

ANTONINE HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Adopted - February 2003

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1. Introduction

1.1 Antonine Housing Co-operative is a registered non profit making housing co-operative providing homes for rent for those who are in housing need.

1.2 The Co-operative is committed to providing housing on the basis of need not ability to pay. It is also committed to a policy of equal opportunities to ensure that all people have fair and equal access to its housing list and assessment procedures and that they are treated equally when they become tenants.

1.3 The Co-operatives work is financed by private finance.

1.4 It is a major objective of the policy and procedures to ensure that there will be no discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, family circumstance, race, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, religion, political or sexual orientation in the allocations process.

2. The Co-operatives properties.

2.1 Antonine Housing Co-operative owns and manages properties throughout both East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire Councils.

The housing stock is varied and mainly of traditional construction. Houses sizes range from 1 apartments to 4 apartments with the majority of the housing stock being of 3 and 4 apartments.

3. Aims and Objectives.

3.1 The Allocations Policy will seek to comply with all relevant legislation, with the requirements of Communities Scotlands' Performance Standards and Raising Standards in Housing and any other guidance issued on allocations.

The Co-operative will let houses in such a way that gives reasonable preference to persons who;

- i. are occupying houses which do not meet the tolerable standard;
- ii. are occupying overcrowded houses;
- iii. have large families;
- iv. are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions.

And

- v. to persons who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

- 3.2 The aims and objectives of the policy are:
- 3.2.1 To provide accommodation for people who have a range of housing needs and the policy will deal with individuals who are homeless, living in poor housing conditions, have serious medical circumstances, are elderly, or suffer from domestic violence or abuse or racial violence.
 - 3.2.2 To reach those groups in housing need who are particularly disadvantaged in the allocation of rented housing such as ethnic minority groups, single people and people with disabilities.
 - 3.2.3 To supplement local authorities work in relieving homelessness, poor housing conditions and other housing need.
 - 3.2.4 To provide high quality accommodation to people across the whole spectrum of housing need.
 - 3.2.5 To maintain the Communities in which Antonine Housing Co-operative works by providing housing at affordable rents.
 - 3.2.6 To provide existing tenants of the Co-operative with the opportunity to transfer to other accommodation as their needs change.
 - 3.2.7 To provide a source of housing to which voluntary groups assisting those in housing need may refer applicants.

4. Access to the Housing List

- 4.1 There will be a continuous opportunity to apply for housing to the Co-operative and anyone aged 16 years or older will be eligible to apply and have their applications assessed.
- 4.2 All applicants will be accepted onto the Co-operatives waiting list but at all times a reasonable preference in the allocation of properties will be given to applicants who are homeless, overcrowded, live in houses which do not meet the tolerable standard or are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- 4.3 A points threshold will be set for each property type and applications which fall below the set threshold level will be advised of the likelihood of their being offered accommodation by the Co-operative. The Points threshold will vary according to demand and will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 4.5 There are circumstances where an applicant may be denied access to the waiting list.
 - ii) Applicants who have given false or misleading information in order to obtain accommodation will be disqualified and forfeit the right to inclusion on the waiting list for a period of 24 months.

The Co-operative shall take action to reclaim any tenancy granted on the basis of such false or misleading information.
 - iii) Applicants who have previously been evicted by the Co-operative or who

absconded from their previous tenancy may be admitted to the list.

5. Criteria For Selection.

5.1 The Co-operative will aim to operate a points/quota system of allocations based upon housing need.

5.2 All applicants, who must be aged 16 years or older, must complete an application form giving, in confidence, details of personal circumstances and the type of accommodation required.

5.3 All information provided by an Applicant or sought by the Co-operative to assess the housing needs of that applicant will be treated in the strictest confidence.

5.4 In order to select those with the greater need for the Co-operatives accommodation at all times a reasonable preference will be given to those applicants detailed within Section 3, however applications will also be accepted from people who;

need to move to a different area in order to give or receive support, as part of an extended family, or within the framework of 'Care in the Community' or to take up employment

are victims of racial or other harassment and domestic violence.

require different housing due to the health needs of the applicant or a member of the applicants family.

6. Allocations procedures.

6.1 In the allocation of its housing the Co-operative shall take no account of;

i. the length of time for which an applicant has resided within its area;

or

ii. any outstanding liability (for payment of rent or otherwise) attributable to the tenancy of any house of which the applicant is not, and was not when the liability accrued, a tenant;

or

iii. any liability (for rent or otherwise) of the applicant which was attributable to the applicant's tenancy of a house but which is no longer outstanding;

or

iv. any such liability which is outstanding but in respect of which section 6.3 sub sections ii & iii below are satisfied; or

v. any outstanding liability of the applicant or any person who it is proposed will reside with the applicant which is not attributable to the tenancy of a house; or

vi. except to the extent permitted by section 6.3 subsection iii, below, the age of the

applicant provided that the applicant has attained the age of 16 years; or

- vii. the income of the applicant or his family;
- viii. whether, or to what value, the applicant or any of his family owns or has owned (or any of them own or have owned) heritable or moveable property.

6.2 The Co-operative shall also take no account of whether an applicant is resident within its area of operation if the applicant;

- i. is employed, or has been offered employment in the area; or
- ii. wishes to move into the area and the Co-operative is satisfied that the purpose in this is to seek employment; or
- iii. wishes to move into the area to be near a relative or carer; or
- iv. has special social or medical reasons for requiring to be housed within the area; or
- v. is subject to conduct amounting to harassment and wishes to move into the area; or
- vi. runs the risk of domestic violence and wishes to move into the area.

6.3 The Co-operative shall not impose a requirement that;

- i. an application must have remained in force for a minimum period; or
- ii. a divorce or judicial separation be obtained; or
- iii. the applicant no longer be living with, or in the same house as some other person.

before the applicant is eligible for the allocation of housing.

6.4 In the allocation of its housing the Co-operative shall take no account of rent or service charge where;

- i. the amount of the outstanding liability is not more than one twelfth of the annual amount payable (or which was payable) by the applicant to the landlord in respect of the tenancy in question; or

the applicant has;

- ii. agreed with the landlord an arrangement for paying the outstanding liability;
- iii. made payments in accordance with that arrangement for at least three months and;
- iv. is continuing to make such payments.

7. Who will be given priority?

As the aims of the Co-operative are wide ranging, it will be unable to provide accommodation to all who require it.

For this reason the Co-operative will at all times ensure that reasonable preference will always be given to those applicants noted in Section 3 and that this Policy will make best use of the available stock, maximise choice and help to sustain communities.

7.1 General Housing List.

7.1.1 Priority will be given to applicants on the Co-operatives waiting list on the basis of housing need and to those who are homeless.

7.1.3 To rehouse temporarily or permanently tenants who need to be decanted whilst major works are carried out to their homes.

7.1.4 To consider requests to help voluntary organisations who do not have their own long term housing.

7.2 Transfer Applicants

Priority for internal transfers within the Co-operatives stock will be given to;

- i) tenants or members of a tenants family who have serious health problems where a change of accommodation, location or storey height would help.
- ii) families where increased numbers have caused overcrowding.
- iii) applicants who wish to move from accommodation which is too large and which could be used to house a family.
- iv) applicants who wish to move because of racial harassment, domestic violence or any other form of harassment.
- v) families/individuals who require accommodation to be near or live with an elderly or dependant relative.
- vi) Applicants who are elderly and live in accommodation on or above the first floor and wish to move to lower accommodation.

7.3 Local Authority Nominations.

7.3.1 The local authorities have an obligation to deal with homelessness and the Co-operative undertakes to support both East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire councils in their efforts to relieve homelessness and other factors of housing need.

Under the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 the Co-operative also has a statutory obligation to assist local authorities in meeting the needs of homeless persons.

The Co-operative has entered into nominations agreements to make available accommodation for local authority nominees who meet the Co-operatives housing need criteria and that will also meet the requirements of the above Act in terms of meeting the needs of homeless persons.

At present the agreement is that the local authorities will nominate up to 50% of lets subject to annual review.

7.3.2 Applicants who are not existing Antonine Housing Co-operative tenants or eligible for admission to the Co-operatives waiting list may also apply to the Co-operative for accommodation through the relevant local authority housing department.

7.3.3 The Co-operative will accept nominations from the District Council and individuals wishing to apply for houses may apply through the Councils Housing Department Officer for a nomination to the Co-operative through the Councils agreed nominations procedures.

Nomination is however at the discretion of the Council only and the Co-operative has no responsibility in determining who the Council nominates. All nominees will be assessed against Antonine Housing Co-operatives allocation criteria and have to demonstrate housing need prior to any offer of housing being made.

8. Size of Accommodation Offered.

Size of Accommodation	Household Type
Bedsit	Single person
1 Bedroom	Single Person or couple
2 Bedroom/4 Person	Parents and 1 child or 2 children sharing where the children are of the same gender and are under 12 years of age OR where the children are of different genders the eldest child is under 8 years.
3 Bedroom/5 persons	Parents and 2 children where the children are of different sex and are over 8 years of age.
3 Bedroom\6 Persons	Parents and 3 children where 2 children of the same sex are sharing both under 12 years of age or where children of different sex are sharing and the eldest child is under 8 years of age.
Larger Accommodation.	Families with the number of people for whom the accommodation was designed.

9. The Points System

9.1 Homeless applicants.

All persons who make application to the Co-operative for housing and who have been assessed as statutorily homeless by the local authority will be awarded

40 points

in addition to any other category under which he/she has been awarded points.

9.2 Overcrowding

9.2.1. Applicants will receive points as detailed below where overcrowding occurs.

9.2.2. The number of apartments (bedroom and living room) in the household's present house will be compared with the number of apartments the household needs. The number of apartments the household needs is calculated as follows:

A living room which is not used for sleeping

+ 1 bedroom for each husband and wife (or partner/co-habitee)

+ 1 bedroom for every two persons of the same sex under the age of 12 years

+ 1 bedroom for every two children under 8 years of age

+ 1 bedroom for any remaining members of the household.

9.2.3 However if a bedroom is designated as a 1 person bedroom, any overcrowding will be pointed as above.

10 points for each additional apartment needed.

9.3 Condition of Accommodation

Applicants whose current accommodation is structurally unsound, is subject to rising or penetrating damp, fails to meet the tolerable standard or is subject to a statutory improvement or closing order.

15 points

9.4 Lacking standard amenities.

All applicants who occupy housing which lacks the undernoted amenities will receive points as follows;

Lack of inside w.c. 15 points

Lack of inside bath/shower 15 points

Lack of hot water supply 15 points

9.5 Sharing amenities with another household.

Applicants who share amenities with other households including members of their own original family will be awarded points as follows;

Sharing bathroom or shower 5 points

Sharing kitchen 5 points

9.6 Medical disability

9.6.1 Points will be awarded to any applicant or those whose household includes a person who is sick or disabled and whose disability or quality of life would be significantly helped by rehousing.

9.6.2 All applicants in this respect will be required to complete a self-assessment form.

9.6.3 The award of medical/disability points will be at the discretion of the Operations Officer on the basis of the information received from the applicant and from their Medical Practitioner, if the Co-operative feels that this is necessary or where the need has already been established by the Occupational Therapist.

9.6.4 Medical disability points will be awarded as follows;

Priority A – Severe Illness and mobility impairment etc 20 points

Priority B – Severe medical condition 15 points

Priority C – Medical condition worsened by Housing condition 5 points

Where an applicant lives in accommodation on or above the first floor wishes to move to lower accommodation, points will be awarded as follows;

Where the applicant is over 65 years 5 points

Where the applicant is over 70 years 10 points

Where the applicant is over 75 years 15 points

If any medical/disability points have been awarded for this reason, then points will not also be awarded under this category.

9.7 Family Support.

Where an application is received from a person wishing to move into the area to provide care to a relative, or wishes to move closer to a carer, points will be awarded as follows;

10 points

in addition to any other category under which he/she has been awarded points.

9.8 Employment

Where an application is received from a person moving into the area to take up an offer of employment he/she will be awarded

15 points

in addition to any other category under which he/she has been awarded points.

All applicants under this category will be required to provide a copy of their letter of appointment and will be advised that a check will be made with their employer prior to any offer of housing being made..

9.9 Social Issues

Generally this category will include more subjective elements of an applicants desire to be rehoused by the Co-operative and may include circumstances such as unsatisfactory living arrangements harassment and problems with neighbours.

Each application that is received regarding social issues will be considered on an individual basis and where it can be shown that a move of house would be beneficial to the applicant he/she will be awarded;

10 points

in addition to any other category under which he/she has been awarded points.

All applicants under this category will be required to provide supporting independent evidence of the nature of the problems which they are experiencing and this may include information from Police, Social Work or Landlord.

9.10 Domestic Violence

Where an application is received from a person moving into the area to escape the risk of domestic violence he/she will be awarded;

10 points

in addition to any other category under which he/she has been awarded points.

All applicants seeking to be rehoused under this category will be required to provide confirmation of their particular circumstances from e.g. Social Work Departments, police or their current landlord.

At all times any information required by the Co-operative will be requested as quickly, sensitively and confidentially as possible.

10. Internal Transfer Applicants

10.1 Under occupation

The number of apartments in the households present home will be compared with the number of apartments the household needs in the same way as overcrowding.

20 points will be awarded for each apartment surplus to the households needs.

Priority will also be given for the following factors:

10.2 Overcrowding.

Applicants will receive points as detailed below where overcrowding occurs.

The number of apartments (bedroom and living room) in the household's present house will be compared with the number of apartments the household needs. The number of apartments the household needs is calculated as follows:

A living room which is not used for sleeping

+ 1 bedroom for each husband and wife (or partner/co-habitee)

+ 1 bedroom for every two persons of the same sex under the age of 12 years

+ 1 bedroom for every two children under 8 years of age

+ 1 bedroom for any remaining members of the household.

However if a bedroom is designated as a 1 person bedroom, any overcrowding will be pointed as above. Except in the case of additional children in a family points will not be awarded unless the overcrowding has existed for over a year.

10 points for each additional apartment needed.

10.3 Family Support/Combined Lets.

Priority will be given where two households wish to relinquish their tenancies and transfer to larger or more suitable accommodation for reasons of family support, e.g. a single elderly parent receiving constant care and support from their family or carer becoming joint tenants with their family or carer or other circumstances where a transfer would significantly enhance the households quality of life.

20 points will be awarded to allow a merger of households to proceed.

10.4 Transfer within Close/Block

Where a tenant wishes to transfer within his/her own block or close, and where such a transfer would enhance their quality of life or assist them in sustaining the tenancy

20 social priority points will be awarded.

10.5 Transfer within Estate/Area.
If a tenant wishes to transfer to another house within the estate. Priority will be given in the same way as transfer within close/block

10.6 Victim of Violent harassment.
When an applicant is the victim of repeated racial or other harassment or is subject to recurring violence then each case will be considered on its own merits as a special case. Priority will be given on the basis of background information provided by external agencies e.g. Police, Social Work Department and other agencies.

Applicants in this category may be awarded 20 points.

11. Allocation of Tenancy

11.1 Prior to an offer of tenancy being made, the Co-operatives staff will visit the applicant to carry out a house visit to confirm that there has been no change in circumstances which could alter the points entitlement and to conduct a tenancy check. Applicants will be expected to provide proof of residence including details of all previous tenancy addresses.

11.2 Where an applicant accepts an offer they will require to sign a tenancy agreement and a date of entry will be arranged at that time.

12. Confidentiality.

12.1 All information provided by applicants is treated in the strictest confidence under the Data Protection Act and will not be passed onto or discussed with any other person or organisation without the applicant's permission.

12.2 Where the Committee is required to discuss an individual case, the identity of the applicant will not be revealed except in the case of a request for a personal hearing.

13. The Quota System

13.1 The Co-operative operates a needs based points system which included Target quotas for allocations from different identified groups.

13.2 It is proposed to operate the Quota System on the following basis, subject to agreement with the local authorities.

1. General waiting list	40%
2. Internal transfer List	5%
3. Referrals	5%
4. LA nominations	50%

14 Tenants Mobility

14.1 Reciprocal arrangements will be proposed with other housing co-operatives/ associations and local authorities to enable tenants to move to different areas.

14.2 The Co-operative participates in the HOMES Scheme which aims to put tenants in

contact with others across the country who might wish to exchange their homes.

15. Mutual Exchange

Tenants of Antonine Housing Co-operative may arrange a mutual exchange with another tenant where that tenant also holds a Scottish Secure Tenancy or short Scottish Secure Tenancy.

Written permission must be obtained from both landlords before the exchange takes place.

16. Referrals & Special cases.

16.1 In addition to the housing list, the Co-operative has a commitment to increase the provision of housing for special needs groups.

16.2 From time to time, the Co-operative will aim to give special consideration to certain recognised organisations. These referrals are for supported accommodation or for people with special need and operate outwith the general allocations policy.

16.3 Applications would normally be expected from approved specialist agencies with the nominations agency expected to provide details of support to be offered to the applicant.

16.4 Acceptance of referrals from approved agencies of special needs categories will be subject to an annual target agreed by the Management Committee.

17. Marital Break up.

17.1 Applications for separate accommodation will be accepted from existing tenants in cases of marital breakdown. Where applicable, the partner keeping the children will be expected where possible to remain in the marital homes. Alternative accommodation will be offered to the separating partner.

17.2 In all cases involving applications for separated partners, extra bedrooms for children are only allocated where the accommodation will be the children's principal home. Confirmation of separation and custody may be required, however cases will be assessed on an individual basis.

17.3 Where rights to tenancy are contested under the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection Act) then no offer of tenancy will be made until the outcome of the court decision is known.

17.4 In the event of an exclusion order for violence being pursued against a spouse in Co-operative property, temporary accommodation may be made available to the party fleeing violence subject to certain conditions.

18 Applicants who have the same points.

Where two or more applicants have the same number of points, the length of time the applicants have been in known housing need will be the deciding factor. Priority will only be given to the applicant with the earlier application where length of time in known housing need cannot be established.

19 Appeals

19.1 Where an applicant is dissatisfied with the decision made in relation to the allocation process or unhappy with the services provided by the Co-operatives staff, they will have the right of appeal to the Management Committee by way of the Co-operatives formal Complaints Procedure.

19.2 Copies of the Complaints Procedure are available on request.

20 Public Services Ombudsman

20.1 The Public Services Ombudsman was established in October 2002 to deal with complaints of maladministration. If, having followed the Complaints Procedure an applicant does not consider that the matter has been dealt with satisfactorily, there is a right of appeal to the Ombudsman.

The Address;
The Public Services Ombudsman
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

Telephone – 0870 011 5378

20.2 The Ombudsman will not normally deal with complaints regarding the Co-operatives policies unless it is considered that the Policy operates unfairly and the applicant has exhausted the Co-operatives own Complaints Procedure

21 Monitoring & Review

21.1 The Co-operative will regularly review the size of its waiting list at least once a year in order to maintain the list at a reasonable level.

21.2 The Management Committee of the Co-operative will undertake to monitor the effectiveness of the policy and to carry out a review of the policy on an annual basis.