



# **Allocations Policy**

**Approved: November 2004**  
**Review Date: 2008/2009**

**If you have difficulty with sight, or if you require a translated copy of this policy, we would be pleased to provide the information in a form that suits your needs.**

# Allocation policy

## A Introduction

### Our aims

- 1 We work in a multicultural area and we aim to provide good-quality rented accommodation to people in greatest need. This will depend on the number and type of houses we have available at any one time. As a housing association based within the community of Govanhill, we must try to meet local housing need. The policy also allows us to respond to the needs of people who need to move to the area for work, social or medical reasons or because they can no longer stay in their local area because of the other people's behaviour.
- 2 This policy covers everyone who applies to us for housing, including current tenants, people who are applying to us for the first time, people Glasgow City Council refer to as homeless, mutual exchanges, people applying through moveUK (the national mobility scheme), and other referrals.
- 3 Our latest housing-needs assessment identified the following areas of housing need which this policy aims to deal with.
  - In Govanhill there are not enough properties of an appropriate size to meet the demands of our housing list.

In particular there is a shortage of two-bedroomed properties or larger, and we cannot meet the demand for this type of housing. This is very different to the rest of the southern area of the city (where we are based) where there is a high demand for one-bedroomed properties. We have more current tenants who want to move from overcrowded accommodation to two-bedroomed properties than people who are applying to us for housing for the first time.
  - Many flats in Govanhill are of such a poor standard that people are living in unacceptable conditions. Many flats don't have suitable washing and cooking facilities.
  - Many people want to live in our area for social reasons or to receive medical support.
  - Many people who apply to us for housing (applicants) come from ethnic-minority backgrounds.
  - Many applicants are homeless or do not have a secure tenancy.

- 4 To meet these housing needs, we will regularly review our housing lists and develop letting plans that are appropriate to respond to the varying needs and priorities of our applicants. Lettings plans support the allocation policy by providing up-to-date information about how the allocation policy is working. As well as our latest forecasts of how many properties may be available for letting in the future, and our broad targets for meeting different types of housing need. Our lettings plans will try to make sure our community is sustainable. By this we mean that people will want to continue living in the Govanhill area, so the area will continue to be a popular place to live and our houses will not stand empty. The lettings plan will also make the best use of our housing stock and give our customers more choices.
- 5 We promote equal opportunities. We will follow the Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and, where possible, we will introduce the provisions of the Race Relations Code of Practice in Rented Housing. We will also meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
  - a This means that:
    - when we are providing housing services and employing staff to provide these services, we will aim to provide equal opportunities for everyone, and treat everyone fairly;
    - no person or group of people applying for housing will be treated less favourably than anyone else for any reason;
    - we will aim to identify and respond to the needs of disadvantaged groups by building close relationships with those groups; and
    - to help us meet our commitment to equal opportunities, we will collect and monitor details of the ethnic or racial origin and any disabilities of everyone applying for housing.
  - b We have a continued commitment to make sure that we select tenants and let properties fairly. Also, we are committed to letting properties efficiently, and our housing will be balanced in the interests of both applicants and the local community. We will give applicants the opportunity to tell us which areas and which type of property that they would consider being rehoused in.
- 6 If you need to move from one area to another, we will help you through moveUK. This is a national mobility scheme which helps tenants to move to a different area.
- 7 We accept applications from people who do not have a secure tenancy, who are unable to stay in their current home, and homeless person's referrals through Glasgow City Council's Homeless Persons Protocol. We try to work closely with the council's local Community Assessment Team to make sure any tenancies we offer are long term and that if you apply to us as a homeless person, you receive as much choice as your situation allows.

## **B How we select tenancies**

- 1 When we are allocating empty properties, we target those in housing need. To help us do this, we will review our housing lists every year and develop appropriate letting plans to respond to the varying needs and priorities of our applicants. Our lettings plans will

aim to sustain our community (see page two), make best use of our housing stock and give our customers more choice. We also take into account the things in the following sections.

## 2 **Legal requirements**

- a We will allocate properties in line with the law affecting how housing associations in Scotland allocate housing and in line with Communities Scotland's Performance Standards.
- b We may offer a tenancy to employees, committee members, former employees, former committee members and close relatives of these people, but only in line with Communities Scotland's detailed guidelines. These guidelines are designed to make sure we consider applications fairly, and that nobody receives special treatment as a result of their connections with us.

## 3 **Age of applicants**

We will consider applications for mainstream housing from people who are 16 or over.

## 4 **Access**

- a There is a continuous opportunity for people in housing need to apply to us for housing and for us to assess them through our open housing list.
- b We give details of how to apply to us for housing on our website, in our office and in other local community buildings in our area. We give partner organisations, social landlords and Glasgow City Council yearly updates on how to apply for housing with us.
- c How we assess your housing need and whether we accept you onto our housing lists will depend on:
  - the law;
  - this allocation policy;
  - the priority grading given to your circumstances; and
  - the level of your housing need.
- d If you have little or no housing need, we do not feel it is fair to mislead you if we are unlikely to rehouse you. We will tell you if we are unlikely to offer you a tenancy, so that you can choose whether or not to stay on our housing list.

## 5 **Housing need**

Our definition of housing need is whether you:

- are homeless or do not have a secure tenancy;
- do not have certain facilities such as an inside toilet or suitable cooking or washing facilities, or you have to share these with other households;

- are living in a property that is in a poor condition;
- need to move for medical reasons;
- need to move for social reasons; or
- your home is overcrowded or too big for your household's needs.

## **6 Reviewing housing need**

- a If your circumstances change while you are on our housing list, you should contact us so that we can review your housing needs.
- b Each year, we will aim to review all applications which fall into categories A, B and C (as described in Section C of the allocation policy). If you don't have a high enough housing need for us to normally offer you housing (category D and category E applications), we will aim to review your application every two years. However, you may, at any time, tell us of any change in your circumstances which increases your chances of being rehoused.

## **C Prioritising housing need**

- 1 The priority we give to you will depend on the area of highest housing need your application has under our priority level system.
- 2 We will assess your overall housing need in line with the priority grading matrix (see page 5). The priority we give to your application will be the highest priority you receive for any of the six areas of housing need in the matrix. For example, if you receive B priority for being homeless or not having a secure tenancy, and D priority for needing to move for medical reasons, we will give you B priority for your overall housing needs.

## Priority grading matrix

Area of housing need	Priority level A+	Priority level A	Priority level B	Priority level C	Priority level D
<b>You are homeless or do not have a secure tenancy.</b>	You are Roofless or a Homeless Persons' Section 5 referral.	You are under a Legal Notice to Quit with a Sheriff Court Decree for eviction.	You are under a Legal Notice to Quit (a court date has been set).  You are living in a Govanhill Housing Association supported-housing project and have been referred for move-on accommodation.	You are living in tied or supported accommodation, you are a lodger or you do not have a tenancy agreement.	You have low housing need.
<b>You do not have, or have to share, certain facilities.</b>	-	-	You do not have an inside toilet, suitable facilities for cooking food, hot-water pipes, a bath or a shower.	You have to share cooking facilities, a toilet, a bath or shower or a living area with other households.	You have low housing need.
<b>You need to move for medical reasons.</b>	You are an emergency medical case or are housebound because your accommodation is unsuitable.	You have severe long-term medical problems and your home has not been adapted to meet your needs. Or, you have mobility problems due to a severe illness and you live in second floor or higher accommodation.	You have long-term medical problems (for example you have cancer or HIV and your home is not suitable for you).	You have other medical or mobility problems (for example, you have asthma and your home is unsuitable, or there is an elderly person with mobility problems in your household and you are living on the third floor of a block of flats with no lift).	You have low housing need.
<b>You need to move for social reasons.</b>	You are an emergency case (you face a life-threatening situation and the police can back this up).	You have priority social factors (for example, you are the victim of racial harassment or domestic violence).	You have extreme social factors (for example, you or a family member needs to stay in the area to receive or provide formal support).	You have other social factors (for example, you or a family member needs to stay in the area to receive or provide support to a relative or a friend or there are pre-school children in your household and you are living on the third floor of a block of flats with no lift).	You have low housing need.
<b>Your home is in a poor condition.</b>	Your property is in serious disrepair and is in a Govanhill Housing Association Rehabilitation Contract (which we estimate to carry out within six months).	-	Your home is in serious disrepair and is in a Govanhill Housing Association Rehabilitation Contract (which we estimate to carry out within 12 months).	Your home is in serious disrepair or is very damp.	You have low housing need.

Your home is overcrowded or too big for your needs.	-	Your home is overcrowded by three or more people.	Your home is overcrowded by two people.	Your home is overcrowded by one person.	You have low housing need.
		Your home is big enough for two or more extra people to live in, and you rent your home from us.	Your home is big enough for one extra person to live in, and you rent your home from us.		

- 3 If you have housing need in three or more housing-need areas within one priority level, we will award you the next level of priority. For example, if your circumstances mean you qualify for 3 housing-need groups in priority-level C, we will award you priority-level B.

This is to take account of your combined housing need.

We will increase your priority in this way if you would normally be awarded priority-level A, B, C or D.

- 4 If you need to move because of a relationship breakdown and you are still living in the home you shared with your husband or wife, we will assess your application as sharing facilities with another household and needing to move for social reasons. You will also be awarded any other priority you qualify for under the priority grading matrix , such as overcrowding or medical priority.
- 5 If you or your partner are pregnant, from six months into the pregnancy we will reassess your housing need as needing an extra bedspace.
- 6 Before we can assess your housing needs as A+ priority we will need proof of your circumstances, this may include, for example, proof of any part-time custody issues with children, or proof if any members of your household are pregnant.
- 7 We will not assess your application until you have filled in all the appropriate forms and you have provided all the proof we have asked you for.
- 8 We will visit you at your home to check your circumstances before we offer you a tenancy.
- 9 If you do not qualify for any priority under our policy, we will award your application priority-level E and we will put your application on our waiting list.

## **D Our properties**

- 1 We are a housing association located within the south side of Glasgow. We have a moderate turnover of properties which allows us to allocate around 150 tenancies each year to the people on our housing lists.
- 2 The size and type of our properties limits the number of families we can re-house. Of our homes, 55% have only one bedroom, 32% have two bedrooms and 11% have three or more bedrooms.

- 3 Although we can only very occasionally offer help to large families in housing need, we have an ongoing development programme and are trying to deal with this problem over time. So, it is important that applicants with large families still apply to us.
- 4 We will allocate our properties as follows.
- We will offer tenancies in line with this policy, our current lettings plan, and your preferences for re-housing.
  - Married couples or partners will share one double bedroom.
  - Heads of households and single parents will have one single or double bedroom.
  - Two children of the same sex under the age of 16 will share one double bedroom.
  - Two children under the age of eight, regardless of their sex, will share one double bedroom.
  - Children of different sexes will need a single bedroom each once they reach eight years old, unless there is another child in the household of the same sex who they could share a double bedroom with.
  - These rules outlined above may not apply if there are certain medical or social reasons why it is impossible for these household members to share a bedroom.
  - If you need to move for medical reasons which affect your mobility, we will normally only offer you ground-floor or first-floor accommodation.
  - We will normally only offer adapted properties and properties with wheelchair access to applicants who need the facilities they contain. We will accept direct referrals from Accessible Housing Solutions for these properties if no-one on our housing list has appropriate needs.
- 5 We may occasionally offer you a property with one bedroom more than you need if there is no-one on our housing list who is more appropriate for the property.
- 6 You can tell us which streets you would prefer to live in, as well as the type of property and floor level you would prefer. We consider housing need and preference when we are allocating housing.
- 7 If we offer you a property under the terms of this allocation policy, this will count as an offer if the property matches your preferences.
- 8 If we offer you two suitable properties and you reject them both, we will ask you to review your choices for re-housing, to make sure any properties we offer you in the future are suitable.  
We will not make you any further offers until we receive this information from you and we are satisfied with it.

## **E Mutual exchanges**

- 1 We allow our tenants to exchange homes with another tenant (our tenant or another landlord's tenant) in certain circumstances.
- 2 You must not exchange homes until you have our and the other tenant's landlord's written permission.

- 3 If you are our tenant, you must let us know immediately when you find someone you would like to exchange homes with.
- 4 We will consider your and the other tenant's rehousing needs. We will only give permission for the exchange to go ahead if we are satisfied that everyone involved will benefit from the exchange, and that the exchange is in line with the other sections of this policy.

## **F Temporary lets**

- 1 We normally help residents who are living in properties which we are due to modernise as part of a Govanhill Housing Association Rehabilitation Contract. We will try to provide temporary housing while we are modernising their home.

## **G Suspending Applications**

- 1a There are circumstances where you will stay on the housing list but you may be suspended from receiving any offers of housing for a limited length of time. We will review your circumstances before we remove any suspension.
- b We may suspend your application for the following reasons.
- You owe us, or another landlord, a tenancy related debt such as rent or rechargeable repairs, and this debt is more than one month's rent, and you have not kept to a repayment agreement for three months.
  - You or any members of your household are guilty of anti-social behaviour.
  - You or any members of your household have broken or not kept to the conditions of your tenancy agreement, for example you have damaged your home, or have not maintained your garden or the shared areas properly.
  - You are our tenant and you have applied to buy your home.
  - You have given us false information on your application form.
  - You do not provide us with information we need to assess your application.
  - You have refused two offers of housing and we are waiting for you to give us your choices for housing.

There is more information on suspensions in Appendix 1.

- c We do not have periods of time for suspensions. We will consider your circumstances before deciding how long to suspend your application for. We will aim to reduce the need for, and the length of, suspensions. If we suspend your application, we will tell you what you need to do before we will review or remove the suspension.
- 2 If you are unhappy with our decision to suspend your application, you should follow the appeals procedure set out in Section L of this policy.

## **H Accountability and reviews**

- 1 We are responsible to our members, the local community, our tenants and the general public.

2 This allocation policy document may change. We try to adapt to changing circumstances, and we review the policy aims each year.

## **I Confidentiality**

1 We will keep any information you give us confidential. We will not discuss your application with anyone other than you (or your representative) unless you give us written instructions to do so.

2 We are registered in the Data Protection Register. We will let you see any information we hold about you in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. You must ask us in writing.

## **J Service standards and reporting**

1 When we receive your application for housing, we will give you a receipt and a reference number within 10 working days.

2 We will tell you which priority of housing need we are giving your application within 20 working days of receiving your application (as long as we have the proof we need and your filled-in application form).

3 We will only offer you properties which match your preferences and needs shown on your application form.

4 If we give your application A, B or C priority, we will normally review your application every year. If we give you D or E priority we will normally review your application every two years.

5 Every three months, we will give the Core Services Sub-Committee extra performance information on turnover, letting timescales, looking at housing needs we are meeting, and why properties are becoming empty.

6 Every year, we will give the Core Services Sub-Committee extra performance information about the ethnic origins and any disabilities of applicants, any applications we have suspended, and overall outputs under our letting plan.

7 We will give the Core Services Sub-Committee reports and they have the responsibility of approving, any allocation decisions outside this allocation policy. The Management Committee have the responsibility of approving allocations covered by Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which relates to tenancy offers to staff, committee members, relatives and so on.

8 Every year, we will give you information on our letting performance, our turnover and our lettings plan. We will also consult fully with our customers about reviewing the allocation policy.

9 You can get information about this policy from summary leaflets in our reception, on our website, and in adverts on how to apply for housing. You can get advice on your

chances of being offered a home by coming to one of our advertised allocations surgeries.

## **K Translations**

- 1 Our allocations policy is available on tape and in other languages and formats where appropriate. We will provide summary information on the allocations policy in English, in Urdu, in Punjabi, in Hindi, on tape, large print and in Braille.
- 2 We employ staff who can speak Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi. You can speak to them about any aspect of our services or your application at one of our dedicated surgeries or by making an appointment. Please contact our switchboard on 0141 424 5000 for details.

## **L Complaints and appeals**

- 1 If you are not happy about the way we have dealt with your application, please read our complaints policy.
- 2 If you believe we have made an incorrect decision while assessing your application for housing, we have a clear procedure for dealing with appeals about decisions we make during the allocation process. If you are unhappy about your application or about how we have treated you, you should first appeal to the Core Services Sub-Committee. If you are still not satisfied, you can then appeal to the Management Committee.

Any member of the sub-committee who is involved in considering your appeal will not take part in decisions involving any further appeal.

- 3 You can get information leaflets explaining the complaints policy from our office.
- 4 If you have gone through the complaints procedure and you are still not happy, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman may take up the matter for you. Write to:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman  
4 Melville Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7NS.

Alan McDonald  
Core Services Manager  
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