



Aberdeenshire *housing partnership*

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

August 2005

ALLOCATIONS

Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership recognises that allocating our properties is a vital part of our housing management role as a landlord and is a particularly important service for all our residents.

Our primary aim is to provide affordable and well managed rented accommodation to those in housing need, and at the same time to contribute to providing balanced and sustainable communities

ABERDEENSHIRE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Allocations Policy sets out the standards and general guidance which we will follow to ensure that our properties are allocated to those most in need.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The aims of this policy are:

- to ensure our properties are available for those in housing need
- to use a fair and accessible system that does not discriminate or exclude individuals
- to ensure the needs and aspirations of the community are considered
- to build and help develop sustainable communities

3.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

3.1 This policy was compiled with reference to the following relevant legislation:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Race Relation (Amendment) Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Matrimonial Homes Act (Scotland) 1981
- Data protection Act 1998

3.2 Performance framework

This policy complies with Communities Scotland Performance Standards AS1.1 & AS1.2 and Raising Standards Chapter 1 - 'Allocations'.

4.0 OUR TARGETS AND QUOTAS

AHP Transfer List Applicants 50%
Aberdeenshire Council Nominations 50%
(inclusive of homeless/Section 5 homeless Nominations)

Where there is insufficient demand from transfer applicants additional nominations will be requested from Aberdeenshire Council.

We want to reflect the ethnicity of the Aberdeenshire population and aim to achieve lettings to ethnic minority applicants within the levels identified in the local housing strategy, the Aberdeenshire Council waiting list and the most recent census information. This produces a range of 0.7% - 2.5%.

5.0 OUR ALLOCATIONS SOURCES

- 5.1 Currently Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership does not hold its own general waiting list (we do hold a waiting list for our very sheltered complex at Fraserburgh) and we receive our nominations from Aberdeenshire Council. We are involved in discussions with Aberdeenshire Council about the formation of a common housing register but this is in the very early stages.
- 5.2 When a property comes vacant, in accordance with the nomination agreement we request nominations from Aberdeenshire Council. In most cases, we receive 3 nominations for each property (one nomination in the case of homeless persons); we then assess each applicant against the following criteria to identify the person in greatest housing need.

6.0 LETTING OF NEW-BUILD PROPERTIES

Nominations are requested from Aberdeenshire Council for New-Build properties. These can be requested up to six months before the property completion date. Internal transfer applications will also be considered up to a maximum of 50%. However in some developments Aberdeenshire Council will if providing funding negotiate a separate nomination agreement.

7.0 FLEXIBLE LETTING

We reserve the right in exceptional circumstances to over or under-occupy a property, including the following reasons:

- Low demand area or type of property
- To develop sustainable communities
- Under recommendation from other agencies
- Lack of provision of larger size properties
- To release two properties back into the public sector

8.0 ELIGIBILITY FOR HOUSING

8.1 We will accept nominations from Aberdeenshire Council from applicants over the age of 16 years regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, HIV status, religion, physical or learning disability, financial circumstances or any local connections

We will allocate housing to any nominee or internal transfer applicant according to our policy and procedure to match the suitability of available housing with the person in greatest housing need.

8.2 At all stages in the allocation process we will ensure that we comply with our Equality & Diversity Policy, which meets all current statutory requirements. All applications and allocations will be monitored to ensure compliance with equal opportunities.

8.3 Current or former employees of Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership Board Members and their close family may, if nominated, be accepted for housing. Any resulting allocations will be made solely on the basis of housing need, and will require to meet current Communities Scotland requirements in terms of Section 15. All such allocations will require to be approved by the Board of Management.

8.4 We will continue to review and enter into Nomination Agreements with the Local Council(s) in whose areas we operate, whereby the Councils will be able to nominate applicants from their housing lists to an agreed proportion of our vacant properties.

8.5 We will develop appropriate procedures in association with the Local Authorities in whose areas we operate to ensure that we meet current statutory requirements for the provision of housing for homeless persons. Our housing management practices will seek to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

9.0 ASSESSING NOMINATIONS/APPLICANTS

9.1 HOUSE SIZES

The following tables are a general guide to the size of houses, which are offered to applicants and how we allocate properties to households with children:

<u>Household</u>	<u>Size/Type</u>	<u>No. of Bedrooms</u>
Single person (16 and over)	2 apartment	1 double
Couple	2 apartment	1 double
2 person family	3 apartment	1 double + 1 single
3 persons	3 apartment	1 double + 1 single
4 persons	3 apartment	2 double
4 persons	4 apartment	1 double + 2 single
5 persons	4 apartment	2 double + 1 single
6 persons	5 apartment	2 double + 2 single

<u>Household</u>	<u>Bedrooms for Children</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Two children under 7 years of age, (of opposite sex)	1 double bedroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Two children, same sex, (age gap of less than 5 years)	1 double bedroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Two children, same sex, (age gap of 5 yrs or more)	2 single bedrooms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Two children of opposite sex (one child is 7 yrs or over)	2 single bedrooms

We will only allocate an upper flat to households with a child over the age of 5 years. If we are unable to let a property on the above household criteria it may be offered to a smaller household.

ASSESSING NOMINATIONS/APPLICANTS

10.0 Our Criteria and Points System

We feel that a points system is the most appropriate method for allocating our properties as it can be applied in a flexible but fair manner. We will assess housing need by a system of points allocated to the existing housing circumstances of each applicant. The points system is approved by the Housing Committee and reviewed regularly in the light of experience and amended as required.

Below are the categories and circumstances we consider when prioritising all nominations/applicants.

A maximum of one set of points will be awarded from each table.

Table 1.

Current housing situation	Points
Applicant without a home of their own	
Sleeping rough / Roofless	60
Women's Refuge	50
Living in homeless accommodation / Hostel / Bed and Breakfast	40
Living with friends / relatives	30
Living in the parental home	20
Private rented accommodation	
Where Notice to Quit has been served	30
Ongoing tenancy	20
Tied Accommodation	
Where Notice to Quit has been served	30
Ongoing tenancy	20
Private Owners and Owner Occupiers	
Relationship breakdown leading to sale of marital home	30
Mortgage repossession (date set)	20
Threatened with repossession	15

Table 2

Undesirable Accommodation	Points
Living in caravan / mobile home / Multi-storey flat / Bedsit	10

Table 3

Overcrowding	Points
Applicant or other adult sharing bedroom with child under 18 yrs	10
Two children of opposite sex with one child over 7 years	9
Applicant or other adult sleeping in living area	8
Two children of opposite sex under 7 years where there is a 5 year or more age gap	7
Applicant or other permanent household member is pregnant and there are 2 children sharing one room.	6
Two children of the same sex where the age gap is less than 5 years	5
Applicant or other permanent household member is 3 months or more pregnant	3
Under occupation	
2 or More Bedrooms extra to Requirements	4
1 Bedroom Extra to Requirements	3

Table 4

Condition of Property	Points
Dampness and/or severe condensation / Not wind and water tight or in serious disrepair	6
Outside W.C	4
Private water supply and risk of breakdown	2

Table 5

Heating Type	Points
No heating other than portable electric or gas heaters	6
Coal fire only, with no back boiler or radiators	4
Focal point gas or electric fire, with no radiators	2

Table 6

Shared Facilities	Points
This applies to sharing of either a bathroom, cooking facilities or lounge	
Outwith the current accommodation i.e. bedsit etc	10
Within the current accommodation	5

Table 7

Violence / Harassment	Points
Applies to persons experiencing racial/domestic abuse, violence or harassment. We will try to assist all victims and undertake a thorough investigation of all claims.	
Fleeing Domestic Violence	10
At risk of Domestic Violence	9
Racial Harassment or other harassment – where evidence is provided i.e. police reports, landlord report	8
Non violent Relationship Breakdown, only where both parties are living in the same house	6
Relationship breakdown between applicant and accommodation provider	5

Table 8

Medical Condition	Points
Where an applicant (or member of their household) health would benefit from rehousing:	
Housebound due to accommodation	10
Applicant (or other household member) is unable to return to the property following an accident	9
Restricted use of house due to medical condition	8
Restricted mobility of applicant due to medical condition	7
Quality of life would improve with a move to other accommodation i.e. due to heating type, floor levels, bathroom facilities etc	6
In receipt of ongoing psychiatric treatment within the last 6 months	5
Applicant on medication for or suffering from stress / depression	4

Table 9

Support Requirements	Points
(Applies outwith a 3 mile radius of current home) Applies where support is provided/received outwith a 3 mile radius from applicants current accommodation and a move would be beneficial	
Where the applicant is currently providing or receiving support	5
Where the applicant is planning to provide or receive support following a move	3

Table 10

Travelling Difficulties	Points
Where applicant (or a member of their household) requires a move to ease travel difficulties. Applies to rural location applicants only	
Remoteness of local services	
Over 2 Miles to essential services or work and public transport is also 2 miles away (no car)	4
Over 2 Miles to essential services or work, public transport within 2 miles (no car)	3
Over 5 Miles to essential services (own car)	2

Table 11

Commuting Difficulties	Points
Applies to all locations	
Commuting 60 miles or over a day for a minimum of 3 days per week	3

11.0 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Nominees/Applicants may be required to provide the relevant documents from the list below:

- In early stages of pregnancy, either a scan report or written confirmation from a GP/midwife
- Following the birth of a baby, a copy of the birth certificate (Internal Transfers only)
- In cases where applicant has newly acquired custody of children, a copy of child benefit book, or extract of custody order
- In cases where applicant has joint custody/regular access and sleep over on average, 2 nights per week, over the year. An extract of the custody order, solicitors letter or a letter from another professional
- In cases under threat of eviction or a tenancy not being renewed, a copy of the Notice to Quit or a letter from the landlord confirming the date the tenancy is to end
- If a house is under repossession, written proof from the mortgage lender or solicitor
- If the house is to be sold and the applicant required to move out confirmation letter from solicitor or Bank or building society.

12.0 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In exceptional circumstances we reserve the right to consider urgent applications on a discretionary basis. In other cases where circumstances are not covered adequately the Housing & Property Manager will award additional points for the reasons listed below.

All cases deemed to have exceptional circumstances will be considered by the Housing & Property Services Manager. Supporting documentation will be required in each circumstance:

- Health – Not adequately covered by our medical condition criteria.
- Social/cultural factors not adequately covered by our criteria
- Compassionate grounds
- Other urgent reasons not covered by our criteria

13.0 TENANCY REFERENCES

We reserve the right to make enquiries in connection with all housing applications and applicants are asked to sign a declaration, allowing us to do this. We will contact previous and current landlords to obtain a tenancy report. The information received will not be passed on to a third party.

14.0 GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL

14.1 Giving False and Misleading Information

To avoid us making allocations based on false information, applicants may be asked to provide documentary support for statements made in their application form.

If an applicant is found to have deliberately falsified or omitted information in order to be offered a property the nomination/application will be refused. If after letting a property, a tenant is found to have obtained a house on the basis of deliberately falsified information we will take legal action to repossess our property.

14.2 Previous/current debt owed to a landlord

We will refuse to consider an applicant if there is an outstanding debt owed to a landlord, unless there is a repayment plan in operation, which has been adhered to for at least three months prior to the nomination/application and payments are continuing.

If the applicant/nominee has been an owner occupier we will seek a reference from the mortgage lender. If there is an outstanding debt owed to the mortgage lender there must be a repayment plan in operation which is being adhered to for at least three months prior to the nomination/application being received.

For those applicants who have a substantial debt owing to a previous landlord we may require the applicant to reduce the outstanding debt to at least one twelfth or one months rent charge and provide proof of same, prior to being housed. A repayment plan must be in operation for the remaining balance of debt owed, for a minimum of three months and payments are continuing.

14.3 Anti-Social Behaviour

Where there is evidence of “serious” anti-social behaviour from an applicant or a member of their household, corroborated from an official source, namely the Police or a previous social landlord the application will be refused.

Anti social behaviour includes the following:

Eviction

Where applicants have been evicted from a previous tenancy due to anti social behaviour within the previous 2 years.

ASBO (Anti social behaviour order)

Where applicants or a member of their household is subject to a current ASBO or has been served with an Anti-social Behaviour Order in the previous 2 years.

NOP

Where an applicant has been served with a Notice of Proceedings due to anti-social behaviour in the previous 2 years.

For clarity, anti-social behaviour must have taken place in the 2 year period prior to application. The behaviour must have occurred on a consistent basis. We see violence to neighbours, any incident causing distress and worry to others, convicted drug trafficking, damage to property and convicted housebreaking as serious anti-social behaviour.

15.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

15.1 Once submitted, all applications will be treated as confidential and no information will be given to third parties without the applicants consent.

15.2 Staff will respect the confidentiality of personal information at all times. Applicants may request copies of their application or other papers you have submitted. All information stored may be subject to the Data Protection Act, 1998.

16.0 APPEALS

16.1 If an applicant is dissatisfied with the way in which their application has been assessed, reviewed, or any other decision taken in relation to their application, an appeal in writing can be made to the Housing & Property Services Manager.

If the Housing & Property Services Manager cannot satisfactorily resolve it, the matter will then be referred to our Chief Executive, and if not resolved referred to the Housing Committee for a final decision.

17.0 COMPLAINTS

- 17.1 We have a formal complaints procedure and copies are available on request. All complaints are logged individually and kept in a complaints file.
- 17.2 A quarterly report on complaints received is submitted to the Board. Bi annually a report will also be submitted to the Housing Committee to identify areas for service improvement.

18.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 18.1 The Housing & Property Services Manager will ensure that we comply with all the requirements set by Communities Scotland regarding our Allocations policy.
- 18.2 The Housing & Property Services Manager will ensure that all staff receive the necessary training to enable them to implement this policy and the procedures which support it, and will carry out a sample survey of 3 applications a quarter to ensure ongoing consistent application of the points system.
- 18.3 The Housing & Property Services Manager will ensure that monthly reports on the following are submitted to the Housing Committee:
- the numbers and category of allocations made; Transfer, general waiting list nomination, homeless/section 5 referrals
 - the proportion of lettings as compared to current targets.
- 18.4 This policy is to be reviewed by the Housing Committee every 3 years, or less following a substantive legislative or performance requirement.

19.0 OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- Complaints policy
- Anti social behaviour policy
- Equality & Diversity policy

Policy reference number	H05
Current version approved	18 August 05
Policy approved by	Housing Committee
Date of next review	August 2008
Policy complies with	Performance Standard AS1.1 & AS1.2, Housing Act 2001 Scotland

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

ASSESSING INTERNAL TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

1. OUR FRAMEWORK

The internal transfer process is an appendix to our full allocations policy. The allocations policy and all contents and conditions apply to internal transfer applications unless otherwise stated in this document.

2. OUR TARGETS AND QUOTAS

AHP Transfer List Applicants 50%
Aberdeenshire Council Nominations 50%
(inclusive of homeless/Section 5 homeless Nominations)

Where there is insufficient demand from transfer applicants suitable for the size type and location of the vacancy additional nominations will be requested from Aberdeenshire Council.

When a property comes vacant, in accordance with the nomination agreement and in accordance with the targets above we will consider all appropriate transfer applications. We will then assess each applicant against the following criteria to identify the applicant in greatest housing need. Where two or more applicants are identified as being in equal need the date of receipt of the transfer application will be the deciding factor (e.g. the person on the transfer list for the longest).

3. LETTING OF NEW-BUILD PROPERTIES

In new build developments internal transfer applications will be considered up to a maximum of 50%. However in some developments Aberdeenshire Council provide funding and negotiate a higher percentage nomination level.

4. OUR TRANSFER CRITERIA AND POINTS SYSTEM

We feel that a points system is the most appropriate method for allocating our properties for internal transfer applicants as it can be applied in a flexible but fair manner.

We will assess all transfer applications in accordance with housing need by a system of points allocated to the existing housing circumstances of each applicant.

The points system is approved by the Housing Committee and reviewed regularly in the light of experience and amended as required.

5. TRANSFER ELIGIBILITY

All transfer applicants will require to:

- have a clear rent account from the date of submitting a transfer form (excluding current Housing benefit entitlement due but not received)
- have conducted their tenancy satisfactorily
- Have a property inspection carried out and the property to be in a satisfactory condition

6. GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION FROM TRANSFER LIST

Applications initially accepted will be suspended from our list if:

- The tenants rent account goes into arrears (regardless of any repayment plan agreed)
- When a minimum of two complaints about the tenant, members of their household or visitors to their home are received, investigated and substantiated.
- If during a routine repairs visit or housing Officer visit issues of unacceptable damage and neglect (that are the tenants responsibility) are witnessed.

7. GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL

Transfer applications will be refused:

- Their rent account is in arrears (regardless of any repayment plan agreed)
- When a minimum of two complaints about them, members of their household or visitors to their home have been received, investigated and substantiated in the 18 months prior to their application.

- The property inspection highlights issues of unacceptable damage and neglect that are the tenants responsibility.

8. GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL OF SUSPENSION

Suspended applications will be accepted onto the transfer list when:

- The rent account is clear (excluding current Housing Benefit entitlement due but not received)
- No further complaints about the tenant, members of their household or visitors to their home are received, investigated and substantiated for a period of eighteen months from receiving the first complaint.
- The issues highlighted during an Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership staff visit have been addressed to our satisfaction.

9. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In exceptional circumstances we reserve the right to consider urgent transfer applications on a discretionary basis. In other cases where circumstances are not covered adequately the Housing & Property Manager will award additional points for the reasons listed below.

All cases deemed to have exceptional circumstances will be considered by the Housing & Property Services Manager. Supporting documentation will be required in each circumstance:

- Health – Not adequately covered by our medical condition criteria.
- Social/cultural factors not adequately covered by our criteria
- Compassionate grounds
- Other urgent reasons not covered by our criteria

10. **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership will issue a review form to all transfer applicants on an annual basis. However between reviews it is the transfer applicant's responsibility to inform us of any changes to their application such as family composition, revised areas of choice or if they now feel they meet the conditions for acceptance onto the list as at 5.0.

Suspended transfer applications will be reviewed bi annually and readmitted onto the transfer list when the conditions listed in 8.0 have all been met. Between reviews it is the transfer applicant's responsibility to inform us when they feel the conditions listed at 8.0 have been met. If the conditions have been met their application can be readmitted onto the transfer list at any time.

The Housing & Property Services Manager will ensure that all staff receive the necessary training to enable them to implement the transfer process and the procedures which support it, and will carry out a sample survey of 3 transfer applications bi annually to ensure ongoing consistent application of the points system.

Points System for Transfer applications

Below are the categories and circumstances we consider when prioritising all Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership transfer applications.

A maximum of one set of points will be awarded from each table.

Table 1

Overcrowding	Points
Applicant or other adult sharing bedroom with child under 18 yrs	10
Two children of opposite sex with one child over 7 years	9
<u>Applicant or other adult sleeping in living area</u>	8
Two children of opposite sex under 7 years where there is a 5 year or more age gap	7
Applicant or other permanent household member is pregnant and there are 2 children sharing one room.	6
Two children of the same sex where the age gap is less than 5 years	5
Applicant or other permanent household member is 3 months or more pregnant	3
Under occupation	Points
2 or More Bedrooms extra to Requirements	4
1 Bedroom Extra to Requirements	3

Table 2

Heating Type	Points
Coal fire only, with back boiler and/or radiators	4
Electric storage heaters	2

Table 3

House type	Points
Flatted property	4

Table 4

Violence / Harassment	Points
Applies to persons experiencing racial/domestic abuse, violence or harassment. We will try to assist all victims and undertake a thorough investigation of all claims.	
Fleeing Domestic Violence	10
At risk of Domestic Violence	9
Racial Harassment or other harassment – where evidence is provided i.e. police reports, AHP report	8
Non violent Relationship Breakdown, only where both parties are living in the same house	6

Table 5

Medical Condition	Points
Where an applicant (or member of their household) health would benefit from rehousing:	
Housebound due to accommodation	10
Applicant (or other household member) is unable to return to the property following an accident	9
Restricted use of house due to medical condition	8
Restricted mobility of applicant due to medical condition	7
Quality of life would improve with a move to other accommodation i.e. due to heating type, floor levels, bathroom facilities etc	6
In receipt of ongoing psychiatric treatment within the last 6 months	5
Applicant on medication for or suffering from stress / depression	4

Table 6

Support Requirements	Points
(Applies outwith a 3 mile radius of current home) Applies where support is provided/received outwith a 3 mile radius from applicants current accommodation and a move would be beneficial	
Where the applicant is currently providing or receiving support	5
Where the applicant is planning to provide or receive support following a move	3

Table 7

Length of tenancy in current AHP property	Points
4 years or more	4

Under 4 years	2
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Table 8

Travelling Difficulties	Points
Where applicant (or a member of their household) requires a move to ease travel difficulties. Applies to rural location applicants only	
Remoteness of local services	
Over 2 Miles to essential services or work and public transport is also 2 miles away (no car)	4
Over 2 Miles to essential services or work, public transport within 2 miles (no car)	3
Over 5 Miles to essential services (own car)	2

Table 9

Commuting Difficulties	Points
Applies to all locations	
Commuting 60 miles or over a day for a minimum of 3 days per week	3

Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership
JARVIS COURT FRASERBURGH, ALLOCATION PROCESS

11. OUR FRAMEWORK

This allocation process is an appendix to our full allocations policy. The allocations policy and all contents and conditions apply to Jarvis Court allocation process unless otherwise stated in this document.

2. OUR WAITING LIST

Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership holds its own waiting list for the very sheltered housing complex at Jarvis Court, Fraserburgh. The process listed below reflects the unique nature of the complex and acknowledges the joint working and support with Aberdeenshire Council and the expert guidance given by Aberdeenshire Council's Social Work Team.

3. THE PROCESS

The following process was agreed at a meeting with Social work representatives, Housing representatives, Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership and Jarvis Court staff team.

THE PROCEDURE

1. Application forms and an information leaflet will be issued to all interested parties available from AHP and the Jarvis Court office.
2. Application forms to be returned to AHP in envelope provided.
3. AHP will send letter of acknowledgement for applications, saying that a Care Manager will make contact to arrange to carry out an assessment.
4. AHP to send copy of application forms to Care Management office.
5. Care Manager to carry out SSA, which incorporates Housing Support needs, and Very Sheltered Housing Assessment and point the applicant for social needs. Total points to be highlighted at the end of the assessment.

6. Care Manager to send copies of assessments to AHP and to Home Care Manager.
7. Home Care Manager to forward copy of SSA to Supporting People Team and notify AHP of applicant's eligibility, when known.
8. AHP to hold the waiting list in order of points. New applicants to be slotted into list in appropriate point order. Waiting list to include whether applicant is eligible for Housing Support. Only Social work will point applications and decide on priority
9. When vacancy arises, AHP to contact the applicant with the highest points and offer the tenancy. AHP Housing Officer will then visit to discuss the details of the tenancy agreement.
10. Panel to meet quarterly to review and update the waiting list.

4. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership will issue a review form to all waiting list applicants on an annual basis. However between reviews it is the applicant's responsibility to inform us of any changes to their application.

The Housing & Property Services Manager will ensure that all staff receive the necessary training to enable them to implement the transfer process and the procedures which support it.