

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

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1. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

East Kilbride & District Housing Association owns 398 houses and flats in East Kilbride District, and is controlled by a Management Committee of local people who are responsible for the Association's policies, including those relating to the Housing List. The areas in which the Association owns properties, and the types of properties owned are detailed later in this document.

The Association aims to provide affordable good-quality rented accommodation to those in greatest need and therefore maintains an "open" Housing List, so that there is continued access to the list for all applicants. Every applicant will be assessed in accordance with the policy to ensure they are assessed fairly. However, because of the low turnover of properties, only a small proportion of applicants are likely to be rehoused in the future.

The Association's allocation policy is based on commitment to equal opportunities and will ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, family circumstances, race, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, religion, political orientation or sexual orientation.

An information sheet and summary of the Allocation Policy is issued with every application form. Copies are available in Reception and full copies of the Allocation Policy are available on request, free of charge.

2. SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy is operated on a 'Groups plus Points' basis, the eligible groups as follows:

- 2.1** Applicants who do not have Security of Tenure, e.g. sub-tenants/those sharing facilities.
- 2.2** Applicants whose medical condition would benefit by being rehoused. Applicants who require rehousing on social grounds to be near family for support
- 2.3** Applicants whose present accommodation is overcrowded, or and applicants whose present accommodation is underoccupied by more than one apartment.
- 2.4** Internal Transfer Applicants
- 2.5** Applicants who are homeless.

2.6 Applicants who have particular support requirements which will be determined by a Community Care assessment eg applicants with learning disabilities.

Within each group the Association's point system prioritises applicants whose Accommodation is considered to be in an unsatisfactory condition and below a tolerable standard.

The Association allocates to Groups 1-5 on a Rota basis. The Rota is determined annually and takes into account the anticipated level of vacancies for the coming year; the number of applicants on each queue and the Nomination Agreement with South Lanarkshire Council which requires that 50% of all vacancies excluding those for Transfer tenants are allocated to nominations from the Council Housing List.

The Association will take into account the best use of the available property when referring to the Rota and will bypass the Rota on occasions where it is appropriate to do so i.e. if a property becomes vacant that would be suitable for medical allocation.

3. SIZE AND TYPE OF HOUSE OFFERED

The Housing List is made up of separate lists depending upon the priority grouping and size of accommodation that is needed. When selecting applicants for the amenity scheme applicants will be considered from all categories provided that they are over 55 years of age. Amenity housing is designed for applicants with health or mobility problems that require additional design features such as grab rails, non slip flooring etc.

Applicants who are awarded medical points will only be queued for ground or first floor accommodation. Consideration will be given to future requirements if the illness is progressive or if the applicant will require an additional room for a carer.

The Association will not offer accommodation which results in overcrowding of the occupants, nor will it offer housing which would result in the house being under-occupied by more than one room.

For the purposes of allocation, and also in the calculation of overcrowding and under-occupation points, the needs of a household in relation to the size of house will be defined as follows:

Single Adult (16 yrs and over):	1 bedroom
Married/Co-habiting Couple:	1 bedroom
Two children of same sex up to 12 yrs old :	1 additional bedroom
Two children of different sex up to the age of 5:	1 additional bedroom
Two children of different sexes where one Child Is older than five years of age	1 additional bedroom each

The Association will also consider any request for an additional bedroom where there is an additional child/ren who are part of the household but not part of the immediate family.

Due to the high demand for two-apartment accommodation, the Association will only queue single applicants for bedsit accommodation.

4. ACCESS TO THE LIST

- 4.1** The Association maintains an open housing list, which means that anyone can apply at any time to be assessed. The Association will place all applicants on the housing list, however due to the very low turnover of vacancies it is anticipated that only a small proportion of all applicants will be rehoused in the future by the Association.
- 4.2** Anyone who is aged 16 years or over may apply.
- 4.3** Applicants living 'care of' households which are already tenants of the Association should ensure that the Association has already given permission for this. If permission has not been granted or has been refused then the Applicant will be admitted to the list however the Association reserves the right not to award overcrowding points.
- 4.4** Applications from Committee Members, Staff and/or their relatives will be subject to the provisions under Section 63, Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

4.5 The Association will take no account of the following:

- 1 Length of time applicant is resident in the area.
- 2 The income of the applicant and or their family.
- 3 The age of the applicant providing that he/she has attained the age of 16 years.
- 4 Any outstanding liability (such as rent arrears) attributable to a home of which the applicant was not a tenant.
- 5 Any rent or other arrears accrued by the applicant on a previous tenancy which are no longer outstanding.
- 6 The value of any property the applicant or applicants' family owns.
- 7 Any rent arrears which are below one month.
- 8 Any outstanding liability (e.g. rent arrears) for which the applicant has agreed an arrangement with the landlord for paying the outstanding liability and adhered to this agreement for at least 3 months and is continuing to make payments.
- 9 Any outstanding debts (e.g. council tax) of the applicant or a member of their household which do not relate to the tenancy of a home.

All applications will be assessed in accordance with the Association's points based system and applicants advised of their likelihood of being rehoused in the future by the Association.

4.6 Any applicant being offered a tenancy with the Association will be expected to occupy their tenancy as their only or principle home.

<p>5. ADMISSIONS TO, SUSPENSIONS AND REMOVALS FROM THE HOUSING LIST</p>
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5.1 Applicants are assessed on their present housing circumstances, and points awarded on the basis of housing need.

5.2 Applicants who are placed on the Housing List are advised that this does not guarantee an offer of accommodation.

5.3 Applicants who deliberately take up residence in accommodation in order to improve their position on the Housing List will be admitted to the Housing List. However the Association reserves the right not to award additional points to those they would have been entitled to in their previous accommodation for a period of two years from the date of termination of previous accommodation. Instances where applicants will be considered to have deliberately worsened their circumstances would include the following:

- giving up secure accommodation which it was reasonable for them to occupy
- moving to accommodation which worsens their housing situation
- moving to accommodation less suitable to their needs.

This list is not exhaustive, however consideration will also be given as to the reasonableness of the individual's actions.

5.4 Access to the Housing List may be suspended by the Association. For the avoidance of doubt the Association reserves the right in all cases to suspend applicants from the Housing List for a specific period. In exercising their discretion in this respect they will always act reasonably and as far as possible within its adopted policies in order to create a balanced community where social problems may be eased through sensitive management. Suspension from the list may be made on the following grounds_:

- a) if the applicant or their spouse or partner has rent arrears at their current or previous tenancy and has no arrangement to pay off the debt. The suspension will be reviewed if the arrears are cleared or a reasonable arrangement has been made and has been adhered to for at least three months.
- b) if the applicant or their spouse or partner has a history of antisocial behaviour or has previously been evicted for antisocial behaviour by this Association or by another landlord.

Antisocial behaviour in this context can include:

- relevant criminal convictions
- drug dealing from a tenancy
- prostitution from a tenancy
- fire raising

- harassment of or threats to neighbour
- extensive damage or wilful neglect of the landlords property
- general noise nuisance

In making the decision on suspensions and the period of the suspension the Association will take into account:

- 1 the nature, frequency and duration of the conduct
- 2 the extent to which the conduct is the consequence of acts or omissions of people other than the tenant
- 3 the effect which the conduct is having on other people.
- 4 Any action taken by the landlord to address the conduct.

- c) if applicants who are currently tenants of the Association or another landlord who are unable to demonstrate their ability to adhere to their terms and conditions of tenancy. Suspensions based on the standard of current accommodation will be related to tenancy matters only and not to the applicant's personal housekeeping standards.

The suspension will be reviewed if the applicant can demonstrate that they are addressing the areas of concern and progress has been made to minimise the same type of behaviour occurring again.

- d) if applicants (or members of their household) are physically or verbally abusive to Association staff or people working on the Association's behalf.

- e) if applicants or their spouse or partner has provided false or misleading information or has withheld relevant information regarding their application. Applications will also be suspended if requests for further information in order to assess the application are not responded to within a reasonable timescale.

In considering suspensions, the Association will take into account the degree of falsification and the housing needs of the applicant.

The application may only be suspended until all the relevant information is collated and verified and the application can be accurately reassessed.

In all cases where the Association is suspending an applicant appropriate advice will be given as to what steps can be taken by the applicant to have the suspension reviewed.

- 5.5 The term Applicant throughout this section also refers to Transfer applicants.
- 5.6 The Association will remove an applicant from the list:
- a) if the applicant requests that this be done (usually in writing)
 - b) on the death of the applicant
 - c) on the failure of the applicant to respond to the annual review of the housing list

Applicants who have been removed under (a) and (c) above can reapply to be reassessed and admitted to the list in the future.

6. ALLOCATIONS' PROCEDURE

- 6.1** Every applicant will be advised when applying of their points, category of application and size of house queued for.

When allocating vacancies the size of the house available will be taken into account and vacancies will be allocated in accordance with the agreed rota, with any offer being made to the applicant with the highest points in that category unless they have specified they do not want that area or it is unsuitable on medical or any other grounds.

Prior to the offer being formalised the applicant will be visited by Association staff to verify that the information given on the form is accurate and that circumstances have not changed. Proof of residence at the address given will be required. Other details may require other confirmation.

- 6.2** Tenancy Reports will be requested from landlords, where applicants currently hold or have previously held a tenancy.
- 6.3** Medical Report will be requested where an applicant is claiming points on medical grounds.
- 6.4** The Association has a nomination arrangement with South Lanarkshire Council that allows the Association to request nominations from the Council for 50% of its vacancies, net of transfers. Applicants are advised to make sure that they also apply to the Council for housing.

- 6.5** Where an offer is to be made to an existing tenant of the Association, the tenant's house will be inspected by Association staff to ensure there has been no malicious damage or wilful neglect. Where it is found that a flat has been damaged by the tenant, the transfer may be refused. The tenant will be advised of the reasons why the offer cannot proceed and will be required to demonstrate their ability to adhere to the terms and conditions of their tenancy over an reasonable period before consideration will be given to any offer of accommodation.
- 6.6** Where an applicant has rent arrears; former tenant rent arrears or any other related housing debt such as outstanding rechargeable repairs, then no offer will be made unless they can demonstrate an arrangement had been made to clear the debt and has been adhered to for a period of at least three months.

7. THE POINTS' SYSTEM

Applicants will be awarded points as follows, under one of the following categories. If the applicant qualifies under more than one category they will be placed on the queue which is most likely to rehouse them:

7.1 Applicants who do not have Security of Tenure

Applicants who are living c/o family or friends.

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 7.1.1 Sub-tenants (sole household): | 10 |
| 7.1.2 Sub-tenants (sharing facilities): | 15 |
| (including those adults still living in the family home) | |

- | | |
|--|----------|
| If accommodation also overcrowded, points per room short: | 5 |
| If accommodation also lacks amenities, points per amenity lacking: | 5 |
| If accommodation also lacks cooking facilities: | 5 |

If the applicant or a member of the applicant's household has a medical condition which satisfies the criteria in category 7.2 below additional points will be awarded

All hostel residents will be classed as category 7.1.2 = sub-tenants with shared facilities

7.2 Applicants whose medical/social condition would benefit by being rehoused
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The following points will be awarded to applicants or a member of the applicant's household if they have a medical condition of a physical nature which would be improved by rehousing. Applicants who are awarded these points will only be offered ground or first floor accommodation: (relevant evidence must be provided). **10**

The following points will be awarded to applicants or a member of the applicant's household who have a mental health problem which would be improved by secure, stable accommodation: (relevant evidence must be provided). **3**

Medical points will not be awarded on the grounds of stress, anxiety or depression.

If the applicant or a member of their household has been diagnosed as asthmatic and currently lives in accommodation with blow air heating, medical points will be awarded.

If the application is made on Social grounds, the following points may be awarded:

7.2.1 Applicant requires support of/or requires to give support to family living in the area: **5**

7.2.2 As above, but where evidence is provided to show medical grounds for same: **10**

PLEASE NOTE:

- If applicant or a member of the applicants household fulfils the criteria under Points will not be awarded for medical AND social needs to the one applicant
- Support can either be of a physical nature i.e. assistance with shopping etc or emotional support. The Applicant will have to demonstrate that the support is necessary to the quality of their life
- Applicants wishing to be considered for housing on the basis of support needs will require to provide written statements from both parties detailing why and what support is required and why they are the only person that can provide it.
- Applicant must provide verification also from an external source i.e. a Doctor, Social Worker, Health Visitor etc.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to provide the necessary documentation.

7.3 Applicants whose present accommodation is overcrowded or underoccupied

Please see Table 1 attached, which details points awarded.

The housing points detailed on **Table 1** will be awarded to householders: (i.e. those who currently have a secure tenancy or own their own home.)

Applicants who have no security of tenure will be pointed under category 7.1 or 7.4. or 7.6

If the applicant or a member of the applicant's household has a medical condition which satisfies the criteria in category 7.2 above additional points will be awarded

7.4 Applicants who are Homeless

Applicants who are registered with South Lanarkshire Council as homeless and are placed in furnished flats, refuges, B & B accommodation and those living in Lindsay House will be placed in this category, as will applicants who are separating from their partners but who are continuing to live in the matrimonial home, including those fleeing domestic abuse; applicants who live in tied accommodation and those living in HM forces accommodation who have three months or less to leave their current accommodation; applicants who are forced to sell their property due to financial difficulties, and applicants living in private rented accommodation and who have been issued with a Notice to Quit will be placed in this category.

Applicants separating from their partners and **who wish to be assessed for points under this category** may require to provide proof of this i.e. a letter from their lawyer, depending on individual circumstances. This will then entitle them to 'sharing facilities' points. Applicants forced to sell their property due to financial difficulties will require to attend the Money Advice Centre and provide the Association with confirmation of their assessment that the applicant has no alternative but to sell.

7.4.1 Sole household:	10
7.4.2 Sharing facilities:	15
If accommodation also overcrowded, points per room short:	5
If accommodation also lacks amenities, points per amenity lacking:	5
If accommodation also lacks cooking facilities:	5

If the applicant or a member of the applicant's household has a medical condition which satisfies the criteria in category 7.2 above additional points will be awarded

7.5 Tenants of the Association who wish to Transfer

Tenants of the Association who wish to transfer must complete an application form. Their application will be categorised under the transfer category, which will be rotated with the other 4 groups above. Points will be awarded to transfer applicants under either the medical, overcrowding/ under-occupation or social categories.

Tenant applicants who have a history of causing nuisance or annoyance or harassment will not be considered for an offer of housing until they have demonstrated their ability to adhere to the terms and conditions of their tenancy over an reasonable period. (See Section five)

Where an offer is to be made to an existing tenant of the Association, the tenant's house will be inspected by Association staff to ensure there has been no malicious damage or wilful neglect. Where it is found that a property has been damaged by the tenant, the Association reserves the right to suspend the application and to withdraw the offer. The tenant will be advised of the reasons why the offer cannot proceed and will be required to demonstrate their ability to adhere to the terms and conditions of their tenancy over an reasonable period before consideration will be given to the removal of the suspension and any further offer of accommodation.

Any alterations or improvements will require to have the Association's permission. Applicants may be required to either reinstate the property to the original condition or reimburse the Association for any costs incurred in the reinstatement .

7.6 Applicants with support requirements

Applicants who have particular support requirements, such as applicants with learning disabilities, will be assessed and queued under this category. The points system is not the most appropriate method of assessing and prioritising applicants for rehousing as a variety of factors have to be taken into account before an offer of housing can be made either from mainstream stock or current special needs provision.

The Association will work in close partnership with South Lanarkshire Council to assist in the development and implementation of a housing strategy for client groups with support requirements.

In conjunction with South Lanarkshire Council, the Association will identify those applicants that it may be in a position to assist on an annual basis. This will allow the necessary Community Care Assessments to be carried out and the information gained to be used to identify suitable areas and house types for rehousing. It will also allow support agencies to plan a programme of support prior to allocation if this is required and to cost and plan any support package.

In identifying applicants to be given priority the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- Location and type of support required
- Current housing circumstances
- Medical requirements
- Areas and house type requested
- Ability to live independently with support
- Availability of support

Applicants on this list will also be considered for any vacancy which arises within an appropriate established supported accommodation project (see 9.12 below)

8. SPECIAL CASES

The Association may from time to time consider special cases where the application does not fall within any of the above categories or where additional consideration is requested. Any such cases will be assessed by the Housing and Tenants Services Sub-committee.

9. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

9.1 Mutual Exchanges

The Association will consider requests for Mutual Exchanges from our tenants. They may exchange with another tenant of the Association or any public sector landlord. The request must be made in writing and the Association reserve the right to refuse the request if it considers it reasonable to do so. Examples of when it may be considered reasonable to refuse a request are :

- a) either party cannot demonstrate their ability to adhere to the terms and conditions of their tenancy over an reasonable period.
- b) The exchange would worsen the housing conditions of either party (i.e. one of the parties has a medical condition which would not be improved by the move)
- c) The exchange would not make best use of the Association's housing stock (i.e. a property was under-occupied by more than one room or overcrowded as defined in Section 7)
- d) The exchange was proposed for financial gain.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

If a mutual exchange is refused under ground a) above then the Association will work with the Tenant to address the areas of concern in order that the exchange or an alternative exchange can be reconsidered at a future date

The Association will assist in the promotion of Mutual Exchanges between our tenants and tenants of other appropriate landlords.

The Association also participates in **HOMES** and **HOMESWAP** which are national schemes set up to assist tenants to move from or to other areas. Leaflets, information and advice and assistance are available in the Association office.

9.2 Partnership Breakdown

In the event of one of the Association's tenants experiencing relationship breakdown both parties are advised to seek legal advice if they cannot agree amicably as to who should remain in the tenancy, as the Association recognises the rights of both parties under the terms of the Matrimonial Homes Act 1981 to reside in the property if applicable.

Joint tenants should note that both parties are responsible for complying with the terms of the tenancy agreement, including rental payments even if not living in the property. If either party wishes to rescind their rights to the tenancy then they can do so in writing.

The Association has agreed that in the event of partnership breakdown, whichever party agrees to leave the tenancy will be eligible to apply for housing and be admitted to the Housing List. The Association may consider prioritising the applicant for rehousing, however only one offer will be made. In considering the request, account will be taken of availability of suitable housing; location of potential vacancies in relation to the matrimonial home etc. In the event of the applicant receiving an offer of accommodation from either

a Local Authority Landlord or Housing Association, then the applicant will not be prioritised for an offer from the Association.

9.3 Custody and Access to Children

Applicants who have custody of their children will be offered accommodation to meet the entire family's needs. If the applicant has access only then they will only be considered for accommodation that suits their own needs unless they have overnight or weekend access in which case one additional bedroom surplus to their own needs will be allocated, irrespective of the number or sexes of the children. In the event that two applicants have the same points, then priority will be given in the first instance to the applicant with permanent custody

9.4 Offers of Accommodation

If two applicants have the same number of points then account will be taken of the applicant's preferences in terms of stock type; area amenities etc. Thereafter the date of application will be used to determine which applicant is made the offer.

Pregnant women will be queued for the size of accommodation they will require once the baby is born however will not qualify for any additional overcrowding points until after the birth.

In the case of joint applications it is the Association's policy to offer joint tenancies where there is more than one adult member of the household.

9.5 Appeals Procedure

If an applicant feels they have been unfairly assessed or is dissatisfied with how their application has been dealt with by the Housing Officer, then they may appeal firstly to the Housing Manager within 14 days of receipt of their assessment letter, and their appeal will be responded to within 14 days. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the result of their appeal to the Housing Manager, then they can appeal the decision to the Housing and Tenant Services Sub-Committee within 14 days of receipt of the letter advising of the outcome of their appeal, and this will be considered within 28 days.

9.6 Complaints Policy

If the applicant feels his/her application has been maladministered then they can complain to the Ombudsman. Leaflets and information on this can be obtained from the Association's office on request.

9.7 Confidentiality

The Association respects the confidential nature of information given by applicants and their representatives and will not discuss applications with anyone other than the applicant unless instructed in writing to do so by the applicant.

The Association is also registered on the Data Protection Register and will respond under the terms of the Date Protection Act 1984 to any request made in writing from an applicant to see any information regarding them stored in the Association's computer system.

9.8 One Apartment List

Single applicants allocated a bedsit will be eligible to apply for a transfer to a two-apartment. Once they have resided in the bedsit for two years if no offer has been made and their application has not been suspended they will be given priority for a two-apartment vacancy. This is subject to the availability of two apartments and will be balanced by the needs of applicants in other 2 apartment queues .

9.9 Review – Allocation Policy

The Association will review its Allocation Policy on a regular basis and will monitor all allocations by quarterly Reports to the Housing and Tenant Services Sub-committee to ensure all allocations are carried out in accordance with the policy and its aims and objectives.

9.10 Review – Housing List

The Association will review its Housing list on an annual basis. All applicants will be given 14 days to confirm they wish to remain on the list. If no response is received within this time-scale the applicant will be sent a further reminder with the same timescale before the application will be removed from the housing list. This will not debar the applicant from reapplying again in the future.

9.11 Legal Action

The Association will take legal action to recover any tenancy that was allocated on the basis of false or misleading information.

9.12 Change of Circumstances

Applicants should remember to advise the Association of any changes in their circumstances that would affect their application for Housing – e.g change of address, changes to the household such as new babies being born or relationship breakdowns

9.13 Supported Accommodation

The Association has a range of supported accommodation. In allocating any vacancies that arise within this specialist provision, the Association will work in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council and the appointed care agency to identify an applicant whose needs will be best met with this type of accommodation.

9.14 Other Housing Providers

Applicants should ensure that they also make application to South Lanarkshire Council as 50% of all allocations are made to nominees from the council list.

There are also a number of other housing associations working in East Kilbride and South Lanarkshire and it is advisable for applicants to contact them also for advice and assistance.

Details are included in the information sheet issued with the application form.

9.13 - Applicants fleeing domestic abuse.

Applicants requiring rehousing because of domestic abuse should discuss the reasons for rehousing with the Housing Officer to ensure accurate assessment of their housing circumstances. Applicants may also wish to contact Womens Aid at their advice centre at Torrance Road, East Kilbride, tel no 01355 249897

**10. TABLE 1:
OVERCROWDING/UNDEROCCUPATION**

		N	E	E	D	S	
Apt. Size		2	3	4	5	6	
		1	10	20	30	40	50
H A S	2	-	10	20	30	40	
	3	-	-	10	20	30	
	4	5	-	-	10	20	
	5	10	5	-	-	10	
	6	15	10	5	-	-	

11. GUIDANCE NOTES FOR STAFF

11.1 PROCEDURE FOR PROCESSING AND ASSESSING HOUSING APPLICATIONS (INCLUDING TRANSFERS)

Application Requests

1. An applicant can request a housing application form by telephone, e-mail, in writing or in person at the office.
2. An information sheet will be issued with every application.
3. For telephone, e-mail and written requests a covering letter will also be issued. All requests will be responded to within 2 working days.

Processing Applications

1. All forms will be date stamped and recorded in the incoming mail book.
2. All forms will be assessed within 10 working days of receipt.
3. Any further information required to assess the application will be requested.
4. Once all relevant information necessary to assess the application is collected, the application will be fully assessed within 10 working days.
5. An application will be loaded onto the computerised housing list and assessment letter will be issued detailing the number of points, the size of property queued for and the category of application.
6. The assessment letter will include details of the appeals process.

Suspending Applications

1. If the application is to be suspended in accordance with the terms of the Allocation Policy (section 5) then the application details will be loaded on to the computerised database and categorised as suspended.
2. The applicant will be advised within 10 working days of the suspension, the reason for the suspension and the steps and timescale for the suspension to be removed or reviewed.
3. Details of the appeals procedure will also be included in this letter.
4. All suspensions will require the authorisation of the Housing Manager before the applicant is advised.

Removing Applications

1. On receipt of a written request to remove an application, the application will be removed from the housing list and categorised as such.
2. Written confirmation of this action will be issued within 10 working days of receipt.
3. Applications will be removed from the list on notification of the death of the applicant.
4. If an applicant fails to respond to the annual review of the housing list as detailed in section 9.10 of the Allocation Policy. The application will be recategorised as removed and the date and reason recorded.

11.2 PROCEDURES FOR ALLOCATIONS

The following procedures are for the guidance of staff and should be read in conjunction with other relevant Procedures i.e. Void Policy and Procedures; Maintenance Policy and Procedures etc.

Termination of a Tenancy

1. This should be done in writing giving one months notice.
2. An acknowledgement should be sent confirming receipt and advising the tenant of the terminations date; balance on the rent account; arranging or asking the tenant to arrange a pre-termination inspection and generally advising about leaving the property clean and tidy etc.
3. A memo or e-mail should be circulated to all staff advising them of the change.
4. Housing benefits should be notified.
5. The tenancy should be terminated on the computer.
6. The tenant should be advised if their rent account is clear or if there is a balance outstanding.
7. A forwarding address should be obtained where possible.
8. The tenancy should be inspected before the termination date and the tenant advised of any repairs that they are responsible for before termination
9. A full inspection should be carried out once the keys have been handed in.

Inspection

1. Void property repairs should be carried out as soon as possible to minimise rent loss.
2. Any re-decoration will be at the discretion of the Housing Management staff.
3. Gas and Electrical safety checks including smoke alarms etc to be carried out.
4. Gas and electric meters will be read and the details forwarded on to the appropriate body with copies kept on file.
5. Yale lock to be changed.

Allocations

1. Once notification of a termination has been received the allocation process should commence to minimise rent loss.
2. Allocations should be made in accordance with our Allocation Policy
3. A void book will be maintained to monitor that 50% of lets are made to SLC nominees and to rotate allocations among the **5** categories. This will also form part of the audit trail.
4. On receipt of written Notice of termination, the property details to be recorded in the void book. Address of property, property type, size and location to be entered along with termination date.
5. Every second void notified to the Association, excluding those which will be allocated to transfer applicants, will be recorded as "SLC nomination". The procedures agreed in the Nomination Agreement will be followed and recorded in the void book, including dates nominations requested; date received; dates of home visits and records of any offers; refusals etc. Once allocated, SLC to be advised of the outcome of the nominations received within the agreed timescales.
6. If the property is to be let to an applicant on the Association's Housing list, then the category of let to be identified from the agreed Rota which will be retained with the void book and which will be completed as allocations are made. The appropriate list is to be printed off from the computer in points order and retained as part of the audit trail. Each applicant on the list

starting with the applicant with the highest points to be assessed in order for the vacancy. If an applicant is to be bypassed for any reason- i.e. not interested in the area- this is to be recorded in the void book and on the printed list.

7. Once an applicant has been identified for a vacancy an initial telephone call should be made to check they are interested in the offer and that their circumstances have not changed. A home visit should be carried out by two members of staff whenever possible. Advance notice of the visit should be given advising of the purpose of the visit and detailing what documentation will be required.
8. Proof of circumstances should be obtained, e.g.:
 - a) proof that they are living at the address given e.g. benefits book, council tax receipts etc. Two forms of proof should be requested.
 - b) proof of children e.g. child benefit book, letter from a lawyer confirming custody or guardianship.
 - c) all details on their application form should be confirmed, including reason for leaving secure accommodation if appropriate.
 - d) if they have been awarded point for dampness or sharing amenities proof of this should be seen.
 - e) if points have been awarded for overcrowding proof of residence of other household members will also be required

Tenants should be encouraged to disclose details of any previous tenancy - former tenancy rent arrears and details will not necessarily debar an applicant from receiving an offer but this information could be used to assist the applicant to maintain their tenancy satisfactorily.

9. Any other relevant documentation should be collected i.e. a tenancy reference from current or previous landlord; medical information from the Doctor etc.
10. If the offer is to go ahead the applicant should be given written notification of the address, proposed date of entry, the rent and the method of payment, and details of viewing the property. This may be done verbally, initially, and followed up with written confirmation. Any formal offer has to be authorised

by the Housing Manager or in his/her absence a senior member of staff prior to the offer being issued.

11. Viewing should be arranged as soon as possible, and the applicant given 24 hours to decide whether to accept.
12. If accepted the applicant should sign the Tenancy Agreement immediately.
13. If refused the offer should be made to the next applicant on the list and the procedures from (6) above gone through.
14. If the property is likely to be slower to let than average, e.g. a bedsit, then to ensure that the property is allocated efficiently a number of applicants can be contacted at the one time to ascertain interest in the offer.
15. If an applicant does not respond to a letter re a potential offer, a second letter to be issued asking them to contact the office to confirm whether they wish to remain on the list or be removed.
16. Once the allocation is complete, the date of entry is to be recorded in the Void book. The computer list – or in the case of Nominations, the letters/faxes from SLC – and any other relevant documentation including a photocopy of the relevant page in the void book to be filed in the Allocations folder.
17. Repairs or maintenance information which delays the allocation of a property to be summarised in the void book. Any repairs works to be done simultaneously to the Allocation process and the Housing Officer and Technical Services Officer to liaise to minimise any void losses.

Signing up a Tenant

1. When signing the Tenancy Agreement time should be taken to explain all details of the tenancy agreement; a housing benefit form should be completed at the office and submitted for them to ensure that HB is claimed promptly; a copy of the gas safety certificate issued as well as a Tenants' Handbook. The signing-up check list should be used for guidance. A SCORE log sheet should be completed. Council Tax, and any known utility suppliers informed of the change of Tenancy.
2. The tenant should be advised that they will be visited within 6-8 weeks of the start of their tenancy to check they have settled in and are not experiencing any difficulties.

11.3 PROCEDURES FOR TRANSFER APPLICANTS

1. A tenant can request a transfer form by telephone, in writing, by e-mail or in person at the office.
2. Transfer applications will be acknowledged, assessed etc in accordance with procedures detailed in 11.1 above.
3. Transfer forms will be kept in the transfer folder.
4. All Transfer applications will be included in the Mutual Exchange Register held on excel and available at the Office's reception desk. On receipt the Register will be checked for potential mutual exchanges.
5. If a potential mutual exchange is identified then the Mutual Exchange Procedures to be followed.

11.4 PROCEDURES FOR MUTUAL EXCHANGES

1. An information sheet to be issued to all mutual exchange applicants.
2. The Mutual Exchange Register will be held on Excel. The Register will hold information by Application number. The Register will not contain names or addresses but areas and property types to protect the confidentiality of Applicants..
3. Mutual exchange list to be checked regularly for potential exchanges and displayed on the Notice Board in reception.
4. If a potential exchange is identified both applicants to be contacted preferably by telephone to gauge their interest initially in the area and type of house available.
5. If both applicants interested then telephone numbers can be exchanged with the consent of both parties to allow them to contact one another to view the properties and to discuss timescales etc. The Information Sheet should be issued along with any necessary forms i.e. if the other party is not one of the Association's tenants then they should complete a standard Housing Application form and the Association's Tenant should complete a Mutual Exchange form.
6. Once both forms have been received then the necessary checks to be carried out on both tenancies. Home visits should be arranged to both addresses within ten working days. A Tenancy Report should be requested immediately if the Association is not their Landlord. Once the home visits are completed a Tenancy

Report regarding the Association's tenant should be completed and issued to the other Landlord.

7. A Mutual Exchange Progress sheet should be completed throughout this process. Once all the information required is available the request to exchange should be authorised or refused within 28 days of receipt of the Mutual Exchange forms.

In considering the request the following issues will be considered:

- a) Are both rent accounts clear if not has an agreement been adhered to for 3 months ?
- b) Have both parties demonstrated they can adhere to their conditions of tenancy?
- c) Is the exchange going to cause overcrowding or under-occupation of either property?
- d) Have both properties been inspected?

Authorisation or refusal to be countersigned by the Housing Manager.

7. Once both landlords have given approval, an entry date to be negotiated. South Lanarkshire Council use Monday's as their Dates of Entry - we will comply with this ensuring the incoming tenant signs up PRIOR to the date of entry.
8. If insufficient information is available to assess the request within the 28 days, then the request to be refused and the applicant advised of the reason for this. The Applicant to be advised how to reactivate their request once the relevant information is submitted.
9. If the mutual exchange request is to be refused, the applicants to be given written notification within 28 days of receipt outlining the reasons why and advising of the right to appeal and the Appeals procedure. Mutual exchange applicants will have the same rights of appeal as Housing Applicants which are detailed in the Allocation Policy.
10. If approved, the tenant must given written confirmation of their intention to terminate their tenancy and the new tenant must sign the Tenancy Agreement prior to any move taking place.
11. Tenants to be advised that the exchange is subject to both parties accepting the other property as seen. If the incoming Tenant is prepared to accept responsibility for Tenant alterations or damaged items, then the appropriate disclaimer to be completed prior to sign up.

12. All mutual exchanges must be approved by the Housing Manager prior to approval being issued.

11.5 HOMES NOMINATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. The Association will participate in the Homes Scheme and will follow the procedures laid down in the Homes Procedures manual.
2. The criteria to assess Nominations made to the Association are as follows:
 - a) To take up employment beyond reasonable travelling distance
 - b) To receive support
 - c) To give support
 - d) Other social reasons
3. All nominations received which meet the above criteria will be referred to the Association's Housing and Tenant Services Subcommittee for acceptance. The Committee will consider nominations made; the number of nominations already accepted as well as the annual turnover of vacancies when assessing whether a nomination can be accepted.
4. The Association will monitor the number of nominations made and received on an annual basis and will monitor the quality and size of stock offered to referrals.
5. The Association will ensure that any Tenant wishing to move outwith East Kilbride will be given information regarding the scheme and assistance to complete any necessary paperwork.