

**GLEN OAKS HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

**ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

**Date Approved: May 2005**

**Date of Review: May 2008**

**Policy complies with Performance Standards AS1.1 & 1.2**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Statement of Equal Opportunities	4
Part 1	
1.0 Introduction	5
1.1 Compliance with Performance Standards, Legislation and Good practice	5
1.2 Objectives of the Policy	6
1.3 Access	7
1.3.1 Admission to the Waiting List	7
1.3.2 Removal of an applicant from the Waiting List	7
1.3.3 Suspending applicants	7
1.3.4 Referrals	12
1.3.5 Common Housing Register	12
1.3.6 Information Awareness and Advice	12
1.3.7 Confidentiality	13
1.3.8 Data protection	13
1.4 Allocation of Housing	13
1.4.1 Reasonable Preference	13
1.4.2. Assessing Health Needs	14
1.4.3. Harassment and Abuse	14
1.4.4. Homelessness	14
1.4.5. Granting of a tenancy to relatives of persons connected with the Association	14
1.5 Reviewing and Monitoring Allocations	15
1.5.1 Lettings Plan	16
1.6 Administration	17
1.6.1 Application Forms	17
1.6.2 Verification of Information	17
1.6.3 Offers and Refusals	17
1.6.4 Allocations Audit trail	18
1.7 Appeals/Complaints procedure	18
1.8 Policy Review	19
1.9 Further information	19

## Part 2

2.0	Points System	20
2.1	Priorities for re-housing	20
2.2	Allocation of Points	21
2.2.1	Below tolerable standard	21
2.2.2	Inadequate heating	21
2.2.3	Property due for demolition	22
2.2.4	Overcrowding	22
2.2.5	Under-occupation	23
2.2.6	Sharing Amenities	23
2.2.7	Insecure accommodation	23
2.2.8	Medical Priority	25
2.2.9	Social/Economic factors	25
2.2.10	Physical Environment	26
2.2.11	Local Connection	26
2.2.12	Access to Children	27

## Part 3

3.1	Nomination Arrangements	28
3.2	Waiting Lists	28
3.3	Transfer List	29
3.4	Mutual exchanges	30
3.5	Homes – National Mobility Scheme	30
3.6	Special Tenancies	

## **STATEMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Glen Oaks Housing Association has policies and procedures, which clearly promote equal opportunities and seek to eliminate unfair discrimination in all areas of our operation. We will operate our equal opportunities policy in accordance with the law relating to disabilities, sex, race discrimination and protection from harassment. The Association has developed our policies and procedure in accordance with the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice for rented housing and employment and the Equal Opportunities Commission's code of practice for employment. Our Equal Opportunity Policy covers the Association's:

- Assessment of housing need
- Letting of our houses
- Provision of housing and services to residents
- Membership of the Association
- Recruitment of Committee and staff
- Training and development of Committee and staff
- Conditions of service for staff
- Conduct of Committee members
- Appointment of consultants and contractors.

The policy covers gender, marital status, family circumstances, disability, race, ethnic or national origins, age, religion, political or sexual orientation.

The Association is opposed to discrimination in any form and at all levels, and is committed to take all steps within its power to counteract it. The Association will respect community diversity and seek to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and equally.

The Association has systems in place for monitoring our performance on equal opportunities in all areas of our work.

## Part 1

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Glen Oaks Housing Association is a community-based housing association concerned with providing high quality affordable rented accommodation in the Greater Pollok area of Glasgow. The Association is committed to promoting social inclusion and to creating a balanced and stable community, by making the best use of its available housing stock.

### **1.1 COMPLIANCE WITH PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, LEGISLATION AND GOOD PRACTICE**

In developing this Policy the Association has taken into consideration: -

Communities Scotland Performance Standards Activity Standards 1.1 and 1.2 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 maximize and simplify access routes into our housing”.
- AS1.2 Lettings  
“We let houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in housing need, makes best use of available stock, maximizes choice, and helps to sustain communities”.

The legislative framework affecting the allocation of properties namely:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection)(Scotland) Act 1981
- Data protection Act 1998

Good practice guidance issued by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

Glen Oaks Housing Association will ensure that our Allocations policy and procedure will:

1. Enable everyone to have an equal opportunity to apply for housing.
2. Prioritise the allocation of property to people in the greatest housing need.
3. Provide good information and advice to applicants to allow them to make informed choices about available housing.
4. Be fair, efficient and non-discriminatory
5. Provide greater access to our waiting list by ensuring that the allocation process is easily understood and simple to administer.
6. Encourage participation by having processes in place to involve tenants, applicants, committee members and staff in development and implementation of the policy and procedure,
7. Ensure confidentiality of each applicant.
8. Make the best use of the available stock and minimise the time properties lie vacant.
9. Use the allocation process to develop social inclusion and create and maintain stable and balanced communities where people wish to live and remain.
10. Consider opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations to identify and alleviate need.

## **1.3 ACCESS**

### **1.3.1 ADMISSION TO THE WAITING LIST**

All applicants have the right to be admitted to the Housing List, following which their application is fully assessed. Glen Oaks Housing Association accepts applications from any person 16 years of age and over. All applicants will have fair and open access to our housing list and assessment process. Applications can be made at any time by obtaining an application form from any of the Association's offices, from Positive Action in Housing, Women's Aid or the Glen Oaks Web site at [www.glenoaks.org.uk](http://www.glenoaks.org.uk). Assistance is offered to applicants who need help to complete an application form, and translators can be made available on request. The issue of an application form should not be taken as an indication that the Association will eventually be able to make an offer of housing.

### **1.3.2 REMOVAL OF AN APPLICANT FROM THE WAITING LIST**

The Association would only remove an applicant from the waiting list where:

- The applicant has requested in writing that they wish to be removed from the list.
- The applicant has died
- The applicant has failed to respond to the periodic review of the waiting list.

### **1.3.3 SUSPENDING APPLICANTS**

Glen Oaks Housing Association can suspend applicants from offers of housing for a specified period of time. Where a suspension is to be applied, the applicant will be notified clearly of the reason for the suspension, the timescale involved and advised of action that can be taken to end or appeal the suspension. This practice will be kept to a minimum and will only be implemented following full consideration and assessment of the applicant's circumstances. The Association will however take into consideration the safety of existing tenants, stability of the community and the public investment in its properties.

## **Suspensions would apply in the following circumstances**

- **Arrears in respect of tenancy matters**

An Applicant will be suspended where they owe arrears directly attributed to their current tenancy or a former tenancy. The arrears can include rent arrears, unpaid service charges, rechargeable repairs, costs associated with clearing out of a property or cleaning of a property which has been left in poor condition.

In considering arrears the debt must be more than one twelfth of the annual rent, less than 5 years old and must not be technical housing benefit arrears.

Applicants with more than one month's rent outstanding will only be eligible for housing where they have demonstrated a commitment to clear the arrears through a repayment agreement of at least three consecutive months with their landlord.

Glen Oaks Housing Association will not take into account current arrears which have been caused by delays in payment of Housing Benefit which is due to be paid direct.

If the applicant is an owner-occupier factoring debt or property repair charge can be considered but mortgage arrears cannot be included.

Each case will be considered on its own merits and will be reviewed every 3 months.

- **Anti-social behaviour**

The Association will withhold an offer of housing from an applicant or a member of their household who has previously harassed or been violent to other tenants, neighbours or staff or who has damaged the Association's property.

Anti-social behaviour in this context can include

- Relevant criminal convictions (relevant to a tenancy or to community safety)
- Drug dealing from a tenancy
- Prostitution from a tenancy
- Fire-raising
- Extensive damage to a property
- Harassment of or threats to neighbours

When considering a suspension of this nature the Senior Housing Services Officer will take account of the following criteria to assess if the suspension is reasonable.

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

Suspension of the application will be taken where there is clear robust evidence of the behaviour, which is supported by the current or previous landlord or the Police.

Applicants (or a member of their household) whose tenancy record highlights that they have had an Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) served on them or been evicted in the last three years for anti-social behaviour will be suspended as it has been previously established that the anti-social behaviour took place.

Where however the Association offers to re-house an applicant, (or a member of their family), who has been evicted in the last 3 years for anti social behaviour or has had an ASBO served against them, a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy may be given for up to 12 months to make sure the tenancy is Conducted satisfactorily. In offering a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy the Association would ensure the provision of appropriate support services to enable the conversion of the tenancy to a Scottish Secure Tenancy. If the tenant or a member of their family continues to act in an anti-social manner, the Association may seek possession under the appropriate conduct grounds contained in Schedule 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Each case will be considered on its own merits and will be reviewed every 6 months. This can be reviewed earlier where the applicant provides clear and substantiated evidence that they no longer pose a risk.

- **Condition of house or tenancy**

An offer of housing will be withheld where the tenant has not adhered to the conditions of tenancy in respect of the property as stated in their tenancy agreement.

Matters related to the tenancy include state of the garden or common areas, control over pets, rubbish and vandalism.

Where a home visit or a tenancy reference show that a tenancy condition in

respect of the property has not been adhered to, the application will be suspended for a period of 3 months. This can be reviewed earlier where the applicant has brought the property up to an acceptable standard.

Suspensions may also occur where debt is owed for the cost of making good repairs which are the tenants responsibility or for reinstating fixtures.

- **Declined Offers**

Applicants will not be suspended from future offers, should they decline an offer of accommodation. However where an applicant has declined three offers, a review of their application will be undertaken to ensure all information about their stated choices are known.

- **False Information**

Where an applicant has deliberately given false or misleading information to gain advantage over other applicants then the Association will suspend their application for a period of 6 months. The applicant will be invited to attend an interview to discuss the contents of their application following which the applicant can re-submit a new application. The suspension may be lifted prior to the 6 months where the applicant can demonstrate special or extenuating circumstances in respect of housing need.

Applicants who are offered a tenancy agreement will be required to declare that they have not knowingly given false or misleading information to obtain the tenancy.

Should it come to the Association's attention that this has occurred, a Notice of Proceedings for possession of the property may be served and Legal Action instructed to end the tenancy.

- **Property Ownership**

Applicants who own their own home do not require to sell their property. However it is a legal requirement that the applicant will be required to occupy a tenancy as their only or principal home.

The Association will automatically suspend a transfer application when a Right To Buy request is submitted. (This is to prevent the applicant purchasing a house where they are no longer the tenant.) Should the tenant withdraw the application to buy, then the transfer application will be reinstated.

- **Abandonment or Eviction**

Where an applicant has abandoned a property or been evicted their application will be suspended for 12 months from the date of the abandonment or eviction. Where the applicant can demonstrate special or extenuating circumstances the application may be reviewed prior to the 12 month period.

- **Voluntarily leaving a tenancy**

Giving up a previous tenancy will not in itself be grounds for suspension. However where it can be established that the applicant deliberately placed themselves in a worse circumstance to gain higher priority on the waiting list, their application will be suspended for 6 months. Each case will be considered on its own merits and where it can be demonstrated that there are special or extenuating circumstances the suspension will be reviewed prior to the 6 months.

- **Registered Sex Offenders**

Where a registered sex offender (as defined by the Sex Offenders Act 1997) applies for housing or is nominated for housing, the Association will suspend the application until the Police and/or Social Work Department provide a risk assessment. The Association is committed to minimising the risk to local communities and a decision to offer a tenancy will be taken in conjunction with the Police and Social Work Department.

- **Asylum Seekers**

Where Asylum Seekers are subject to immigration control, the association will suspend the application until their rights to a tenancy is confirmed by the Home Office. Details of relevant agencies will be provided to the asylum seeker for information and advice.

- **Threatening or violent behaviour**

The Association reserves the right to suspend an offer, to applicants who threaten or verbally or physically abuse any member of staff. Similarly, any applicant who attempts to offer an inducement or bribe to any member of staff in order to obtain an offer of housing will be suspended from receiving an offer. A Suspension for either of these categories will be for a period of 12 months. Where the applicant can demonstrate special or extenuating circumstances the

application may be reviewed prior to the 12 month period.

Cases where this occurs will be reported in the first instance to the Housing Services Director and thereafter to the Management Committee.

#### **1.3.4 REFERRALS**

The Association has an agreed protocol with Glasgow City Council (GCC) for the referral of statutory homeless households for housing under section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The Association will accept 19% referrals from GCC in any year.

#### **1.3.5 COMMON HOUSING REGISTER**

Glen Oaks Housing Association is committed to the development of a Glasgow wide Common Housing Register. Once this is established its purpose will be to:

- Maximise and simplify access for applicants to the waiting lists of Registered Social Landlords
- Provide a broad applicant base from which landlords may allocate housing
- Reduce duplication of work and maximise information leading to greater efficiency in the allocation process for both the Landlord and the applicant.

#### **1.3.6 INFORMATION AWARENESS AND ADVICE**

The Association promotes its services to the wider community and makes available information about our housing stock and how to gain access to it. This is undertaken by:

- Poster advertising in other landlords offices and hostels
- Liaison with agencies such as GCC, CAB and support agencies e.g. the Mungo Foundation
- Direct contact with First Bus to promote availability for ethnic minority groups
- Leaflets and Advertising Materials displayed in the Association's three offices
- As a member of MoveUK – the national mobility scheme
- Information on the Greater Pollok Community Website at [www.greaterpollok.net](http://www.greaterpollok.net)
- Access to the Glen Oaks Web site at [www.glenoaks.org.uk](http://www.glenoaks.org.uk)

The Association will ensure that all communication is in plain language. Where appropriate it can make available interpretation services and will provide information in different formats, tape, large print, Braille, and key minority languages on request.

### **1.3.7 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information given by an applicant on the application form will be treated confidentially by any member of staff who has access to it. The information will not be revealed to any third party, unless required by law, without the written consent of the applicant.

### **1.3.8 DATA PROTECTION**

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Housing Scotland Act (1987) an applicant has the right to see information stored about him/her on the Association's computer systems. The Association will require proof of identity and an administration charge of £5 will be requested prior to the release of information. The Association will respond within 40 days to a data subject access request.

## **1.4 ALLOCATION OF HOUSING**

### **1.4.1 REASONABLE PREFERENCE**

In line with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Association seeks to give priority (the legal term being “reasonable preference”) to applicants in one or more of the following categories:

- Applicants who are occupying houses which do not meet the tolerable standard; or
- Are occupying overcrowded houses; or
- Have large families; or
- Are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions; and
- To homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness (within the meaning of Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended by the 2001 Act).

The term “reasonable preference” is not easy to define and, like many legal

terms, will ultimately be decided upon, by the courts. Raising Standards in Housing have provided some general guidelines, and these have been used in formulating this policy.

The Association will use a points system to assess housing need and will achieve reasonable preference by ensuring the above categories attract a sufficiently high number of points; in addition, we will ensure compliance with Section 5 of the 2001 act to help enhance the degree of preference to statutorily homeless applicants.

#### **1.4.2 ASSESSING HEALTH NEEDS**

The Association will consider the severity or urgency of a health condition and will award points to recognise different levels of priority where re-housing would significantly alleviate the difficulties the applicant is facing.

#### **1.4.3 HARASSMENT AND ABUSE**

Issues of harassment and abuse can take many forms and can be of a physical, verbal or life threatening nature. In recognition of this, the Association will award points at different levels of priority depending on the severity of the situation.

#### **1.4.4 HOMELESSNESS**

Where a homeless applicant approaches the Association directly for an Application form, we will provide information and advice and arrange an appointment, where required, with Glasgow City Council for an assessment within the terms of the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003. Applicants who are classified as statutory homeless can be referred to the Association for re-housing.

#### **1.4.5 GRANTING OF A TENANCY TO RELATIVES OF PERSONS CONNECTED WITH THE ASSOCIATION**

To ensure that the Association complies with the statutory requirements regarding benefits to Committee members/officers and employees and/or to their relatives, all applicants shall be asked to state whether or not, to their knowledge, they are related to a Committee member/officer or employee, Definition of relevant relationships is provided in Communities Scotland Guidance Notes 03/02 on the provisions of Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

All 'Schedule 7' allocations will require to meet the following criteria: -

1. Demonstrate that the allocation complies with the Association's published policy and procedures.
2. The person in question has no involvement or influence over the process by which the Association allocates the tenancy.
3. The applicant's circumstances will not be discussed with the Committee, although the Housing Services Director will verify that the allocation is in line with the policy.
4. Any decision to allocate a property will be made by the Housing Services Sub Committee, who has been given delegated authority by the Management Committee to approve such allocations.
5. The decision is recorded in the Association's minutes.
6. The Association will enter details of any let into the appropriate Register of Interest, which will be held in the Association's office. Each entry is required to be counter-signed by the Housing Services Director or the Chief Executive.

## **1.5 REVIEWING AND MONITORING ALLOCATIONS**

The Association will ensure that this policy and its operation, effectively meets the objectives set out in section 1.2 and complies with the Performance Standards.

The Housing Services Sub Committee has delegated authority to monitor this policy, review its operation and make recommendations for policy changes to the Management Committee.

For each Housing Services Sub Committee meeting, reports are compiled detailing:

- The number of applicants who have applied for housing and the number of lets made to homeless applicants, waiting list applicants and transfer applicants. This information is gathered to monitor demand.
- The number of applicants suspended or removed from the waiting lists and reasons for this action.
- The number of applications received by ethnic group, gender and disability. This is monitored to ensure that the housing lists are accessible to all sections of the community, and that appropriate information and advice is given.
- Number of offers made and number of offers accepted, monitoring

reasons for refusal and taking relevant action to meet the aspirations of the applicant.

- Number of days taken to allocate properties, void periods and rent loss. This is monitored to maximise rental income.

The Association also complies with the monitoring requirements of Communities Scotland, and provides information for the Annual Performance Statistical Review. Annual letting statistics are published in the Association's Annual Report

The Association participates in the SCORE reporting system; a method of continuously recording information about Scottish Housing Associations lets to the people they house, and the property they are being provided with. All information is confidential and applicants are requested to co-operate in completing a short questionnaire that will help the Association in its objective of providing affordable housing for people in housing need.

As well as reviewing technical data, the Association consults with Area Committees and the Registered Tenants Organisation about their perceptions and experience of the allocations process.

### **1.5.1 LETTINGS PLAN**

The Housing Services Sub-Committee, as part of the review of the Allocations Policy will set out a Lettings Plan to assist in the creation of sustainable communities.

The Association has a number of difficult to let properties and is committed to a flexible approach in tackling this issue. The difficult to let properties normally have at least two or more of the following characteristics

- High level of refusals, usually because of the location or condition of the property.
- Low/No demand as close/street/area is considered to be undesirable.
- Longer void periods in comparison to similar property in the area
- High turnover within the property

The lettings plan will address particular issues within our estates as part of a comprehensive strategy to regenerate the area. Committee will develop policies in line with local priorities. This will indicate the likely level of lets and how they are to be allocated in an area.

## **1.6 ADMINISTRATION**

### **1.6.1 APPLICATION FORMS**

The Association provides an information pack to prospective applicants when they request an application form. Information regarding turnover of properties is available to enable all applicants to exercise choice in their re-housing prospects. Applicants can choose certain closes or streets within an area in which they wish to be re-housed. It is explained on the application form that although this choice is available, availability in certain streets and areas may be lower so the applicant may be on the waiting list for a longer time period. Applicants can discuss the availability at their allocation interview or by contacting staff in our Allocations Department.

The Association is committed to processing applications where possible, within 10 working days from receipt, provided no additional information is required.

### **1.6.2 VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION**

Every applicant who is likely to be offered a property will be interviewed in our office or at the applicant's home before an offer is made. The purpose of the interviews and visits are to check that the details on the application form are correct and that points have been correctly awarded. The Association will consider asking local housing associations or the local council to visit if the applicant lives outwith a reasonable traveling distance.

Tenancy reports will be obtained from previous and current landlords. Applicants are required to sign a mandate authorising the Association to contact landlords to obtain information about the conduct of a tenancy.

Change in circumstances must be notified to the Association in writing. Failure to notify changes may result in applications being suspended to allow a review of the application.

### **1.6.3 OFFERS AND REFUSALS**

Applicants from both the waiting and transfer list will receive three offers in their choice of area unless the Association considers that there are strong reasons why any offer is unsuited to the applicants needs. Refusal of three reasonable

offers will result in the application being suspended. Since applicants are given a wide choice of areas, they will be invited to review their application and discuss their housing requirements. Failure to respond to this request will result in the application being cancelled

Where Glasgow City Council's Community Casework team makes a Homeless Referral, the applicant will normally be given one offer unless the Community Casework Team deems the offer to be unsuitable.

In all cases every effort is made to ensure that applicant's preferences are taken into account. All offers of tenancies will be made in writing. Applicants will be given 3 days to respond to the offer of a tenancy. The applicant will be required to view the property before signing a tenancy agreement.

#### **1.6.4 ALLOCATIONS AUDIT TRAIL**

The Association is committed to a clear audit trail to demonstrate for any given let how and why that particular allocation was made and to confirm that the Allocations Policy is achieving its objectives. Responsibility for implementing the policy is delegated by the Management Committee to the Housing Services Director. Allocation of housing is administered by the Allocations Officer and authorised by a Senior Housing Services Officer. All allocation decisions are recorded and are available for monitoring purposes to internal or external regulators. This information will not be made available to the public due to the requirements of confidentiality.

Where the applicant is dissatisfied with the Association's decision, they have a right to appeal.

#### **1.7 APPEAL/COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

Where an applicant is dissatisfied with the way this policy has been implemented or are appealing against a decision that has been made, he/she should contact the Housing Services Director, who will respond to their enquiry in the first instance. If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal/complaint, they can refer to the Association's formal Complaints Procedure. A copy of this is available from the Association and gives details of the next steps available. Ultimate responsibility will rest with the Management Committee who will consider any appeal or complaint at a Complaints Sub Committee meeting.



## **PART 2**

### **2.0 POINTS SYSTEM**

Glen Oaks Housing Association will administer the allocation of housing on a points based system. The system of awarding points for various categories of housing need is designed to give appropriate weighting to applicants in recognition of their housing requirements.

### **2.1 PRIORITIES FOR REHOUSING**

The Association will give reasonable preference to the under noted categories of applicants in housing need.

- (i) Persons who are occupying houses that do not meet tolerable standards
- (ii) Persons who are occupying overcrowded houses
- (iii) Persons who have large families
- (iv) Persons who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- (v) Homeless and Persons threatened with homelessness, including Referrals from Glasgow City Council's Community Casework Team - target 19%
- (vi) Severe or urgent medical cases
- (vii) Applicants who have suffered harassment or abuse
- (viii) Existing tenants due to be re-housed due to the Association's plans' for demolition
- (ix) Internal Transfers – 20% of all lets
- (vi) MoveUK - National Mobility Scheme - target 4% of all lets

## **2.2 ALLOCATION OF POINTS**

### **2.2.1 Below tolerable standard**

In recognition of section 20(1) of the 1987 Housing (Scotland) Act as amended by the 2001 Act, the following points will be awarded where standard amenities are lacking or below tolerable standard.

#### Lacking Amenities

A standard number of **40 points** are awarded if one or more of the following is lacking.

Lack of inside toilet facilities, for exclusive use of the occupants

Lack of fixed bath or shower and wash-hand basin with satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water suitably located within the house

Lack of sink with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water

#### Property Conditions

If one or more of these conditions exist, which adversely affect the applicant's living conditions, **40 points** will be awarded in recognition of below tolerable standards.

Structurally unstable

Rising or penetrating damp

Unsatisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting in respect of ventilation and heating

Inadequate piped supply of wholesome water available within the house

Ineffective system for drainage and disposal of foul and surface water

Unsatisfactory facilities for the cooking of food within the house

Unsatisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings

### **2.2.2 Inadequate Heating**

Points will be awarded to applicants whose present property does not have full central heating **15 POINTS**

### **2.2.3 Property Due for Demolition**

Where a property is due for demolition and written confirmation has been received from the landlord. **30 POINTS**

### **2.2.4 Overcrowding**

Overcrowding is a key factor in determining housing need and overcrowding points will reflect the degree of overcrowding.

Where there is a lack of adequate accommodation, the minimum standard will be: -

1. One living room and one double bedroom for applicant and/or partner.
2. One double bedroom for 2 children regardless of sex under 10 years.
3. One double bedroom for 2 persons of the same sex under 16 years.
4. One single bedroom for each remaining member of the household regardless of sex, over 16 years.

A double bedroom provides two 'bed spaces', and a single bedroom provides one 'bed space'

Overcrowding points are calculated on the basis of bed spaces required compared with bed spaces available in the present accommodation.

Points for each 'bed space' required **20 POINTS**

For applicants who do not already have a house of their own, the numbers of bed spaces available are taken as the number available in rooms in the present accommodation that the applicant's household has exclusive use of. Rooms used for living and sleeping will not be counted as bed spaces.

Where an applicant is expecting a child, and the birth of the child will result in overcrowding, the appropriate points will be awarded when the application is submitted or revised. This will require confirmation by a doctor or hospital consultant.

Applicants with the same number of points will be given priority by length of time they have been overcrowded.

### 2.2.5 Under-Occupation

Under-Occupation points are awarded to assist transfer and waiting list applicants in larger houses who wish to move to smaller houses. This also allows for the utilisation of larger properties for larger families.

Where there is under-occupation based on the household composition, the following standards will apply: -

Each bedroom surplus to requirement **10 POINTS**

### 2.2.6 Sharing Amenities

Sharing amenities points are awarded to applicants who do not have their own home and who have to lodge with someone, or live in a hostel or house in multiple occupations (bedsit) where basic facilities are shared.

Applicants who share a living room, kitchen, toilet or bathroom with others.

**10 POINTS**

- 1 Where both parties require to share the matrimonial home but the marriage has broken down.

**10 POINTS**

### 2.2.7 Insecure Accommodation

Points in this category can be obtained in the following ways

- Homelessness
- Insecure tenancy

#### 1. Homelessness

The local authority has the statutory responsibility to provide for people who are homeless and in priority need. The Association makes a contribution towards housing people in this category by accepting Homeless referrals as agreed with the Community Casework Team.

Points will be applied in the following circumstances:

- 1 The applicant is confirmed by the Local authority as homeless and in priority need as defined in Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987(as amended by the 2001 Act) **30POINTS**

2. Applicant is homeless as a result of relationship breakdown **30 POINTS**

3. Owners are subject to homelessness due to repossession action **30 POINTS**

2. Insecure Accommodation

Applicants who have limited security of tenure in their current accommodation will be eligible for points in this category.

1. Hostel dweller, homeless accommodation, short assured /secure tenancy, or no tenancy agreement, temporary lets, long term hospital patients, or persons released from prison.

**25 POINTS**

2. Asylum Seekers who have been given refugee status, ELR or ILR and have had their NASS (Nation Asylum Support Service) support terminated, should be considered as unintentionally homeless and therefore in priority need.

**25 POINTS**

3. Tied accommodation: where the applicant is required to vacate their home due to retiral, termination of employment (but not through intentional homelessness)

**20 POINTS**

4. Personnel leaving HM Forces **20 POINTS**

5. Caravans / lodgers / sub tenants, applicants in short term accommodation (Up to 12 months lease) only where no security of tenure is applied

**20 POINTS**

5. Where single applicants or couples 16 years of age or over who live in the parental home.

**10 POINTS**

Applicants who can demonstrate that they are in imminent danger of losing their own accommodation, and have no satisfactory housing available, to them and do not fall into one of the priority groups, under the Homeless Persons Legislation Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

**20 POINTS**

Supporting documentation will be required to prove these circumstances, before

points are awarded.

### **2.2.8 Medical Priority**

Medical points will be awarded depending on the extent of the medical condition and if it is related or aggravated by physical, social or environmental conditions of the present property and to the extent that the medical condition and quality of life will be eased by rehousing of the applicant.

1. Emergency Cases

Where the applicant or family member has a need to be rehoused due to the property being unsuitable because of the applicant or family member's **severe** physical disabilities.

**50 POINTS**

2. Severe Medical Problems

Where the applicant or family member's current housing circumstances mean mobility is impaired, and this is deemed to be causing aggravation to the applicant's medical condition.

**30 POINTS**

3. Less Severe Medical Problems

Where an applicant or family member's current housing is detrimental to health.

**20 POINTS**

In all cases a self-assessment form will be completed and where required, supporting evidence of medical circumstances must be provided.

### **2.2.9 Social/Economic Factors**

Points may be awarded to applicants who are or have experienced exceptional social circumstances not adequately covered under other sections of the Policy (. e.g. racial or other harassment, domestic violence/ abuse etc.).

Accordingly where an applicant has experienced exceptional social circumstances the Association where possible will seek supporting evidence from official agencies, e.g. Police, Social Work Department, etc.

Where applicable Points will be awarded as follows:

1. High Priority

Where the applicant is in danger in the present household owing to actual abuse or violence.

**50 POINTS**

2. Medium Priority

Serious harassment or severe neighbour problems (where the applicant is confirmed as not causing the problem). Documentation or evidence will be required and approved by the Housing Services Director.

**30 POINTS**

3. Low Priority

Differences in lifestyle.

**20 POINTS**

### **2.2.10 Physical Environment**

This category recognises that people can be inconvenienced due to their physical environment.

Where an applicant requires amenity housing and is seeking ground floor accommodation, then the following points will be awarded:

- |                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Resident on 1st floor | <b>5 POINTS</b>  |
| 2. Resident on 2nd floor | <b>10 POINTS</b> |
| 3. Resident on 3rd floor | <b>15 POINTS</b> |

Where a person cannot physically maintain a large garden **10 POINTS**

Where young children, aged 10 years and under are living at height - 4th floor (or above)

**10 POINTS**

The maximum points awarded are 20 points.

Points in this category will only be awarded where no medical points have been awarded for the same reason.

### **2.2.11 Local Connection**

Points can be awarded for an applicant's local connection within an area, but the length of residence in the area cannot be used to influence decisions on priorities.

Local connection will only be considered in the following categories:

### Support Requirements

Consideration will be given to a close relative who requires to provide support in order to sustain independent living, for a tenant in the community. **10 POINTS**

Applicant requires to move nearer to family for social or medical reason **10 POINTS**

Where an applicant requires to live in an area to access essential facilities: e.g. schools, hospitals, training centre **10 POINTS**

Where the applicant requires to provide support to a relative who lives in the Association's area of operation, or requires to live in the area to access employment. **10 POINTS**

Factors that affect an applicant's ability to sustain employment. Points will be given to applicants who require to be near their place of employment where distance, transport arrangements or financial difficulties prevent ease of access. **10 POINTS**

The Association will not suspend an application on the basis that there is no local connection.

### **2.2.12 Access to Children**

Where an applicant requires a property larger than his/her needs due to access arrangements to his/her children, documentary proof will be required. This will be either a copy of a Custody/Court Order. Informal arrangements will not be sufficient.

## **PART 3**

### **3.1 NOMINATIONS ARRANGEMENT**

The Association will work with other agencies to maximise and simplify access routes into our housing.

The Association has an agreed protocol with Glasgow City Council (GCC) for the referral of statutory homeless households for housing under section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The Association will accept 19% referrals from GCC in any year.

### **3.2 WAITING LISTS**

Housing and Transfer Lists are currently held for the Arden, Darnley and Pollok areas according to the type and size of property required, and in order of priority as determined by the allocation system. These lists are reviewed annually. Applicants indicating a change of circumstances will have their application form reassessed and will be advised of their new point's level. Applicants who do not return annual review forms within the specified time period will be advised that their application is no longer on the transfer and waiting list.

### **3.3 TRANSFER LIST**

3.3.1 Glen Oaks Housing Association operates a Transfer List. Tenants can apply for a transfer to another Association property provided the condition of the property vacated is suitable for immediate relet.

3.3.2 Transfer applications will be assessed on the basis of housing need using the same criteria and points system as all other applications. A separate Transfer List will be maintained for each operational area. The Housing Services Sub-Committee will determine the percentage of properties available for transfer applicants, currently 20% quota.

### 3.4 MUTUAL EXCHANGES

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives tenants the right to apply for a mutual exchange. Glen Oaks Housing Association encourages mutual exchanges as they can relieve pressure on the transfer list and provide an additional opportunity to tenants to move to more suitable accommodation. They also assist in making best use of the Association's housing stock.

1. A mutual exchange occurs when two tenants exchange houses with the agreement of the Landlord(s).
2. Both parties must complete an application form for a mutual exchange to be progressed.
3. A Housing Officer will undertake tenancy checks on the condition of the property(s) before the exchange is approved. Any repairs identified as necessary, which have been caused by the tenant's negligence, must be completed at the tenant's expense before an exchange is approved. Poor decoration is not regarded as grounds for refusing to grant an exchange, although both tenants must be prepared to accept this.
4. The Association will process a mutual exchange application in 28 working days providing all relevant information is available.
5. Exchanges are not limited to two parties and three-way exchanges can take place.
6. The Association will maintain a register for persons seeking a mutual exchange
7. Any tenant can seek to exchange with any other tenant in the public sector and exchanges to properties outwith the Glasgow Area can be facilitated by the HOMESWAP scheme (see section below on National Mobility).
8. Any local lettings initiatives apply when mutual exchanges are being considered.
9. Mutual exchange applications will be granted in all cases where they constitute a reasonable request.
10. The following are examples of where the request for an exchange would not be considered to be reasonable and where approval is unlikely to be given;

- overcrowding would result
- under occupancy of more than one room would result
- one of the houses will be affected by works due to be carried out by the landlord, e.g. demolition.
- the exchange would breach a local letting initiative
- requests for exchanges as a result of financial inducement on the part of either of the applicants (in advertisements or by any other means) or where there are grounds to believe that either party has attempted to mislead the other. Particular attention would be given to applicants who would worsen their circumstances by mutual exchange
- either party would be gaining access to a special needs facility (e.g. a house adapted for disabled persons) to which they are unsuited or have no need.
- either party would be giving up a special needs facility that they require and would be moving to a less suitable house.
- The applicant owes money to the landlord of one months rent in relation to the tenancy
- A “live” legal notice has been served on the applicant by the landlord

Requests for exchanges would be considered and assessed individually on their own merits.

### **3.5 MOVEUK - NATIONAL MOBILITY SCHEME**

The Association participates in the MoveUK National Mobility Scheme, which allows access through nomination for people who require to move from locations out with the area in which they live for health, employment or social reasons. The Association will assist tenants to move by arranging reciprocal nomination arrangements with other participating landlords. Advice will be provided on this Homemove and Homeswap (national exchange scheme), to any tenant who wishes to be nominated under this scheme.

### **3.6 SPECIAL TENANCIES**

The Association has a commitment to consider the provision of housing special needs groups.

The Association will consider referrals from recognised organisations as approved by the Management Committee.

These referrals would be for supported accommodation for people with special needs and operate outwith the general Allocations Policy.

Applicants would normally be accepted from approved specialist agencies with the nominating agency expected to provide details of support to be offered to the applicant.

Special lets made available to registered groups will be subject to regular review by the Housing Services Sub-Committee.

# **GLEN OAKS HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

## **ARDEN REGENERATION STRATEGY – LETTINGS PLAN**

### **Introduction**

A principal aim of the Allocations Policy is to develop balanced and sustainable communities. As part of the review of the Allocations policy the Housing Services Sub Committee require to set out a Lettings Plan, which takes account of these aims.

A strategic action plan has been identified for Arden, which includes physical factors such as new build property, planned and cyclical maintenance and intensive estate management aimed at improving the living conditions of residents and to develop the confidence of prospective applicants and investors.

Although the physical regeneration of the estate is important it is also necessary to consider the social factors, which will underpin the success of these measures in the regeneration of the estate. It is recognised that good quality affordable properties will be at the centre of the regeneration strategy.

Accordingly, the lettings plan will look at particular demand issues within this estate and will make the best use of the available stock, using the principles of sustainability in the creation and maintenance of a community where people want to live and remain.

SFHA Raising Standards document suggests that the Allocations Process should assist in the creation of a sustainable community. Sustainability has been defined as “people continuing to want to live in the same community, both now and in the future.

### **Local Needs and Demands**

The Association will be providing 42 new build homes for rent in Arden in 2005/2006. The type and number of properties to be provided are noted below.

<b>Property Type</b>	<b>No. of units</b>
2apt 2 person flat	16
3apt 4 person semi detached	14
4apt 5 person semi detached	9
5apt 6 person semi detached	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>

In considering the allocation of the proposed 42 new build properties in Arden the Association have analysed and identified local housing need and demand for the size and type of property to be provided, and would wish to exercise greater priority for local connection in respect of existing tenants living in the Arden area.

### **Allocations Policy**

The Association is anxious that in allocating individual tenancies that a sustainable community is achieved. Existing tenants who apply for re-housing would be allocated in accordance with our existing allocations policy taking account of “reasonable preference” legislative requirements and equal opportunities.

All offers of accommodation will follow the processes stated in the Allocations Policy to ensure that the transfer applicant with the most need is selected.

Currently the waiting list for Arden has 249 applicants of which 80 (32%) are transfer applicants who wish to move to modernised or new build properties within the estate. The percentage of lets available for transfer applicants is currently 20% of all properties allocated in any year. Last year, 149 properties were allocated in the Arden area. Therefore we could consider allocating 29 lets to new build properties or modernised homes.

In considering this it would be our intention to give priority for transfer applicants who meet the criteria below.

1. Applicants who are currently overcrowded.
2. Maximise transfer applications to tenants living in 5 apt properties in the estate to smaller new build accommodation (freeing up potential 5 apt properties for families who are currently overcrowded and are on the waiting list for 5 apt accommodation).
3. Maximise transfer applications for 2apt households who are currently under-occupying 4apt modernised/mini-modernised properties.
4. Match existing local people with appropriate properties to meet physical mobility needs, or where re-housing would significantly alleviate the difficulties the applicant is facing.

It would be good practice to publicise the number of lets in each category in the Glen Oaks Bulletin to demonstrate our commitment to the community in realising tenant's aspirations.

This policy is being suggested to retain the existing tenants in the community.

## **Difficult to let properties**

It is important to attract new applicants to property which is currently in demand in the area i.e. mini-modernised, modernised and cottage properties and to explore other options for low/no demand property.

The Association has a number of difficult to let properties and is committed to a flexible approach in tackling this issue. The difficult to let properties normally have at least two or more of the following characteristics

- High level of refusals, usually because of the location or condition of the property.
- Low/No demand as close/street/area is considered to be undesirable.
- Longer void periods in comparison to similar property in the area
- High turnover within the property

The Association will continue to pursue Glasgow City Council for grant funding for the overall regeneration of the un-modernised property in Arden. Where approval is given for demolition, the Association will review this lettings plan to incorporate priority for displaced tenants.

It is hard to generate demand from applicants who through choice will not consider difficult to let property and therefore creating a balanced community can be difficult to achieve.

We should consider introducing “sensitive” lettings. This might involve measures such as “under letting” to keep child densities down, avoiding concentrating too many of a particular household type, such as single people or large families in one building and seeking to avoid lifestyle clashes. This would mean Housing Services Officers stating the type of applicant most suited to the property prior to an allocation being made.

It should be noted that we currently give applicants choice of the streets they wish to be considered for to prevent offers being made which are not acceptable to the applicant. Perhaps we could look at extending this further to take account of specific closes/ addresses? However it should be recognised that in streets which are at the bottom of the hierarchy of popularity that we may not be able to attract applicants.

In properties which have been empty for a long time we will continue to seek partnerships with other agencies that can provide support for special lets to bring long term difficult to let properties back into use.

This plan is centred on the needs of the Arden community, and not individual households and seeks to address the overall sustainability of the area.

For presentation and discussion with the Housing Services Sub Committee  
4 May 2005