Scheme**

The Co-operative will participate in the above national mobility scheme. This allows access to housing in other parts of the United Kingdom for those who require it.

#### **16.0 Information Leaflets**

Information leaflets containing an abbreviated version of the Co-operative's Allocation Policy and Procedures will be made available at the Co-operative's office.

Lochfield Park Co-operative  
10 Dalilea Drive  
Easterhouse  
Glasgow  
G34 0EJ

Telephone: 0141 771 2228  
Facsimile 0141 773 0015

#### **17.0 Housing Need Indicators & Point Categories**

##### Medical

Medical priority will be awarded only where alternative accommodation would benefit applicants or family member's health.

There are restrictions on mobility and ground floor accommodation is required

**20 Points**

Where there are medical circumstances, which are causing problems to the household although this will not restrict applicants to ground floor accommodation.

**12 Points**

### Incoming Workers

Applicants outwith Easterhouse area who work or are due to take up permanent employment in Easterhouse area.

**15 Points**

### Resident in Need

Applicants for rehousing may be accepted where:

- a) A move to the Co-operative area is required to provide support and assistance to a resident within the Association area.
- b) Support and assistance is required from a resident in the area.

A visit will be carried out to the resident to confirm the level and frequency of the support.

Medical and / or Social Work reports may be required

**12 Points**

### Overcrowding

The lack of any of the following defines overcrowding. The minimum standard will be as follows:

- applicant and / or partner requires one bedroom
- two children of the same sex under 16 require one double bedroom
- two children of different sex over 9 require one single bedroom each
- two children of different sex under 9 require one double bedroom

Points will be awarded for overcrowding as follows:

|  | <b>No. of Bedrooms Needed</b> |          |          |          |          |    |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----|
|  | <b>1</b>                      | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |    |
| <b>No. of Bedrooms in Applicants Present Accommodation</b> | <b>0</b>                      | 10       | 20       | 30       | 40       | 50 |
|  | <b>1</b>                      | -        | 10       | 20       | 30       | 40 |
|  | <b>2</b>                      | -        | -        | 10       | 20       | 30 |
|  | <b>3</b>                      | -        | -        | -        | 10       | 20 |
|  | <b>4</b>                      | -        | -        | -        | -        | 10 |
|  | <b>5</b>                      | -        | -        | -        | -        | -  |

### Housing Need

To address the issue of housing need 10 points per number of bedrooms required will be added to each application.

i.e. the difference between the number of bedrooms available at the time of application and the number of bedrooms required to satisfy the housing need of the applicant.

#### Under Occupation

Where the standards for 'overcrowding' have been applied and there are bedrooms unoccupied

**5 Points  
(per bedroom)**

The Co-operative aims to make the best use of available housing stock therefore underoccupying will be discouraged.

#### Roofless

The Co-operative recognises the plight of "roofless" applicants and distinguishes between those who are "roofless" and those who are "homeless" or "threatened with homelessness"

**20 Points**

#### Homeless or Threatened With Homelessness

The Co-operative aims to make an effective contribution to the reduction of homelessness.

**15 Points**

#### Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 – Homelessness

The Co-operative will work in partnership with Glasgow City Council and will assist the Council to meet it's statutory responsibilities to homeless people and families.

#### Matrimonial Breakdown

With regard to the breakdown of a tenants relationship under the terms of the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981, non entitled spouses will be considered for rehousing by the Co-operative. The matrimonial home will remain with the party granted custody of the children. The partner applying for separate accommodation will be treated as a separate household and will be awarded points accordingly. The Co-operative will request legal documentation pertaining to the matrimonial breakdown.

**10 Points**

#### Fleeing Violence

Applicants fleeing violence as a result of their colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, age, disability, social background, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion or domestic violence.

**10 Points**

### Elderly at Height

Applicants aged 60 or over who live on the third floor (or fifth floor and above of a multi-storey flat) and wish to move to a ground or first floor property and who do not qualify under medical0

**12 Points**

### Children at Height

Applicants with children under 3 years of age who live on the third floor (or fifth floor and above of multi-storey flat) and wish to move to a ground or first floor property.

**5 Points  
(per child)**

Applicants with children under 16 years of age who live on the seventh floor or above.

**3 Points  
(per child)**

### Insecurity of Tenure

Mortgage Repossession

**10 Points**

House to be demolished

**10 Points**

Desire to live independently

**5 Points**

Living with landlord

**5 Points**

Living care of (does not include living with parents)

**5 Points**

Living in B&B

**5 Points**

Short Secure Tenancy

**5 Points**

### Lack of Amenities / Sharing Amenities

Points will be awarded if the applicants present accommodation lacks standard amenities or if amenities are shared:

No inside toilet

**10 Points**

No bath / shower

**10 Points**

Inadequate water supply

**5 Points**

Applicant sharing bathroom or kitchen

**5 Points**

No central heating

**5 Points**

Low occupancy of close (where an Applicant lives in a close of low occupancy level resulting in vandalism or vulnerability)

**10 Points**

deteriorating accommodation / environment (where an applicant lives in generally deteriorating accommodation or undesirable environment and whose housing situation would be improved by an offer of housing by the Co-operative)

**10 Points**

### Special Cases

In the event of an application which cannot be accommodated within the terms of the allocation policy, such a case shall be submitted for consideration by the Housing Management Sub-Committee who have delegated authority to consider such applications.

Housing need points will then be awarded in accordance with the Aims and Objectives of the Allocation Policy.