



**Atrium Homes**

# **Allocations Policy**

June 2002

## **Atrium Homes**

### **Allocations Policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1. This policy aims to take into account Communities Scotland's Performance Standards AS1.1 and AS1.2 which state:

*AS1.1 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.*

*AS 1.2 Lettings:*

*We let our houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest need; makes best use of available stock; maximises choice; and helps sustain communities.*

1.2. Atrium will

- a) allocate vacant properties on the basis of housing need and
- b) ensure that the housing requirements of its customers are met by the provision of adequate, good quality and affordable accommodation over a range of property types.

1.3. Atrium recognises that notwithstanding its obligation to provide housing to those in need, it must make best use of available stock by sensitising allocations to the requirements of an area with a view to help establish and maintain balanced and stable communities. Atrium will aim to achieve this by the development of annual Lettings Plans.

1.4. Atrium will aim to ensure that in the implementation of this policy no individual or group is treated unfairly or discriminated against on the grounds of race, colour, culture, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, family circumstances or marital status.

1.5. This policy was approved by the Board on 24 June 2002.

#### **2. Applications for Housing**

2.1. Atrium will register applications from any individual aged 16 years or over.

2.2. Applicants must submit a valid application in a format prescribed by Atrium along with all necessary supporting documentation.

2.3. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing. Atrium will highlight to applicants that access to the housing list may not necessarily result in an offer of housing being made. Atrium will advise applicants who do not have a realistic chance of being rehoused within a reasonable period of time and may suspend their application.

### **3. Management of the Housing List**

- 3.1. Atrium will operate a housing list for external applications and a separate transfer list for its existing tenants.
- 3.2. Atrium will
  - a) place applicants on either the transfer list or external list
  - b) assess and prioritise applications based on the applicants circumstances and housing need using the criteria outlined in the Points System (Appendix A )
  - c) ensure all decisions to allocate a vacant property are recorded and monitored.
  - d) ensure information concerning the lists is made widely available and easily understood.
  - e) review and monitor the lists regularly.

### **4. Housing Need**

- 4.1. Atrium will, where suitable housing is available and within the policy framework, give reasonable preference to
  - a) applicants demonstrating one or more of the following needs –
    - Insecurity of tenancy
    - Sharing facilities with non family members
    - Medical need
    - Lacking basic facilities or below tolerable standard
    - Under occupation or overcrowding based on Appendix B
    - Vulnerability due to threatened or actual domestic violence, sexual abuse, racial or other harassment
    - Family support – receive or offer support
    - Need to move nearer health, education or employment resources
  - b) applicants who are generally disadvantaged in the housing market (particularly those forming new households, with large families and with special housing need).
  - c) applicants who require support to enable them to live in the community.
  - d) applicants who need a specially adapted home.
  - e) applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- 4.2. Atrium will seek relevant supporting information from applicants to help assess their level of housing need. This information will vary from applicant to applicant but might include information on medical needs, proof of address etc.

### **5. Establishing Eligibility for Offers of Housing**

- 5.1. Before an offer of housing is made the circumstances of the applicant will be verified.
- 5.2. Atrium will check applications to ensure the accuracy of information submitted. Applicants who either withhold relevant information or provide misleading information on their application form may have their application suspended.

- 5.3. Atrium will seek supporting information in the form of references to satisfy itself regarding the conduct of an applicant's current or previous tenancies.
- 5.4. Atrium may visit applicants being considered for rehousing at their home to confirm their present circumstances are as stated in the application form.
- 5.5. Atrium will act to ensure that those applicants who require support/ care in order to sustain a tenancy have a support package available before offering housing. Atrium may consider withdrawing an offer made to an applicant who requires support/ care in order to sustain a tenancy and the support package is no longer available.

## **6. Selection for Offers of Housing**

- 6.1. In selecting an applicant for the allocation of a property, Atrium will normally allocate to the applicant with the highest points, subject to the constraints of this policy.
- 6.2. In the event where points are equal, we will consider the length of time the applicant has been on the housing list. The applicant with the earliest application will normally be selected.
- 6.3. Atrium may consider withdrawing an offer made to an applicant who
  - no longer qualifies for housing, as a consequence of alterations in circumstances.
  - has submitted false or misleading information or has failed to disclose relevant information.

## **7. Suspension from the List**

- 7.1. Atrium may suspend applications where
  - a) the applicant is deemed no longer to demonstrate a housing need
  - b) the applicant has applied to purchase their existing home under the Right to Buy legislation
  - c) the applicant is determined to have submitted false or misleading information or has failed to disclose relevant information
  - d) the applicant has been made 2 reasonable offers of housing and refused them both. A reasonable offer is considered to be one that meets the applicant's housing needs in terms of size, type and location.
  - e) the applicant's points levels are such that there is no realistic chance of them being made an offer within a reasonable time.
  - f) the applicant is a housing list applicant and has rent arrears greater than one months charge, unless
    - he/she has an arrangement to repay them, and
    - he/she has made payments in accordance with the arrangement for at least 3 months; and
    - he/she is continuing to make such payments;
  - g) the applicant is a transfer list applicant and has rent arrears greater than two months charge

- h) the applicant has other tenancy related debt owed to their current or former landlord and no arrangement to repay is in place and is being adhered to;
- i) the applicant or part of his household is currently the subject of complaints of anti-social behaviour or has had anti-social action raised against them by their landlord or has previously been evicted for anti-social behaviour.

An individual who is the subject of investigation or legal action in respect of their current tenancy on the grounds of harassment or anti social behaviour will not be offered housing until the outcome of the action is known. Once the results are available the application will be reassessed in light of these findings.

An individual who has been evicted from a previous tenancy due to harassment/ anti social behaviour, will be required to demonstrate in what ways their behaviour has been modified e.g. through the involvement of specialist agencies before being considered for offers of housing.

- j) the applicant has been found guilty of using their tenancy for illegal or immoral activity; or
- k) the applicant has failed to comply in a substantive way with their conditions of tenancy. Former tenants of Atrium who conducted their former tenancy unsatisfactorily, will only be offered housing where the Housing Services Manager is satisfied the unsatisfactory conduct will not be repeated.

7.2. Suspended applications will be reviewed not less than annually or in response to a request from an applicant to remove the suspension.

## **8. Housing List Review**

8.1. Atrium will carry out regular review of the list. Applicants will be contacted in writing requesting an update of their circumstances.

8.2. Applicants who do not respond to the review will have their application classified as non-active. Non-active applications will not be considered further until the applicant contacts Atrium to reactivate their interest in rehousing.

8.3. Once an application has been entered on the housing list, the applicant must inform Atrium of any changes to circumstances. Failure to notify changes could result in the application being suspended.

## **9. Appeal Process**

9.1. Atrium offers all applicants the right to appeal against any decision made in relation to their application.

9.2. An appeal should be made in writing to the Director in the first instance within 28 days of the decision being appealed. The Director will review the decision and the applicant will be notified of the outcome within 10 working days.

- 9.3. An applicant who is still dissatisfied with the decision may write again within 14 days of date of the Director's letter outlining why they continue to be dissatisfied and the redress sought. The matter will then be referred to the Board for consideration.
- 9.4. If after the Board has decided on the matter, the applicant is still dissatisfied he may appeal to the Commissioner of Local Administration.

## **10. Nomination Arrangements**

- 10.1. Atrium will aim to assist East Ayrshire Council address broader housing needs within its area by offering the Council a nomination arrangement in relation to Atrium's housing stock.
- 10.2. An applicant nominated by East Ayrshire Council will be assessed by Atrium to ensure they satisfy the eligibility and other qualification requirements of Atrium.
- 10.3. If the Council is unable to provide a suitable nomination within the agreed timescale, the let will revert to Atrium for direct allocation.

## **11. Local Lettings Initiatives**

- 11.1. Atrium may from time to time declare an area of its housing subject to a Local Lettings Initiative.
- 11.2. In such situations Atrium may introduce alternative allocation policies for these areas. Such alternative policies as are determined will be published separately.

## **12. HOMES**

- 12.1. Atrium will participate in HOMES, the National Mobility Scheme to promote opportunities for tenants to move home.

## **13. Mutual Exchange**

- 13.1. Atrium will allow mutual exchanges in line with the Mutual Exchange policy.

## **14. Special Lets**

- 14.1. Atrium will, in appropriate circumstances, consider the allocation of property to other organisations (Special Lets). Proposals to enter into leases to other organisation will require both Board approval and the consent of Communities Scotland.
- 14.2. Such special lets would normally be for specific purposes such as the provision of accommodation for supported housing projects.

## **15. Monitoring and Reporting**

- 15.1. Atrium will record and monitor on a regular basis to ensure we are complying with our policy and report regularly to the Board.

**16. Policy Review**

- 16.1. This policy will be reviewed at least every five years and in response to changing legislative requirements.

**Atrium Homes  
Points System**

Circumstances	Description	Points Awarded
<b>Medical Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High Priority</b> – for people with severe and permanent disabilities where present accommodation adversely affects the medical condition and the property sought will ease or improve the medical condition.</li> </ul>	<b>20</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Medium Priority</b> – less severe mobility and medical problems, which are adversely affected by their present accommodation.</li> </ul>	<b>10</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Low Priority</b> – minor medical/ mobility problems where the alternative accommodation would be beneficial for health reasons.</li> </ul>	<b>5</b>
<b>Insecurity of Tenancy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where an applicant has no permanent tenancy or security of tenancy and is not living with relatives.</li> </ul>	<b>10</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where an applicant is living with parents or other members of their immediate family.</li> </ul>	<b>5</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where an applicant has to give up tied accommodation or leaving the armed forces (written evidence required).</li> </ul>	<b>15</b>
<b>Lacking/ Sharing Amenities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants will receive points if they share one of the following facilities with people who are not members of the applicants family –                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ WC</li> <li>◆ bathroom</li> <li>◆ living room</li> <li>◆ kitchen</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>2</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of standard amenities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ bath or shower</li> <li>◆ inside WC</li> <li>◆ hot/ cold water supply to the kitchen</li> <li>◆ hot/ cold water supply</li> <li>◆ cooking facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>2</b></p>
<b>Serious Disrepair</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the Property is in a dangerous condition i.e. subject to a closing or demolition order, or pending a Major Repairs scheme.</li> </ul>	<b>10</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the Property is suffering from extensive water penetration or rising damp rendering the property below wind and water tight standard.</li> </ul>	<b>5</b>

Circumstances	Description	Points Awarded
Under Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Points will be awarded to applicants whose present accommodation is too large for their needs.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ points awarded for each bedroom under occupied</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	3
Over Crowding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Points will be awarded for each additional bedroom required.</li> </ul>	5
Harassment and Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable as a result of threatened or actual domestic violence, sexual abuse or racial or other harassment.</li> <li>• Adequate support evidence will be required before points awarded. No points awarded if applicant wishes to remain in the same locality.</li> </ul>	20
Family Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where an applicant or member of his/ her household require to move closer to a relative to provide or to receive care/ support. Supporting evidence will be required.</li> </ul>	5
Health, Education or Employment Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social or educational reasons for requiring re-housing in the Association's area.</li> </ul>	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicants normal place of permanent employment is within the Association's area but experience travelling difficulties.</li> </ul>	5
Homelessness/ Potential Homelessness	<p>Applicants will be awarded points as follows –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeless i.e. roofless (confirmation will be required). 20</li> <li>• Applicant facing repossession/ eviction due to genuine hardship. 15</li> <li>• Irretrievable breakdown in relationship causing tenant, spouse or partner to depart 15</li> <li>• Living with relatives/ family/ parents (does not apply to an applicant who has never left the family home. A child who returns to live with parents must have been away from home for a period in excess of one year. 10</li> <li>• Bed and breakfast/ hostel accommodation (if applicant has been placed in this accommodation by Homeless Unit then the homeless/ roofless points will apply) 15</li> </ul> <p>All applicants in this category will be required to supply proof of their current circumstances.</p>	
Waiting List	For each year waiting to be housed the applicant will be awarded points to a Maximum 20 points	2

### Qualifying Criteria for Size of Accommodation

Household	Size of Property
One adult	1, 2 or 3 apartment
Couple	2 or 3 apartment
Family with one child	3 apartment
Family with two children – (under 10)	3 apartment
Family with two children – (either over 10)	4 apartment (can accept 3)
Family with two children – (both over 10)	4 apartment (can accept 3)
Family with three children	4 apartment
Family with four or more children	5 apartment

- Atrium will allow under occupation by one bedroom.
- Any member of a household who is temporarily absent will be included in calculating the size of accommodation required.
- A household including an expectant mother will be considered as if it included the additional child from 3 months before the expected date of birth.
- Applicants who have require access arrangements for their children will have these included in the calculation of the appropriate house size.
- In special circumstances, exception to the above may be given consideration. However, these will be at the discretion of the Housing Services Manager. This will normally be when there are no properties of the right size likely to become available.