



<b>HOUSING MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>ALLOCATIONS POLICY</b>
<b>APRIL 2010</b>
<b>APRIL 2015</b>

<b>Policy on :</b>	<b>Allocations</b>
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Compliant with Performance Standard :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 maximise and simplify access routes into our housing”.</li> <li>• AS1.2 Lettings “We let houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in housing need, makes best use of available stock, maximises choice, and helps to sustain communities”.</li> <li>• AS4.2 Partnership working “We work actively with other organisations, and within our own organisation, to ensure that the needs of homeless people are met appropriately and quickly”</li> <li>• AS4.4 Prevention “We help to prevent homelessness arising in the first place and its reoccurrence when it has occurred”</li> <li>• AS4.10 Accommodation Provision “We supply accurate and up to date information about our stock to local authorities as requested and in agreement with them. We comply with requests from local authorities for accommodation for homeless people, unless we have a good reason for not doing so. We make sure we treat homeless people fairly in terms of quality of housing and location we offer them”</li> </ul>
<b>Compliant with Tenant Participation Strategy:</b>	<b>Consultation undertaken on draft policy and feedback presented to the Management Committee</b>
<b>Compliant with Equal Opportunities :</b>	<b>Equal Opportunity assessment on policy ongoing</b>

<b>Compliant with Internal Business Plan :</b>	<b>Yes</b>
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<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Housing Manager</b>
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## **SECTION 1**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Paisley South Housing Association has property in Foxbar, Glenburn, the South, West and the Town Centre of Paisley. A map showing the location of our property is attached, see Appendix 1.

The types of property we have are:

- General needs i.e. suitable for applicants who do not have any mobility needs.
- Amenity properties suitable for applicants who have difficulty with mobility.
- Wheelchair accessible properties suitable for applicants who require the use of wheelchair within the home.
- Substantially adapted properties suitable for applicants who require a property which has previously been adapted to meet a medical need.

Features of a substantially adapted property are:

- Doorways widened for wheelchairs to fit through
- Internal stair lift
- Ramp (inside or outside, or both)
- Wet floor area & walk in showers
- Changed heights and positions of kitchen units.

A detailed breakdown of our property by area, property type and size is attached, see Appendix 2.

The Association has a development programme and has increased its stock through new build projects and rehabilitation of tenement stock. Through our development programme we are positively contributing towards the regeneration of Paisley. The Association seeks funding from the Scottish Government to further our development programme.

#### **1.2 ABOUT OUR ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

The Association is currently working in partnership with Renfrewshire Council, and other locally based housing associations in FLAIR ( Federation of Local Housing Associations in Renfrewshire) to harmonise our allocations policies. This policy reflects the first stage of this process with the Association introducing grouping & prioritising housing applications similar to the council and other partners in FLAIR. The second stage will move partners further towards having a common Allocations Policy so that applicants will benefit from having their applications for housing treated in the same way.

Our Allocations Policy sets out the rules we apply in accepting applicants onto our housing list, the rules we apply to select an applicant for an empty

property and where an applicant accepts the offer of property the type of tenancy which will be offered.

This policy was developed in consultation with our tenants and housing applicants, with other housing associations within FLAIR, Renfrewshire Council and other agencies such as Women's Aid, Renfrewshire Association for Mental Health (RAMH) and Positive Action in Housing.

A copy of this allocations policy is available on request by contacting PSHA at 64 Espedair Street, Paisley, PA2 6RW, telephone no 0141 889 7105 or by emailing [admin@psha.org.uk](mailto:admin@psha.org.uk). Alternatively a copy is available on our web site at [www.psha.org.uk](http://www.psha.org.uk) .

A summary of the policy is available in leaflet form which can also be obtained through the sources detailed above.

Applicants who need an application form or allocation policy information in a different format/language should contact our office as we may be able to help.

The Association will also distribute a copy of the Allocations Policy to the following:

- Members of FLAIR
- Renfrewshire Council
- Scottish Housing Regulator
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Local Libraries
- External Agencies who provide support operating within our area
- Women's Aid
- Renfrewshire Law Centre
- Positive Action in Housing
- West of Scotland Race Equalities Council

### **1.3 COMPLIANCE**

In developing this Policy the Association has taken account of both the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) Performance and Raising Standards (as detailed in this document's covering sheet) and legislation.

#### **1.3.1 Legislation**

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- The Race Relations Act 1976 which makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin when letting properties or assessing applicants
- The Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981 which protects a person's right to live in the family home.

- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 which makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of sex in the provision of housing facilities or services to the public.
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 which makes it unlawful for organisations which provide goods, facilities or services (including housing) to the public to discriminate against disabled people by treating them less favourably than someone else.
- The Data Protection Act 1998 which requires being adhered to in terms of personal information held by the Association both on computerised and manual files.
- The Equality Act 2006 which requires being adhered to in terms of eliminating unlawful discrimination, and promoting equality between men and women.
- The Civil Partnership Act 2004 which requires giving legal recognition to same sex couples.
- The Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005 which places a duty to co operate with responsible authorities in the re housing of offenders.

### **1.3.2 Good practice**

Consideration has also been given to the following:

- Housing Management Standards Manual CIOH
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001: Housing Lists and Allocations Scottish Executive Circular 1/2002
- Suspending Applicants on the Housing Register – A Guide for Housing Professionals CIOH

### **1.3.3 Other Association documents**

In developing this policy the Association has taken account of other relevant policies such as the:

- Void Management Policy
- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Estate Management Policy.
- Nomination Agreement with Renfrewshire Council
- ODS Consulting – Housing Needs of Minority Ethnic Communities in Renfrewshire
- Sustainability Report

## **1.4 AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

### **1.4.1 Aims**

The Association's aim is to "Provide affordable rented housing in attractive neighbourhoods for people who wish to live in Paisley"

### **1.4.2 Objectives**

This policy is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Be compliant with legislation and the SHR requirements
- Provide equal and open access to our housing list
- Provide good information and advice to applicants which will enable them to make informed decisions about their housing options with the Association.
- Maximise choice for applicants
- Have a housing list which is up to date and accurate
- Prioritise applicants in housing need
- Provide a quality service to our customers
- Have a clear appeals and complaints procedure for applicants who wish to challenge an allocation decision or process
- Make best use of our property
- Minimise the number of vacant properties
- To make allocations which will provide sustainable tenancies and contribute towards sustainable balanced communities
- Monitor our allocation process and report on our performance
- Consult with our tenants on any proposed change to how we manage our waiting list and allocate property
- Work in partnership with other organisations to identify and alleviate housing need
- Analyse demand information to inform our future development programme and feed into Renfrewshire Council's Local Housing Strategy.

### **1.5 Equal Opportunities**

The Association promotes equal opportunities and will not discriminate between persons on grounds of gender or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

The Association recognises that particular groups may need assistance to access information on how to apply for a house and how properties are allocated. We will attempt to identify and assist these groups wherever possible.

Should an applicant need any information to be in a different format/language or requires we will attempt to assist wherever possible. We will also, where practical arrange for an interpreter if an applicant speaks a language other than English.

The Association will monitor gender, disability and ethnic origin in accordance with legislative requirements to ensure that the services we provide offer equality of opportunity to all applicants.

## **1.6 Data Protection**

The information provided by applicants within their application form will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The Association will store personal information provided by applicants both electronically and manually within a filing system.

In accordance with the Act an applicant can request access to the information held on their record. Applicants wishing to do this should make their request in writing to the Association. A response will be given within 40 days. A fee of £10 is applied for this service, which should be sent to the Association along with any request made.

The Association will not retain personal information where it is no longer relevant to do so. Following the cancellation of an application the Association will retain the application for a period of one year and thereafter it will be destroyed.

The Association will at all times in dealing with an application for housing have regard for the confidentiality of the information provided by applicants.

## **SECTION 2**

### **2. HOW TO APPLY FOR HOUSING**

#### **2.1 Direct Applicants**

Anyone aged 16 years or over has a right to apply and be accepted onto the Association's housing list.

Access onto the housing list is through the completion of the Association's Application for Housing Form.

Application forms can be:

- Collected from the Association's Office at 64 Espedair Street, Paisley PA2 6RW.
- Downloaded from our website [www.psha.org.uk](http://www.psha.org.uk)
- Downloaded from Renfrewshire Council's web site [www.renfrewshirecouncil.gov.uk](http://www.renfrewshirecouncil.gov.uk) by following the Housing Options link
- Posted out following a telephone request to 0141 889 7105
- Posted or emailed on receipt of an email to [admin@psa.org.uk](mailto:admin@psa.org.uk)
- Collected from Renfrewshire Council or any Housing Associations within FLAIR, see Appendix 3

The Association will also distribute a supply of application forms to other external agencies operating in the Renfrewshire area to ensure maximum opportunity of access for members of minority groups and vulnerable people who may require assistance in making an application for housing.

#### **2.2 Existing tenants**

Existing tenants can apply for a move to another property with the Association at any time. Their applications will be assessed in the same way as direct applicants.

#### **2.3 Persons who are subject to Immigration Control**

There are no legal restrictions on applicants being allocated housing by a housing association on the basis of their immigration status. However, the reason for residence, along with the applicants' county of origin/nationality, will impact on their rights and entitlements to access housing, benefits and welfare entitlement and consequently their ability to sustain a tenancy. Because of the complexity of immigration status and benefit entitlement, such applicants and tenants must always be referred to appropriate agencies for information and advice.

#### **2.4 People leaving the Armed Forces**

The Association will accept applications from both service personnel in advance of discharge and ex – Service personnel. We will not impose any

residential qualifications which would restrict or disadvantage them in any way.

## **2.5 Staff and committee members**

Applications made by staff and committee members for housing will be accepted onto the housing list in the same way as other applicants. Any subsequent allocation of housing is however subject to the control of payments and benefits: Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

To ensure that staff, committee members and close relatives identify themselves, when applying for housing, the Association has incorporated a question on the application form, enquiring as to any relationship with PSHA staff or the management committee members.

Where applicants circumstances fall under Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 the Association will apply our Policy on Payments & Benefits.

## **SECTION 3**

### **3. ADVICE AND INFORMATION**

#### **3.1 ADVICE TO APPLICANTS**

The Association will provide the following information and advice to direct applicants and existing tenants seeking a transfer:

- Guidance on completing an application form
- Where we have property and its availability based on turnover information
- Area profiles
- The supporting information applicants are expected to provide along with their application e.g. carer arrangements where 24 hour care is required, access arrangements for children
- The service standards which apply to processing their application
- How medical information will be assessed
- What information they will receive following assessment of their application
- Who to contact for advice and information about their application
- Alternative sources of accommodation (other Housing Associations operating in the area/ Renfrewshire Council )
- Signposting for applicants who are homeless
- Signposting to external agencies e.g. support providers

The Association will provide all information and advice in Plain English.

#### **3.2 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS**

The Association is committed to seeking continuous improvement in the delivery of our housing services. In order to do this we set service standards and measure our performance against these. In the management of our housing list and the allocation of our property we have set the following service standards:

- Process the application and issue a letter within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt.
- Process any change of circumstances within 10 calendar days.
- Respond to any correspondence from an applicant within 10 calendar days.
- Acknowledge receipt of letters of support within 5 calendar days from receipt.
- Select an applicant for a property within 5 calendar days of receipt of a termination of a tenancy.
- Select an applicant for a property within 5 calendar days following repossession.
- Re let an empty property within 20 calendar days of a tenancy ending.
- Access for applicants to duty Housing Management staff within office opening hours to answer enquiries when either phoning or calling to

the office to ask for advice. Where a duty staff member is not immediately available a message is taken for that staff member to contact within 24 hours.

- Information will be given on;
  - Applicants group
  - Priority
  - Number of properties in their areas of choice
  - Turnover of property in their areas of choice
  - Likelihood of housing

### **3.3 CONDITIONS FOR SELECTING AND ALLOCATING HOUSING**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires us to give reasonable preference to the following people when we are allocating housing:

- (i) Those occupying houses which do not meet the tolerable standard (for example, houses which do not have basic amenities such as hot running water or an inside toilet);
- (ii) Those occupying overcrowded houses (that is, where people have to share inappropriately as there are not enough bedrooms for the number of people living in the house);
- (iii) Large families;
- (iv) Those living under unsatisfactory housing conditions
- (v) Those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The Association **will not consider** the following when allocating housing:

- How long an applicant has lived in an area.
- Any debt relating to a house which the applicant was not a tenant of.
- Any rent or other debt the applicant built up on a previous tenancy which has now been paid.
- Any amount which still needs to be paid where; the amount owed is not more than 1/12 of the yearly amount due (or which was paid) by the applicant to the landlord for the tenancy; or the applicant has an agreement in place with the landlord to repay the money, has made payments in line with the arrangement for at least three months, and is continuing to make these payments.
- Any outstanding debts (including missed Council Tax payments) which do not relate to the tenancy of a house.
- The age of the applicant, as long as he or she is aged 16 or over except when allocating houses which have been designed or substantially adapted for a particular age group; or houses for people who are, or will be, receiving housing support services for people of a particular age group.
- The income of the applicant and his or her family.
- Whether the applicant or any member of their family owns or has owned a property.

### **3.4 CHANGES IN HOUSING CIRCUMSTANCES**

The applicant is responsible for telling us about any change in his/her circumstances e.g. members of the household leaving or moving in. It is

important that applicants keep their application details correct and up to date as this may affect their chances of receiving an offer of housing.

On receiving notification of a change of circumstances the Association will process the information within 10 calendar days advising the applicant if the change has affected their grouping or priority banding.

Where an applicant changes address, he/she will be required to complete a new Paisley South Housing Association Housing Application Form which will be processed in the same way as a new application.

If an applicant has a joint application and decides that they do not want to be housed together, they should tell us. We will give them a date of application from when their name first appeared on the joint application.

### **3.5 DELIBERATELY MAKING HOUSING CIRCUMSTANCES WORSE**

If an applicant changes address, the assessment of his or her circumstances may alter. However, if we consider that a move or an act was done deliberately to increase the chances of being housed, we will assess the application on the previous circumstances and will not consider the extra housing need for 6 months.

### **3.6 FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION**

The applicant will be required to sign a declaration on the application form. Where false or misleading information has been provided knowingly or recklessly in order to influence the assessment of housing need, the application will be suspended from selections for a 6 month period.

If a tenancy has been granted on the basis of such information, we may take action to repossess the property and if appropriate notify the Police of the offence.

## **SECTION 4**

### **4. REMOVAL FROM THE HOUSING LIST**

The Association will not remove any applications except in the following circumstances:

- The applicant has requested removal from our list
- The death of applicant
- The applicant has failed to respond to a review

#### **4.1 AT APPLICANT'S REQUEST**

Applicants who request their application be removed from our list will receive confirmation in writing within 10 calendar days.

#### **4.2 FAILURE TO RESPOND TO A REVIEW**

To ensure the Association holds accurate information on our applicants' needs and choices we will undertake an annual review of the housing list. Applicants will be contacted in writing asking them to;

- Confirm if they wish to remain on our housing list
- Confirm the details we hold as being correct
- Respond with the information asked for within 28 calendar days.

Where the applicant fails to respond to their review letter a reminder will be issued requesting their response within 14 calendar days. Where the applicant fails to respond to the reminder letter their application will be removed from our housing list.

Review letters returned by the Post Office as "Gone Away" or "Addressee Unknown" will be treated in the same way as failed to respond.

Any applicant, who contacts the Association after the review period and following their application being cancelled, can make an appeal. See Section 9 of this policy.

#### **4.3 FAILURE TO RESPOND TO CORRESPONDENCE**

Any applicant who fails to respond to correspondence in respect to their application for housing or correspondence is returned by the Post Office as either "Gone Away" or "Addressee Unknown" will have their application suspended and the review process as detailed in section 4.2 will be followed.

## **SECTION 5**

### **5. HOUSING NEED**

#### **5.1 GROUP & PRIORITY SYSTEM**

Once applications have been assessed, they are placed in a group. We run a 'group plus priority' system for allocating housing which aims to ensure that we give reasonable priority to the applicants as detailed below. Applicants will fall into one of the five groups and will have a priority which reflects the level of their housing need.

Table 1 - The group and priority system.

<b>Group 1 Nominations/ Homelessness</b>	<b>Group 2 Mobility Direct Applicants</b>	<b>Group 3 General Needs Direct Applicants</b>	<b>Group 4 Mobility Existing Tenants</b>	<b>Group 5 General Needs Existing Tenants</b>
<b>Referral Agreement with Renfrewshire Council</b>	<b>Priority A plus</b>	<b>Priority A plus</b>	<b>Priority A plus</b>	<b>Priority A plus</b>
	<b>Priority A</b>	<b>Priority A</b>	<b>Priority A</b>	<b>Priority A</b>
	<b>Priority B plus</b>	<b>Priority B plus</b>	<b>Priority B plus</b>	<b>Priority B plus</b>
	<b>Priority B</b>	<b>Priority B</b>	<b>Priority B</b>	<b>Priority B</b>
	<b>Priority C plus</b>	<b>Priority C plus</b>	<b>Priority C plus</b>	<b>Priority C plus</b>
	<b>Priority C</b>	<b>Priority C</b>	<b>Priority C</b>	<b>Priority C</b>
	<b>Priority D Applicants with aspiration to move</b>	<b>Priority D Applicants with aspiration to move</b>	<b>Priority D Applicants with aspiration to move</b>	<b>Priority D Applicants with aspiration to move</b>

Within any group where an applicant has only one identified need they will be placed within the priority which reflects this need. Where an applicant has more than one need, excluding aspiration, they will be awarded a plus priority.

It should be noted that in relation to Group 2 & 4 the "plus " award will only be given where the applicant has some other type of housing need in addition to their mobility need.

Applicants placed in Group 1 will have access to all Association property.

Applicants placed in Group 2 & 4 will have access to wheelchair property, ground floor amenity, adapted property and ground floor general needs property with level access only.

Applicants placed in Group 3 & 5 will have access to all general needs property excluding those identified as suitable for Group 2 & 4.

## **5.2 ALLOCATION TARGETS**

The Association will allocate housing according to targets set for each group. Each group will be given a percentage target of overall lets in the year which reflects the Association's aims and objectives. The targets are not rigid but are what the Association aims to achieve.

Table 2 – Allocation Targets

<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2 &amp; 3 combined</b>	<b>Group 4 &amp; 5 combined</b>
Nominations/Homelessness <b>Target 50%</b>	Direct Applicants <b>Target 20%</b>	Existing Tenants <b>Target 30%</b>

The Association will review and set new targets annually.

## **5.3 THE PROCESS OF ALLOCATING A PROPERTY**

When a wheelchair, ground floor amenity, adapted or a level access general needs property becomes available for let or re-let, it will be offered to either a Group 2 or Group 4 applicant. We will aim to give applicants and existing tenants equal access to these properties and only where there are no applicants within either of these groups will the property be offered to an applicant needing a general needs property.

Where the Council requires a specific type of property to meet a homeless person's mobility need they will make an applicant referral.

If the property is a general needs property it will be offered to one of the other groups. This will be done by following the percentage targets detailed in Table 2 - that is, 5 out of 10 to nomination/homelessness applicants, 2 in 10 go to direct applicants & 3 in 10 go to existing tenants

Where more than one applicant is selected from the group with equal priority, the Association will prioritise the applications based on the date of award of the priority. If the dates of award are equal we will consider both applicants general needs and housing needs. First priority will be given to the applicant who we consider the property to be most suitable for.

We will contact applicants and check their circumstances before we make an offer of housing. This may be done through a home visit or interview. We will ask for any outstanding evidence from the application form to corroborate the priority that was given to the application. We reserve the right to make

enquiries with any third party to check the validity of information disclosed by the applicant. However the applicants consent for us to do this will be asked for on the application form.

Where an offer is being made to an existing tenant a house inspection and various tenancy checks will be carried out to make sure that the tenant is complying with his/her conditions of tenancy. There are some circumstances where an offer of housing will not be made and these are noted in Section 6 of this policy.

For direct applicants the Association will contact the applicant’s current and/or former landlord for a reference relating to the conduct of current or previous tenancies over the preceding 3 years. We will ask about;

- Any debts left with the previous Landlord, the amount and source of the debt;
- Any action taken against the applicant for anti-social behaviour and the consequences of that action;
- Any other significant breach of tenancy conditions.

#### **5.4 ELIGIBLE HOUSE SIZE**

The Association will apply the following criteria in determining the size of property an applicant will need;

- Couples living as husband and wife, partners (including same sex), and a single parent should have a separate bedroom.
- Children of different sexes aged 10 or over should have a separate bedroom.
- Children of the same sex aged 16 or over should have a separate bedroom.
- Any other person living as part of the household aged 16 or over should have a separate bedroom.
- Unborn child or children from 3 months before the due date will be taken account of when working out the eligible house size required.
- Applicants who have contact agreements for overnight stays for their children will be considered for a property one bedroom larger than they require regardless of the number of children for which they have access. The Association will seek written confirmation from either a court or from the separated partner confirming the applicant’s access arrangements.
- Applicants who have carers who require to sleep over for 3 nights or more in any given week will be considered for a property one bedroom larger than they require.

Table 3 - House size required for different households

<b>Household size</b>	<b>Eligible House size</b>	<b>Number and size of bedrooms</b>
Single person	One bedroom or studio	1 Single or double bedroom
Couple	One bedroom	1 Double bedroom

Couple or a single parent with one child Single person with access arrangements for children Single person with carer	Two bedrooms	1 Single + 1 double bedroom Or 2 double bedrooms
Couple or a single parent with two children	Two or three bedrooms (depending on the age of the children)	Combination of single & double bedrooms
Couple or a single parent with three or more children	Three or four bedrooms (depending on the age of the children)	Combination of single & double bedrooms

The Association's largest properties have 4 bedrooms (3 double & 1 single bedrooms). This means that the maximum number of people in a household we can accommodate is 7, depending on the age and sex of the children.

Where the Association receives an application from a family of 7 persons and we do not have the size of property required consideration will be given to allocating outwith the eligible house size. The Senior Housing Officer will have delegated authority to assess these cases and consider them for our largest property size to alleviate the applicant's current housing conditions.

Where the Association receives an application from a family of 6 persons and in accordance with our eligible house size they require a property with 4 bedroom property we will consider them for a property with 3 double bedrooms where it will alleviate their current housing circumstances.

### **5.5 SEPARATED HOUSEHOLDS**

Where members of the applicant's household are living at different addresses and they have no permanent suitable home for all of them the Association will assess their housing needs, such as overcrowding, on the basis of the whole family living together at the more suitable address.

Suitability will usually relate to the applicant's housing need, mobility needs and the size of the property. The Association will also consider the applicant's right to stay in the house.

### **5.6 GROUPS & PRIORITIES DETAILED**

The Association recognises the following;

#### **5.6.1 GROUP 1 – NOMINATIONS/STATUTORY HOMELESS**

The Association works in partnership with Renfrewshire Council to assist them in alleviating homelessness. This group includes applicants who have been assessed as homeless by Renfrewshire Council's Housing Advice and Homeless Services Team. The Association will accept referrals for these applicants from the Council under Part 11 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987,

as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003.

See Appendix 5 for contact details for Homeless Applicants

### **5.6.2 GROUP 2 - DIRECT APPLICANTS MOBILITY NEED**

Applicants placed in this group will have restricted access to property defined by the Association as suitable for their mobility need. The properties which are available to applicants in this group are:

- Purpose built properties suitable for wheelchair users only.
- Amenity ground floor property.
- General needs level access property.
- Adapted general needs level access property.

The Association will award a priority band of A, B, C or D as detailed in the table below, following an assessment of the applicant's need.

Table 4 – Direct Applicants Mobility Need –

<b>Priority A plus</b>	Critical mobility need - where current accommodation makes it impossible to perform day-to-day tasks or poses a danger to life. Plus any other housing needs apply.
<b>Priority A</b>	Critical mobility need- where current accommodation makes it impossible to perform day-to-day tasks or poses a danger to life.
<b>Priority B plus</b>	Urgent mobility need – where current accommodation severely restricts ability to carry out day-to-day tasks. Plus any other housing needs apply.
<b>Priority B</b>	Urgent mobility need – where current accommodation severely restricts ability to carry out day-to-day tasks
<b>Priority C plus</b>	Mobility need – where moving will improve the ability to carry out day-to-day living. Plus any other housing needs apply.
<b>Priority C</b>	Mobility need – where moving will improve the ability to carry out day-to-day living.
<b>Priority D Aspiration</b>	Desire to move from one property which meets the mobility needs of the applicant to another mobility property

**If more than one person in the applicant's household has mobility need we will only give priority to the person with the highest mobility need. A "plus" priority will only be given where the applicant also has some other type of housing need, excluding aspiration.**

Applicants can only be placed on a queue for housing that is suitable for their mobility need e.g. where an applicant cannot manage stairs he/she will not be considered for a property which has internal stairs. Account will also be taken of the facilities in the house in relation to specific housing needs of the applicant, that is, a wheelchair property will be offered first to any wheelchair users on the queue.

For properties which have been substantially adapted we will try to match this property to an applicant within the mobility group with similar needs. By “substantially adapted” we mean it has one of the following adaptations:

- Doorways widened to accommodate a wheelchair
- Internal stair lift
- Ramped access (internal/ external)
- Wet floor area
- Walk in shower
- Adjusted height/ position of kitchen

A mobility assessment process will include some/all of the following depending on the circumstances presented;

- The completion of the medical self assessment within the application form
- A home visit by a member of staff to verify information given
- The sharing of information with other housing providers/ Renfrewshire Council on any OT assessment undertaken.

The Association will not require doctors’ letters to support an applicant’s request for mobility award.

The Association will give applicants advice on contacting the Social Work Department about adaptations for their current home.

Applicants who are seeking housing due to mental health needs will be considered for general needs property and awarded a priority within either Group 3 or 5 depending on their circumstances.

### **5.6.3 GROUP 3 – HOUSING NEED DIRECT APPLICANTS**

#### **Group 3 - Priority A - Critical Housing Need**

Applicants who have the following needs are considered as having critical housing need.

**Where an applicant has more than one need within Priority A and has any other need as detailed within Priority B or C they will be awarded a Priority A plus.**

- **Group 3 - Priority A - Domestic abuse**

In defining domestic abuse, we will adopt the Scottish Executive definition. “Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse, sexual abuse and mental and emotional abuse.” If an applicant gives domestic abuse as the reason for applying for a house, we will follow the standards set out in the Homelessness Code of Guidance 2005. This means that we will collect information to support the applicant’s case, but will not contact the person that is responsible for the abuse. If it is impossible to get confirming evidence, the applicant’s fears

about the current situation will be enough. The Association will also refer the applicant to Renfrewshire Council's Housing Advice Section for assessment for temporary accommodation. Where an applicant is placed in temporary accommodation the Association will accept a Section 5 referral by the Council through Group 1.

- **Group 3 - Priority A – Harassment**

Harassment may result in an applicant not being safe in or around their current accommodation. This may include cases where;

- Applicants or members of the household have been victims of a physical attack.
- The applicant (or a member of the applicant's household) is the target of harassment where there is a major threat.
- The police recommend a move for safety reasons.

The Association will accept the applicant's allegation of harassment. We will however undertake checks with the Police and other agencies to support/collaborate the allegations if the applicant consents to this. The Association will deal with any information provided in a sensitive and confidential manner. Where an applicant is placed in temporary accommodation the Association will accept a Section 5 referral by the Council through Group 1.

- **Group 3 - Priority A – Property below the tolerable standard**

The Association will use the current legal definition in deciding if a house is below tolerable standard. The current definition is set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001) and will include things such as houses that do not have a sink with a supply of both hot and cold water and houses that do not have an effective system for getting rid of waste water and surface water. Renfrewshire Council's Environmental Services Department must confirm in writing that the house is below the tolerable standard.

- **Group 3 - Priority A – Statutorily overcrowded**

The Association will use the current legal definition of overcrowding. This is contained in sections 136 and 137 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, which say that a house is overcrowded when the number of people sleeping in the house affects either the room standard or the space standard. See Appendix 4 for definition of statutory overcrowding.

- **Group 3 - Priority A – Community Care Panel**

Community Care priority is awarded by the Community Care Panel. The Panel aims to meet the housing and support needs of people so that they can live in the community. The Panel includes senior officers from Renfrewshire Council Housing and Property Services and Social Work, together with representatives from the Health Board or health professions and the local

housing associations. Applicants with a community care need can be referred to the Panel by any of the organisations involved in the Panel.

Applicants will include those who:

- Are elderly
- Have a physical disability
- Have a learning disability
- Have mental health needs
- Have HIV or Aids, or
- Were previously in the care of the local authority

The Panel will give an 'A' award to people whose needs are critical, where current housing makes it impossible to carry out day-to-day tasks. The Panel will decide the type and location of appropriate housing, and we will try to make offers in line with the Panel's decision.

If more than one person in the applicant's household has a Community Care award, we will only take account of the highest priority when allocating housing. A "plus" priority will only be given where the applicant also has some other type of housing need, excluding aspiration. See Appendix 5 for information on the community care panel.

- **Group 3 - Priority A – Relationship breakdown**

The Association will only award an 'A' priority for relationship breakdowns if there is a critical housing need (that is, the applicant can provide evidence e.g. separation agreement/ solicitors letters that state he/ she cannot stay in his/her current accommodation, has no other accommodation and where there are exceptional circumstances that prevent the applicant applying as being homeless).

The Association will also refer applicants in this category to the Council's Housing and Advice Team for advice and support, including advising them about any rights they may have under the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981.

- **Group 3 - Priority A – Leaving institutions**

Applicants in this category will include people who are:

- Leaving the armed forces
- Leaving prison
- Leaving hospital or long-term residential care where there is no need for ongoing support and who have a date to leave but have nowhere to live when they leave.

- **Group 3 - Priority A – Insecure tenure**

Applicants in this category will include people who are potentially homeless through no fault of their own, as a result of insecure tenure, Examples are;

- A repossession order has been granted by the court this includes mortgage repossessions
- The applicant lives in accommodation connected to their job and has received notice to leave the property.

- **Group 3 - Priority A – Property acquired for development**

Applicants in this category will include resident owners or tenants of private landlords residing in property which the Association is acquiring in order to deliver its development programme. This priority will apply within 3 months of the settlement of sale.

**Group 3 - Priority B - Urgent Housing Need**

Applicants who have the following needs are considered as having urgent housing need.

**Where an applicant has more than one need within Priority B and has any other need as detailed within Priority C they will be awarded a Priority B plus.**

- **Group 3 – Priority B – Overcrowding**

Applicants in this category include households which are overcrowded but do not meet the conditions outlined in Group 3 Priority A – Statutorily overcrowded. This includes applicants who are overcrowded, with two or more bedrooms short, when we work out the number of bedrooms needed in line with the maximum eligible house size. (See section 6.)

- **Group 3 – Priority B – Harassment**

Applicants who are experiencing harassment that is specifically targeted at them or members of their household, in or around their current accommodation, but where they are safe in their current accommodation. Or, applicants who fear violence and this fear is justified. Applicants in this category may include:

- Members of minority groups who suffer verbal or physical abuse
- Members of ethnic-minority groups living in an area where there are racial attacks.

- **Group 3 – Priority B – Relationship breakdown**

Applicants experiencing a relationship breakdown who no longer want to live together.

- **Group 3 – Priority B – Receive or provide support**

Applicants who need to move to provide or receive support so the applicant or the person they are caring for can carry out day-to-day tasks (with that

support). Applicants seeking a priority award in this category of need will be asked to complete a self assessment form, see Appendix 6.

- **Group 3 – Priority B – Take up or stay in employment**

Applicants in this category include people who live out with Renfrewshire postcode area and:

- Need to move so they can keep their job
- Have an offer of employment and who need to move to take up the offer

- **Group 3 – Priority B – Community Care**

Applicants with a community care need can be referred to the Panel by any of the organisations involved in the Panel.

Applicants will include those who:

- Are elderly
- Have a physical disability
- Have a learning disability
- Have mental health needs
- Have HIV or Aids, or
- Were previously in the care of the local authority

The Panel will give a 'B' award to people whose needs are urgent, where current housing makes it extremely difficult carry out day-to-day tasks. The Panel will decide the type and location of appropriate housing and we will try to make offers in line with the Panel's decision.

- **Group 3 Priority B - Sharing Facilities**

Applicants who share facilities (that is a bathroom or kitchen or (both) with hot or cold water) with 4 or more people outside their own household.

### **Group 3 - Priority C – Housing Need**

Applicants who have the following needs are considered as having housing need.

**Where an applicant has more than one need within Priority C they will be awarded a Priority C plus.**

- **Group 3 - Priority C – Overcrowding**

Applicants who are overcrowded by one bedroom, when we work out the number of bedrooms needed in line with the maximum eligible house size. (See section 6)

- **Group 3 - Priority C – Sharing facilities**

Applicants and their household who share facilities (that is, a bathroom or kitchen (or both) with hot and cold water) with 1 -3 people outside their own household.

- **Group 3 – Priority C – Leaving home to live independently/Applicants with no accommodation**

Applicants in this category include people:

- Aged 16 or over who want to leave the family home to set up home themselves
- Without accommodation to live in their own right and with nowhere permanent to live
- Living in hotel, B&B or Guest House
- No fixed abode
- Residing in a non residential caravan, boat or vehicle
- Living in a property registered as being in multiple occupation

- **Group 3 - Priority C – Non-secure accommodation**

Applicants in this category include those:

- Living in armed forces accommodation;
- Currently in prison
- Staying in hospital long-term
- Living in a private rented flat with a short secure tenancy and who do not have a date to leave but would have nowhere else to live on leaving their accommodation.

- **Group 3 - Priority C – Looking for work in the area**

Applicants in this category include people who are looking for work in the Renfrewshire postcode area and live outwith it.

- **Group 3 - Priority C – Receive or provide support**

If a move to receive or provide support would substantially improve the ability of either the person giving or receiving support to carry out the tasks associated with day-to-day living.

In considering these applications the Association will consider the type of support required and where the applicant lives in relation to the person providing or receiving the support.

- **Group 3 - Priority C – Community Care**

Applicants with a community care need can be referred to the Panel by any of the organisations involved in the Panel.

Applicants will include those who:

- Are elderly
- Have a physical disability
- Have a learning disability
- Have mental health needs
- Have HIV or Aids, or
- Were previously in the care of the local authority

The Panel will give a 'C' award to people who have some recognised need, where current housing makes it difficult carry out day-to-day tasks. The Panel will decide the type and location of appropriate housing and we will try to make offers in line with the Panel's decision.

### **Group 3 - Priority D – Aspiration Need**

Includes applicants who are:

- In the correct size of property in accordance with our household eligibility criteria ( See Section 5.4) and who do not have any of the needs detailed in Priority A - C but who wish to move to an Association property
- Under occupying their current property

### **5.6.4 GROUP 4 – EXISTING TENANTS MOBILITY NEED**

Applicants placed in this group will have restricted access to property defined by the Association as suitable for their mobility need. The properties which are available to applicants in this group are:

- Purpose build properties suitable for wheelchair users only
- Amenity ground floor property
- General needs level access property
- Adapted general needs level access property.

This group refers only to existing tenants who either have a mobility problem and need housing that suits their mobility needs e.g. ground floor or an adapted property or who require a property which will accommodate wheelchair use.

The Association will award a priority band of A, B, C or D as detailed in the table below, following an assessment of the applicant's need.

Table 5 Existing Tenants Mobility Needs

<b>Priority A plus</b>	Critical mobility need- where current accommodation makes it impossible to perform day-to-day tasks or poses a danger to life. Other housing needs apply.
<b>Priority A</b>	Critical mobility need- where current accommodation makes it impossible to perform day-to-day tasks or poses a danger to life.
<b>Priority B plus</b>	Urgent mobility need – where current accommodation severely restricts ability to carry out day-to-day tasks. Other housing

	needs apply.
<b>Priority B</b>	Urgent mobility need – where current accommodation severely restricts ability to carry out day-to-day tasks
<b>Priority C plus</b>	Mobility need – where moving will improve the ability to carry out day-to-day living. Other housing needs apply.
<b>Priority C</b>	Mobility need – where moving will improve the ability to carry out day-to-day living.
<b>Priority D Aspiration</b>	Desire to move from one property which meets the mobility needs of the applicant to another mobility property

**If more than one person in the applicant’s household has mobility need we will only give priority to the person with the highest mobility need. A “plus” priority will only be given where the applicant also has some other type of housing need, excluding aspiration.**

The Association in considering an allocation to an existing tenant through mobility need will apply the same procedure as for other existing tenants seeking a transfer.

### **5.6.5 GROUP 5 - HOUSING NEED EXISTING TENANTS**

#### **Group 5 - Priority A - Critical Housing Need**

Existing tenants who have the following needs are considered as having critical housing need.

**Where an existing tenant has more than one recognised need they will be awarded a plus priority in their highest need group.**

- **Group 5 - Priority A - Domestic abuse**

In defining domestic abuse, we will adopt the Scottish Executive definition. “Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse, sexual abuse and mental and emotional abuse.” If an applicant gives domestic abuse as the reason for applying for a house, we will follow the standards set out in the Homelessness Code of Guidance 2005. This means that we will collect information to support the applicant’s case, but will not contact the person that is responsible for the abuse. If it is impossible to get confirming evidence, the applicant’s fears about the current situation will be enough. The Association will also refer the applicant to Renfrewshire Council’s Housing Advice Section for assessment for temporary accommodation. Where an applicant is placed in temporary accommodation by the Council they will retain their tenancy with the Association and their housing needs priority.

- **Group 5 - Priority A – Harassment**

Harassment may result in an existing tenant not being safe in or around their current accommodation. This may include cases where applicants or members of the household have been victims of a physical attack;

the applicant (or a member of the applicant's household) is the target of harassment where there is a major threat; or the police recommend a move for safety reasons. Where an applicant is placed in temporary accommodation by the Council they will retain their tenancy with the Association and their housing needs priority.

- **Group 5 - Priority A – Property being demolished**

The Association will apply this priority where we require our existing tenants to relocate due to their home being demolished. This priority will apply from the date of approval for the demolition by the Association's Management Committee

- **Group 5 - Priority A – Relationship breakdown**

The Association will only award an 'A' priority for relationship breakdowns if there is a critical housing need (that is, the existing tenant can provide evidence that he or she cannot stay in his or her current accommodation, has no other accommodation, and where there are exceptional circumstances that prevent the existing tenant applying as being homeless). The Association will refer applicants in this category to the Council's Housing and Advice Team for advice and support, including advising them about any rights they may have under the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981.

- **Group 5 - Priority A – Community Care**

Community Care priority is awarded by the Community Care Panel. The Panel aims to meet the housing and support needs of people so that they can live in the community. The Panel includes senior officers from Renfrewshire Council Housing and Property Services and Social Work, together with representatives from the Health Board or health professions and the local housing associations. Existing tenants with a community care need can be referred to the Panel by any of the organisations involved in the Panel.

The Panel will give an 'A' award to people whose needs are critical, where current housing makes it impossible to carry out day-to-day tasks. The Panel will decide the type and location of appropriate housing, and we will try to make offers in line with the Panel's decision.

If more than one person in the applicant's household has a Community Care award, we will only take account of the highest priority when allocating housing. A "plus" priority will only be given where the applicant also has some other type of housing need, excluding aspiration.

### **Group 5 - Priority B - Urgent Housing Need**

Existing tenants who have the following needs are considered as having urgent housing need.

**Where an applicant has more than one recognised need they will be awarded a plus priority in their highest need group.**

- **Group 5 – Priority B – Overcrowding**

Existing tenants who are overcrowded, with two or more bedrooms short, when we work out the number of bedrooms needed in line with the maximum eligible house size. (See section 5.4)

- **Group 5 – Priority B – Harassment**

Existing tenants who are experiencing harassment that is specifically targeted at them or members of their household, in or around their current accommodation, but where they are safe in their current accommodation. Or, existing tenants who fear violence and this fear is justified. Existing tenants in this category may include:

- Members of minority groups who suffer verbal or physical abuse
- Members of ethnic-minority groups living in an area where there are racial attacks

- **Group 5 – Priority B – Relationship breakdown**

Existing tenants experiencing a relationship breakdown and who no longer want to live together.

- **Group 5 – Priority B –Community Care**

Existing tenants with a community care need can be referred to the Panel by any of the organisations involved in the Panel.

The Panel will give a 'B' award to people whose needs are urgent, where current housing makes it extremely difficult carry out day-to-day tasks. The Panel will decide the type and location of appropriate housing, and we will try to make offers in line with the Panel's decision.

- **Group 5 – Priority B – Receive or provide support**

Existing tenants who need to move to provide or receive support so the applicant or the person they are caring for can carry out day-to-day tasks (with that support). Existing tenants seeking a priority award in this category of need will be asked to complete a self assessment form, see Appendix 6.

- **Group 5 - Priority B – Under occupation of property**

Existing tenants who are under occupying their property by at least 2 apartments (2 bedrooms), when we work out the number of bedrooms needed in line with the maximum eligible house size (See section 5.4)

### **Group 5 - Priority C – Housing Need**

Existing tenants who have the following needs are considered as having housing need.

**Where an applicant has more than one recognised need they will be awarded a plus priority in their highest need group.**

- **Group 5 - Priority C – Overcrowding**

Existing tenants who are overcrowded by one bedroom, when we work out the number of bedrooms needed in line with the maximum eligible house size. (See section 5.4.)

- **Group 5 - Priority C – Community Care**

Existing tenants with a community care need can be referred to the Panel by any of the organisations involved in the Panel.

The Panel will give a 'C' award to people who have some recognised need, where current housing makes it difficult carry out day-to-day tasks. The Panel will decide the type and location of appropriate housing, and we will try to make offers in line with the Panel's decision.

- **Group 5 - Priority C – Receive or provide support**

If a move to receive or provide support would substantially improve the ability of either the person giving or receiving support to carry out the tasks associated with day-to-day living. Existing tenants seeking a priority award in this category of need will be asked to complete a self assessment form, see Appendix 6.

### **Group 5 - Priority D – Aspiration Need**

Includes existing tenants who are in the correct size of property in accordance with our eligible household criteria and who do not have any of the needs detailed in Priority A - C but who wish to move to another Association property. Examples could include;

- Wishing to move within a close
- Move to from a flat to a house/area
- Move to another street within the same area.
- A property which offers off street parking
- Private garden
- Move away from a property with common heating
- Move to a larger property.

Applications will be queued in order of award date.

## **5.7 NUMBER OF OFFERS**

The Association aims to work with applicants to help them make the best choices that suit their level of need. Applicants will receive two offers before a housing options review is held, in which staff will provide housing advice to applicants.

After receiving this advice if an applicant refuses a further offer, we will suspend them from the list for up to 6 months to allow them to further consider their housing options. If an applicant widens their areas of choice within this period, the suspension will be lifted.

## **5.8 SPECIAL CASE ALLOCATION**

A 'special case' allocation will only apply where circumstances arise which cannot be addressed within the context of the Allocation Policy. Where this arises the approval of the Management Committee will be sought for the allocation.

A report detailing the individual circumstances will be considered by the Management Committee. It may be necessary to divulge the identity of the applicant, this however this will only be done with the consent of the applicant.

## **5.9 DEFERRED APPLICATIONS**

There may be circumstances where an applicant wants to join the housing list, but is not in a position to receive an offer. Such applicants will be put on the housing list as deferred applications. Responsibility lies with the applicant to tell us when he/she wants to be actively considered for housing and this can be done up to six months before the applicant needs housing. Applicants in the following categories may have their applications deferred:

- Applicants in tied housing (linked to their job)
- In prison
- In the armed forces

If an applicant does not want to be considered for housing because of personal reasons, for example, is too ill to move, he/she should tell us to put his/her application on hold and tell us when the time suits to be considered for housing.

## **5.10 GUARANTEED HOUSING**

If an existing tenant of the Association gives up a tenancy to move to residential accommodation, a hospital, a group tenancy, to live with a close relative to receive or provide essential support, or to go to prison, we may guarantee to re-house them within 12 months from their end of tenancy. Tenants should apply in writing before giving up their tenancy.

Where we give a guarantee and the former tenant wants to move back to an Association tenancy, we will offer them housing, which is not of a higher demand than the one they left.

### **5.11 MANAGEMENT TRANSFERS**

The Association acknowledges that from time to time existing tenants may require transferring to another property on serious management grounds. Such circumstances will be rare and each case will be dealt with on an individual basis outwith the group and priority system.

In cases of fire, flood and major repairs, where the Association is required to provide an existing tenant with temporarily re-housing we may consider a tenant's request to make the temporary move a permanent let. This may apply if:

- The property is of a same type and within an area of similar or lower demand
- The property meets the conditions of any mobility award
- The property is of the same size as their current home and does not create a need recognised by the Association to qualify the tenant for a transfer
- The tenant meets any other criteria applied to other existing tenants seeking a transfer
- The tenant has lived in the property for more than 8 weeks

There may be circumstances where we will choose to ignore the time period and arrange for a direct transfer, as long as the applicant meets the other criteria.

### **5.12 LETTING INITIATIVES**

One of the aims of the Allocations Policy is to contribute towards improving communities. Our main aim is for people to continue wanting to live in the same community, both now and in the future, and we appreciate the need to use local lettings initiatives from time to time to help facilitate this.

Local Lettings Initiatives allow us to change the conditions for allocating empty houses in a specific area to meet specific objectives.

We will consult tenants and other interested parties about any local lettings initiatives. Any initiatives will meet statutory requirements, be published, and will be subject to regular review in order to determine how long they should run, and if their objectives are being met.

The Association currently operates two lettings initiatives.

#### **5.12.1 Lettings Initiative in our high rise property at Oliphant Court.**

This initiative recognises the unsuitability of high rise accommodation for families with young children and the potential clash of lifestyles when there is

a mix of different household groups within this type of building. Applications from people aged 38 years old with no children under the age of 14 are sought for this property.

### **5.12.2 Letting Initiative in Barterholm Road**

Barterholm Road is visually unattractive and has experienced in the past recurring issues surrounding youth disorder and anti social behaviour. To address high turnover and promote sustainability of existing tenancies staff can apply discretion for future lets. Applicants identified as being vulnerable at point of selection will be interviewed by staff and assessed as to their suitability for the property. Where it is identified there is a risk of them not managing the tenancy in this area they would be by passed. Vulnerable applicants are defined as applicants seeking their first tenancy, 16 – 24 year olds, applicants identified as having support needs for addictions and where their has been a history of non engagement with support services and previous history of anti social behaviour.

## **SECTION 6**

### **6. SUSPENSIONS FROM ALLOCATIONS**

#### **6.1 PRINCIPLES**

A suspension is where an applicant has been accepted on the list but is then told they are not eligible for an allocation of housing until certain criteria are met.

The Association can suspend both direct applicants and transfer applicants on the housing list for offers of housing for a specified period of time.

Suspensions will only be applied following consideration of robust evidence and decisions are subject to the test of reasonableness.

The following principles will apply:

- The applicant will be notified of why their application is being suspended
- The suspension is time limited
- The applicant is advised of the action that they must take to end the suspension
- A clear and accountable appeals procedure
- The Association will review all suspended cases on an individual basis prior to the end of their suspension period

#### **6.2 REASONABLENESS**

Suspensions will not be used as a punishment for previous behaviour but can be used for current behaviour.

In considering the legitimacy of a suspension the Association will consider the following;

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

### **6.3 EXAMPLES OF SUSPENSIONS**

The Association will apply suspensions in the following circumstances;

- The applicant knowingly supplied false information either on their application form, change of circumstances form or at subsequent interviews with Association Staff. Suspension period 6 months.
- Arrears in respect to a current or previous tenancy. An application will be suspended where the applicant owes arrears attributed to their current or previous tenancy. In considering the arrears the debt must be:
  - more than one twelfth of the annual rent
  - less than 5 years old and must not be the result of a housing benefit overpayment.

We will lift the suspension when either the debt is repaid or the applicant has kept to a repayment arrangement for at least 3 months and is continuing to make agreed payments.

- Where a tenancy related debt other than rent, for example, service charges, rechargeable repairs, non-routine cleaning of a house, costs of clearing an abandoned house and storing furniture is outstanding. Applications will be suspended where the recurrent payment or one-off charge is more than one-twelfth of the annual amount owing. Debts which comprise recurrent and one-off charges will be considered separately. Debts which are over five years may be disregarded. We will lift the suspension when either the debt is repaid or the applicant has kept to a repayment arrangement for at least 3 months and is continuing to make agreed payments.
- The applicant has been assessed by PSHA as requiring support to maintain a tenancy and this is either not in place or the applicant cannot demonstrate they are engaging with their support provider. Suspension period 3 months. The Association will take all reasonable steps during the suspension period to ensure the appropriate support package is identified.
- We may suspend applicants if there is clear evidence that the applicant, or any person who wants to be housed with the applicant, has caused or is causing anti social behaviour and it is related to a tenancy.  
Examples of what anti social behaviour include:
  - Relevant criminal convictions (i.e. relevant to a tenancy or community safety)
  - Drug dealing from a tenancy
  - Prostitution from a tenancy
  - Fire-raising

- Extensive damage to a landlord's property
- Harassment or threats to neighbours

When considering suspension of this nature, the Association will ensure that the suspension is reasonable and there is clear robust evidence of the behaviour, supported by the current or previous landlord and/or other agencies – e.g. police, social work, Renfrewshire Council ASIST team etc. The evidence may be from social workers or probation officers or in the case of Renfrewshire residents a report from ASIST. Suspension period 6 months. We will lift the suspension when there is evidence available that the decision is no longer valid because of a change in circumstances or change of behaviour.

- An applicant or someone else named on the application has previously been evicted for anti-social behaviour or has had a decree or an Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) granted against them in relation to a tenancy in the last three years. In such cases, we will seek clear evidence, such as Police reports, on current or recent behaviour in order to determine whether the suspension should be lifted.
- The applicant or any person who wants to be housed with the applicant has breached the terms of their current tenancy e.g. neglect of property, common area, control over pets and vandalism. Suspension period 3 months. We will lift the suspension when the applicant provides evidence that there has been an improvement in tenancy conditions. This may be through a letter from their landlord, or in the case of existing tenants, a housing management report.
- Applications from existing tenants will be suspended where a Notice of Proceedings relating to a breach in applicants tenancy has been served. Suspension period 3 months.
- Where the applicant is a registered sex offender (as defined by the Sex Offenders Act 1997) the Association will suspend the application at the point of selection 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 (Responsible Authorities)
- The applicant has failed to respond to correspondence and a review of their application is ongoing. This excludes full reviews of the housing list.
- The applicant has previously given up a secure tenancy and it can be established that the applicant deliberately worsened their circumstances to gain a higher priority on the housing list. Suspension period 6 months.
- The applicant or any person who wants to be housed with the applicant has threatened, verbally or physically, a member of staff or representative of the Association. Suspension period 6 months.
- The applicant repeatedly refuses offers of housing which meet their needs and reflects their choices. Where an applicant refuses two offers, a Housing options review will be offered to discuss their re housing options. On refusal of a 3<sup>rd</sup> offer the application will be suspended for 6 months. Where an applicant changes/ widens their

areas of choice during the suspension period the suspension will be lifted.

- Applications from existing tenants will automatically be suspended in the event that a Right to Buy application is submitted to the Association. Suspension will be lifted where a sale does not conclude.
- The applicant has canvassed a member of the Association's Management Committee for personal gain. Suspension period 3 months.
- The applicant has attempted to bribe a member of staff in order to obtain accommodation or preferential treatment. Suspension period 3 months.
- Where an applicant has requested that his/her application be suspended. For example, where an asylum seeker will only want an offer of housing if they receive leave to remain in the country.

#### **6.4 TIMESCALE FOR SUSPENSIONS**

When a suspension is being considered we will ensure that, as far as practicable, all relevant circumstances are taken into account, including the consequences of suspension on the applicant. Suspensions will be for no longer than 12 months.

Where an application is suspended, the applicant will be notified in writing. S/he will be advised of the timescale for suspension as well as the action s/he can take to end the suspension.

#### **6.5 APPEALING A SUSPENSION DECISION**

If an applicant disagrees with a decision to suspend his/her application, or wishes to appeal against a suspension, he/she may write to the Senior Housing Officer stating clearly the reasons for asking the decision to be reviewed. Once the decision has been reviewed, if the applicant remains dissatisfied, he/she can use the Association's Complaints Procedure.

## **SECTION 7**

### **7. GENERAL CONDITIONS**

#### **7.1 RESPONSIBILITY**

To ensure the Allocation Policy is applied consistently and to ensure we provide a quality service for our customers the Association's staff and management committee members have clearly defined areas of responsibility.

The Housing Assistant will be responsible for:

- The management of the Association's housing list
- Providing advice & information
- Issuing forms
- Processing forms
- Seeking information supporting applications
- Home visits
- Undertaking prospects interviews
- Selection of applicants for property
- Making referrals to WRO/TIO and external agencies
- Assisting in the sign up of a new tenant
- Liaising with Renfrewshire Council for Group 1 referrals
- Processing self assessment information e.g. to receive/ provide support, medicals
- Preparation of paperwork for sign ups
- Loading the tenancy onto UH system
- Seeking references for applicants

The Housing Officer will be responsible for:

- Undertaking support assessments for applicants
- Signing off the award of priorities for applications
- Signing off allocations of property
- Accompanied viewings
- Sign up of new tenant
- New tenant visit
- Implementing end of tenancy procedures for tenants

The Senior Housing Officer will be responsible for;

- Dealing with appeals & complaints
- Compiling special case reports
- Collating statistical information for processing applications and allocations
- Collating information on customer satisfaction
- Representing FLAIR on the Community Care Panel

The Housing Manager is responsible for:

- Monitoring effectiveness of the Combined Nominations/Homelessness Agreement

- Analysis of housing need and demand information
- Monitoring and reporting on performance
- Reviewing and setting targets
- Reviewing Policy and procedures
- Compiling annual returns

The Management Committee is responsible for:

- Approving Policy
- Considering special cases

## **7.2 TENANCIES**

### **7.2.1 Scottish Secure Tenancy**

Generally, the Association will offer successful applicants a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST).

### **7.2.2 Short Scottish Secure Tenancy**

In some cases, under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, we may offer the applicant a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST), for example, where the applicant has been evicted for anti social behaviour within the last three years. A Short Scottish Secure Tenancy under these circumstances:

- Will be for at least six months (or a year); and
- Must be provided with support.

We will only offer a Scottish Secure Tenancy when we are satisfied that the conditions of the tenancy are being met.

### **7.2.3 Joint tenancy**

The Association will generally offer joint tenancies, particularly when we are offering a new tenancy to married or cohabiting couples (single and mixed sex). Also where an existing sole tenant wishes to convert to a joint tenancy and the proposed additional tenant meets the qualifying criteria set out in the legislation. We understand, however, that it will not be appropriate to offer a joint tenancy in all circumstances, for example, where an applicant has previously experienced an abusive relationship, and will respect the new tenant's preferences.

## **7.3 WORKING WITH OTHER HOUSING PROVIDERS**

The Association recognises the importance of working closely with other partner organisations to improve the housing options for applicants and to make the process of accessing public housing in Renfrewshire easier.

We will continue to develop partnership working through the following;

- Combined Nominations/Homelessness Agreement with Renfrewshire Council
- NASSO Information Sharing Protocol

- Local Housing Strategy
- Housing Needs of Minority Ethnic Communities in Renfrewshire
- Disabled Housing Services

#### **7.4 MONITORING PERFORMANCE**

The Association will monitor the allocation process and report on our performance in delivering our allocation policy to the management committee on a quarterly basis.

Outcomes will feed into;

- The annual review of allocation targets
- The review of this Policy

with a view to delivering continuous improvement in how we allocate our property.

We will collect and analyse the following information;

- Number and breakdown of applicants on the housing list
- The time it takes to process applications
- Equality and Diversity Information on the housing list and on lets
- Suspensions
- Offers refused and reasons
- Number of appeals/complaints and outcomes
- The time it takes to allocate a property
- Number and percentage of allocations made per month to each group
- Sustainability of allocations made
- The effectiveness of partnership agreements
- SCORE data

#### **7.5 APPEALS & COMPLAINTS**

Where an applicant is dissatisfied with any decision made by the Association regarding their application, or any part of the allocation process, they can request an appeal. Appeals will be dealt with by the Association's Senior Housing Officer (SHO).

The SHO will;

- Take an appeal made in writing, verbally over the telephone or in person
- Acknowledge the appeal within 5 calendar days
- Provide a written response within 14 calendar days

The appeal decision of the SHO is final. Where an applicant is dissatisfied with how we have processed their appeal they can seek redress through using the Association's Complaints Policy. This allows for consideration of complaints regarding the conduct of staff, management committee or about decisions of the Association.

Applicants will be given information on "How to make a Complaint" which advises on how complaints are dealt with and includes information regarding final recourse to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

## **7.6 POLICY REVIEW**

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years from the date of approval. The Committee will also review the Policy in light of any failures of the Allocation process or as a result of any changes in legislation or recommendations by the SPSO or SHR.

The review process will incorporate consultation with tenants, as outlined in our Tenant Participation Strategy.

## Appendix 1 Map

**Appendix 2 Stock Profile – See separate document**

### Appendix 3

#### Contact details for Renfrewshire council & Housing Associations within FLAIR

<p><b>Renfrewshire Council</b> Council Headquarters, North Building Cotton Street, Paisley PA1 1TW</p> <p>Telephone 0141 842 5000</p>
<p><b>Williamsburgh Housing Association</b> Ralston House Cyril Street Paisley , PA1 1RW</p> <p>Telephone 0141 887 8613</p>
<p><b>Bridgewater Housing Association</b> 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Bridgewater Shopping Centre Erskine, PA8 7AA</p> <p>Telephone 0141 812 2237</p>
<p><b>Linstone Housing Association</b> 32 Burnbrae Avenue Linwood, <b>PA3 3DE</b></p> <p>Telephone 01505 382 383</p>
<p><b>Ferguslie Park Housing Association</b> The Tannahill Centre Blackstoun Road, Paisley, PA3 1NT</p> <p>Telephone 0141 887 4053</p>
<p><b>Paisley South Housing Association</b> 64 Espedair Street Paisley, PA2 6RW</p> <p>Telephone 0141 889 7105</p>

## **Appendix 4**

### **Statutory Definition of Overcrowding – section 136 and 137 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987**

A house is overcrowded when the number of persons sleeping in the house is such as to contravene:

- (a) the room standard,
- (b) the space standard

#### **Section 136 of the room standard**

- (1) the room standard is contravened when the number of persons sleeping in a house and the number of rooms available as sleeping accommodation is such that two persons of opposite sexes who are not living together as husband and wife must sleep in the same room.
- (2) For this purpose:
  - (a) children under the age of 10 shall be left out of account, and
  - (b) a room is available as sleeping accommodation if it is of a type normally used in the locality either as a bedroom or living room.

#### **Section 137 the space standard**

- (1) The space standard is contravened when the number of persons sleeping in a house is in excess of the permitted number, having regard to the number and floor area of the rooms of the house available as sleeping accommodation.
- (2) For this purpose:
  - (a) no account shall be taken of a child under the age of one and a child aged one or over but under 10 shall be reckoned as one-half of a unit, and
  - (b) a room is available as sleeping accommodation if it is of a type normally used in the locality either as a living room or a bedroom.
- (3) The permitted number of persons in relation to a house is whichever is less of:
  - (a) the number specified in Table 1 in relation to the number of rooms in the house available as sleeping accommodation, and
  - (b) the aggregate for all such rooms in the house of the numbers specified in column 2 of Table 2 in relation to each room of the floor area specified in column 1.

No account shall be taken for the purposes of either table of a room having a floor area of less than 50 square feet.

- (4) The Secretary of State may prescribe the manner in which the floor area of a room is to be ascertained for the purposes of this section; and the regulations may provide for the exclusion from computation, or the bringing into computation at a reduced figure, of floor space in a part of the room which is of less than a specified height.
- (5) Regulations under subsection (4) shall be made by statutory instrument, which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of either House of Parliament.
- (6) A certificate of the local authority stating the number and floor areas of the rooms in a house, and that the floor areas have been ascertained in the prescribed manner, is evidence for the purposes of legal proceedings of the facts stated in it.

Table 1

Number of rooms	Number of persons
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	7.5
5+	2 for each room

Table 2

Floor area of room	Number of persons
110 sq. ft or more	2
90 sq. ft. or more but less than 110 sq. ft	1 ½
70 sq. ft. or more but less than 90 sq. ft	1
50 sq. ft. or more but less than 70 sq. ft	½

## **Appendix 5**

### **Community Care Panel**

The Community Care Panel has been set up by Renfrewshire Council to assess the housing and support needs of people who need care in the community, and who the Council have a legal duty to find accommodation for. Applicants who need both housing and support will be referred to the Community Care Panel. Renfrewshire Council Housing and Property Services, Social Work, health professionals and Paisley South Housing Association staff can refer people. The Panel is made up of senior staff of Housing and Property Services, Social Work, the healthcare trust and local housing associations.

The Panel considers each case that has been referred to them in order to provide appropriate housing and support. This should help applicants to keep their tenancies in the long-term, taking account of things such as:

- their wider support network;
- their ability to use community facilities; and
- particular needs outlined by the agency that referred them.

The Community Care Panel is one of a range of options available to help people with particular needs to live in the community. As a result, the Panel may not always be the most appropriate option.

Successful applicants are given a priority for the type and location of housing appropriate to their needs. The aim is that applicants are then put on a waiting list for a particular type of housing where they can get appropriate housing within a reasonable timescale.