



ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1. POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Barony Housing Association (The Association) aims to provide good quality affordable accommodation on a fair basis for people in housing need. This is within the constraints of the availability of type and location of existing stock.
- 1.2 The Association, in partnership with other agencies, aims to assist in the creation and maintenance of balanced and stable communities.
- 1.3 The Association's Allocations Policy will establish standards and set a framework within which guidelines and procedures will be implemented to be used in the admission of applicants to the housing waiting list and in the allocation of properties.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 In formulating the policy the Association has taken into account guidelines issued by Communities Scotland, the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, as well as all relevant legislation, including the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

2.2 Customer Care

The Association is committed to customer care and will endeavour to apply its customer care policy at all stages of the allocations process. A copy of this policy is available on request.

2.3 Equality and Diversity

- 2.3.1 The Association is committed to ensure that allocations are made efficiently and fairly and will aim to promote Equal Opportunities and comply with the requirements of the Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 section 106.
- 2.3.2 The Association will welcome applications from all people in housing need regardless of their sex, marital status, age, race, colour, ethnic or national

origin, sexual orientation, religion, culture, medical condition, mental or physical disability, subject to meeting eligibility criteria for the type of accommodation applied for.

- 2.3.3 Ethnic and disability monitoring will be applied for all applicants and nominations for and allocations to the Association's properties. Information will be kept confidential and will not form part of the allocations process.

2.4 **Staff and Committee Allocations**

The Association will fulfil the requirements of Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.2.5 **Confidentiality**

All information provided in connection with an application will be treated as confidential. The Association will comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and any subsequent statutory requirements or voluntary arrangements.

2.5 **Linkages with other Barony Housing Association Policies**

Applications for Housing will also be subject to other policies of the Association, copies of which are available on request. These include but are not limited to:

Domestic Pets

Complaints/Feedback

Equal Opportunities

Tenant Participation

2.6 **Appeals**

Applicants will be advised in writing of non-acceptance or cancellation of an application and the reasons why. If the applicant is not satisfied with the way in which any decision concerning their application has been reached or the way the application has been handled s/he may appeal the decision to a more senior member of staff, not involved in the original decision.

3 **APPLYING FOR HOUSING**

3.1 **Direct Application**

- 3.1.1 Applications should be made on the Association's official application form. On receipt of a completed form, relative housing need will be assessed on the basis of the Association's points system. The application will then be placed on the appropriate housing list, subject to fulfilment of other policy criteria.

3.1.2 Additional or alternative local assessments in conjunction with, for example, the local authority or health board may be required.

3.2 Common Housing Registers

3.2.1 Within a Common Housing Register (CHR), applicants complete a single, shared application form which enables them to be considered for housing by all social landlords with housing stock in that area.

3.2.2 Where the Association enters into a Common Housing Register, it will not hold its own housing list, and will allocate in accordance with the common arrangements agreed for that local area, with its partner providers.

3.2.3 The agreement of Committee of Management shall be sought for any local amendment required to this Allocations Policy as a result of entry into a Common Housing Register. This shall include the ability to enter into a common allocations policy with partner providers, applicable to the local area in question. This shall be recorded in an Appendix to this policy.

3.3 Nominations

3.3.1 Where such arrangements exist, the Association will assist the local authority in its statutory duties by entering into a nomination arrangement with each authority in the Association's vacancies each year. This percentage may be increased in specific areas at the Association's discretion.

3.4 Homelessness

3.4.1 The Association will fulfil its statutory duty to comply with requests from local authorities to re-house households assessed as statutorily homeless and will not refuse a referral without good reason.

3.4.2 The Association will, where appropriate, enter into formal arrangements with local authorities and other Registered Social Landlords, often known as homeless protocols, for the more effective discharge of its obligations, including the provision of furnished or unfurnished temporary accommodation for persons under homeless assessment.

3.4.3 This arrangement will ideally be part of a joint protocol also covering nominations, but may be a separate agreement. In either case, the Association will seek agreement on what proportion of nominations are to be homeless referrals.

3.5 Direct Referrals

3.5.1 The Association may enter into agreement with other agencies regarding certain of its properties to enable direct allocation of these to specific needs groups.

4. ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Eligibility Principles

Any applicant aged 16 or over is entitled to apply and be admitted to a housing list held by the Association at any time, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria (in accordance with Section 20 (2B) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001).

4.2 General Needs Housing

This type of housing is available to any person 16 years of age and over. There is no upper age limit for applications.

4.3 Sheltered

4.3.1 This type of housing is mainly for people aged 60 or over who, while able to live independently in their own home, would benefit from a Sheltered Housing Service Manager and alarm call service. (Where a couple, at least one of the applicants should meet the above criteria).

4.3.2 Younger people with a disability may sometimes be accepted if it is considered that through medical or physical disability they would benefit from the Sheltered Housing Service Manager and alarm call service.

4.4 Amenity

This type of housing is mainly for people aged 50 or over; or who have a medical need or physical disability, which requires the provision of amenity standard accommodation.

4.5 Wheelchair

If the property is purpose built for wheelchair use, the applicant or household member should be a wheelchair user.

4.6 Adapted

Where properties are designed or adapted for special needs, the applicant or a household member should require such specialised accommodation.

4.7 Ground Floor

Priority may be given to persons with mobility difficulties or medical requirements benefiting from level access accommodation, where a specific need has been assessed. Medical evidence may be required.

4.8 **Property Size**

- 4.8.1 The Association will meet the standards of Part VII of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1988, as a minimum, such that at the point of allocation the applicant's household should be accommodated in a property that meets minimum bed space requirements.
- 4.8.2 The Association will seek to better these by application of the following standards:
- o Persons of 16 years of age and over should have their own bedroom.
 - o Single bedrooms can normally only be occupied by one person.
 - o Double bedrooms can normally be occupied by one or two persons but will be occupied by two persons only under the following circumstances:-
 - Adult couples 16 years of age and over
 - Two children of the same sex
 - Two children of different sex under the age of 8
- 4.8.3 In assessing property size required, the applicant's household will include children for whom overnight access or custody has been granted for the applicant. The Association may require verification of a formal arrangement.
- 4.8.4 Overcrowding will be assessed according to the total number of persons in the present accommodation measured against the total number of bedrooms required under sub-section 4.8.2 above. This includes two people sharing a single room where a double is required, and applicants in bedsit accommodation with no separate bedroom.
- 4.8.5 If the applicant's household is split because of insufficient room in the present accommodation, all members of the household who wish to be re-housed together will be included as if in the main accommodation for the assessment of overcrowding.
- 4.8.6 Under occupation will be assessed according to the total number of persons in the present accommodation measured against the total number of bedrooms required under sub section 4.8.2 above. This will apply only to applicants who under occupy social sector rented housing; i.e. Communities Scotland, Local Authority, Registered Social Landlord, that will become available for re-let once the applicant has been re-housed.

4.9 **Best Use**

- 4.9.1 The Association, through balanced application of the general eligibility principles outlined above, seeks to make best use of its properties, by allocating these to households who, for example, require the specific features of the property such as disabled adaptations, or will use all available bedrooms.
- 4.9.2 In some areas, dependent upon local circumstances, larger properties may be allocated to smaller households for example, where demand from larger households is low or supply of smaller accommodation is restricted at a local level.
- 4.9.3 The Association reserves the right to determine best use, and its decision will be final. Records of the decision making process will be maintained.

5 **ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS**

5.1 Properties will be allocated on the basis on housing need, therefore no account will be taken on the following:

- length of time resident in the area
- Tenancy related debts:
 - For which the applicant has no legal responsibility
 - Which no longer exist
 - Where the amount outstanding is less than
 - one month's rent
 - Where a repayment arrangement has been made and agreed
 - with the landlord, in accordance with which payments have been made for at least 3 months and payments are continuing.
- Non tenancy debts
- Income of the applicant and his/her family
- Property ownership, or the value of any property owned
- Length of time on waiting list
- Ability to pay
- Personal references

5.2 Where an applicant has a current tenancy or has previously held a tenancy, the Association reserves the right to seek references, with the applicant's permission, regarding the conduct of the present or previous tenancy.

- 5.3 If the applicant is or has recently been a homeowner, the Association reserves the right to seek references, with the applicant's permission, regarding payment record.
- 5.4 If permission to seek references is not obtained, the Association may withhold the allocation of a tenancy.
- 5.5 References regarding other aspects of the conduct of the tenancy will also be taken into account. Where an adverse tenancy report is received which relates specifically to conduct or breach of the tenancy, the Association may impose conditions such as a requirement that a suitable support package be in place before an allocation is made.
- 5.6 The Association may determine not to house an applicant where their degree of physical or mental illness or disability requires a level of support services, until support is available.
- 5.7 Where applicants on an allocation list have an equal number of points, priority will be given to applicants who have been in housing need for the longest period.

All applications will be reviewed at least annually.

6 TRANSFERS

- 6.1 The Association will accept applications for transfers from existing tenants, which will be assessed on the basis of housing need.
- 6.2 Consideration will be given to a transfer request alongside allocation list applications taking into account demand for the accommodation to be released by the transfer and making the best use of housing stock.
- 6.3 Transfer applicants will not be re-housed when they have tenancy related debts equivalent to one month's rent or more etc as per 5.1.
- 6.4.1 Tenants whose tenancy has been conducted unsatisfactorily will not be re-housed by the Association, except where a compulsory transfer is to be effected. The Association may impose conditions such as a requirement that a suitable support package be in place or that a period of time passes which is trouble free before a transfer is permitted.

6 MoveUK

- 7.1 The Association will participate in the MoveUK scheme to enable tenants to seek moves out-with their local area.

- 7.2 The Association will accept nominations from other participating housing providers providing the applicant needs:
- a) to take up employment beyond reasonable travelling distance
OR
 - b) to give or receive support from relatives or friends, OR
 - c) for other social reasons, eg violence and harassment.
- 7.3 Nominations accepted under the MoveUK scheme will be assessed in the same way as all other housing applications.

8 **REFUSAL OF OFFERS**

- 8.1 Where an applicant has refused two reasonable offers made in accordance with their stated application preferences, eligibility criteria and identified housing needs, the Association will suspend the application and withhold any further offers for up to twelve months.

9 **POINTS AWARDED**

- 9.1 In line with the Policy's objectives, the Association aims to allocate accommodation on a fair basis for people in housing need.
- 9.2.1 Housing needs will be assessed and prioritised using a points system. Points will be awarded on the basis of the applicant's existing housing situation and personal housing needs as identified in Appendix 1.
- 9.3 Within any one category, only one set of points will apply, and the highest points applicable will be awarded where more than one criteria applies.
- 9.4 If an application is received from a household living apart and points area applicable to more than one household member, they will be allocated on the basis of whichever applicant is in highest housing need, at the point of allocation.

10 **MANAGEMENT PRIORITY: EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

- 10.1 Where an application cannot be adequately assessed via the available points criteria due to particular exceptional circumstances, this may be referred to the Head of Service (HS) for further consideration.
- 10.2 If the housing situation of the applicant and /or the Association's ability to meet their needs is considered to merit the housing/transfer of the applicant with immediate effect, management priority points may be applied, by the Head of Service.
- 10.3 The Committee of Management will be regularly advised as agreed of the number of allocation made utilising management priority points.

11 ABUSE OF THE ALLOCATIONS PROCESS

- 11.1 If any applicant is found to have deliberately provided false or misleading Information, the Association reserves the right to suspend the application for up to 2 years.
- 11.2 If a tenancy is granted and is found to have been allocated on the basis of false and misleading information, the Association will take legal steps to recover the tenancy.
- 11.3 Behaviour of an abusive or violent manner towards our staff or agents will result in an application being suspended on the housing waiting list pending investigation. If confirmed, the suspension will remain in place until the Association can be satisfied that there will be no re-occurrence . This suspension will be subject to regular review.

12 MONITORING

- 12.1 Information will be reported to the Committee of Management as agreed on a regular basis. This will enable legislative and best practice requirements to be met, performance to be monitored, and draw the attention of the Committee to areas of potential concern which may require policy review or interim revision.

13 REVIEW

- 13.1 This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and at least every 3 years, to ensure that the Aims and Objectives are being achieved, and that best use is being made of current housing stock.
- 13.2 The Association reserves the right to change or amend the policy subject to the further approval of the Committee of Management and to re-assess the status and priority of applicants as required as a result.
- 14 This policy was approved by committee on 19th October 2006 and will become effective from 15.02.07.



1. EXISTING HOUSING SITUATION

1.1 Tenure and Security

i) Homeless and in Priority Need

Applicants who are assessed by the local authority and determined to be unintentionally homeless or unintentionally threatened with homelessness and in priority need and entitled to permanent accommodation, in accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and associated Code of Guidance.

ii) Homeless and Not in Priority Need

Applicants who are assessed by the local authority and determined to be unintentionally homeless or unintentionally threatened with homelessness and NOT in priority need.

iii) No Right to Continuous Occupation

Applicants with a degree of insecurity of tenure, who demonstrate that they have no right to continuous occupation, but do not fall within 1.1 i) or ii).

1.2 Condition of Property

In need of substantial or extensive repairs, e.g. with structural defects, not wind and watertight or unsafe services.

Poor state of general maintenance, e.g. poor internal fittings, internal joinery or plasterwork (where not the applicant's responsibility).

1.3 Lack of Facilities

- i) No Piped Water Supply
- ii) No Hot Water Supply to Kitchen
- iii) No Hot Water Supply to Bathroom
- iv) No Inside Toilet
- v) No Bath or Shower
- vi) No Kitchen/Cooking Facilities
- vii) No Fixed Heating i.e. Portable Heaters Only
- viii) Fixed Heating to some but not all Rooms.

1.4 Shared Facilities

Household does not have exclusive use of facilities, for example, sharing one or a combination of:

Living room, kitchen, bathroom with other households.

1.5 Overcrowding

Points will be awarded in accordance with the policy for each bedroom required.

1.6 Under-occupation

Points will be awarded in accordance with the policy for each bedroom above the number required.

2. PERSONAL HOUSING NEEDS

2.1 Medical

Where the Association is part of a local arrangement for assessing medical needs, the following will not apply, except in so far as it represents the general principles which should underly any local arrangement.

Points will be awarded where the applicant or a member of his/her household:

Has a medical condition caused or aggravated by current housing conditions and re-housing would improve or alleviate the condition.

OR

Has a condition not caused or directly affected by current housing conditions, but which affects their ability to function independently and this would be improved by re-housing.

IN EITHER CASE

- i) Substantially
- ii) Slightly

Medical needs will be assessed on the basis of a self-assessment form. However, the Association may seek expert opinion from an independent medical assessor.

2.2 Domestic Abuse

Points will be awarded where the applicant or member of the applicant's household is at risk of physical, mental or sexual abuse from another household member.

2.3 Harassment

Points will be awarded where the applicant or a member of the applicant's household is suffering harassment or violence, e.g. continuous physical abuse, serious verbal or written abuse which is associated with their current accommodation and would be alleviated by re-housing, other than where points have been awarded because of domestic violence.

- i) Where immediate re-housing required to ensure safety
- ii) Other cases.

2.4 Care or Support

Where an applicant or member of their household needs to **move** to be able to provide or receive care or support, e.g. to care for infirm, elderly or vulnerable family members or due to personal infirmity, vulnerability or age.

2.5 Remoteness

Applicant is over pensionable age or the household includes child (ren) under the age of 5, **and** more than ½ mile from amenities without a car **and** the accommodation applied for is within ½ mile of amenities.

2.6 Employment

Applicant has employment or a firm offer of employment, and if the journey to work, by the applicant's available means of transport, would take one hour or more from present accommodation. Accommodation applied for must be within the above travel-to-work time for points to be awarded under this criterion.

2.7 Environmental Issue

Applicant is pensioner or disabled and unable to manage garden in present accommodation, and the accommodation applied for has a maintained communal garden or no garden.