

**PARKHEAD HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD.**

**ALLOCATIONS POLICY & PROCEDURES**

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## **PARKHEAD HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD**

### **Allocations Policy**

#### **Policy Aims and Objectives**

Parkhead Housing Association is a Community Controlled Charitable Housing Association that aims to provide good quality rented accommodation to those in housing need while also considering the best use of stock in relation to promoting a sustainable community within the Parkhead area.

The Allocation policy will strive to;

1. Facilitate fair and open access to the housing lists.
2. Prioritise those in housing need (reasonable preference being given to applicants occupying houses which do not meet tolerable standards; occupying overcrowded houses; are living in unsatisfactory housing in relation to access or medical condition) including those applicants referred by Glasgow City Council via the Section 5 Homeless Referral route.

Where any rehab property ( not new build ) in the designated Powfoot St / Beattock St difficult to let area has three refusals then subsequent offers can be directed towards those applicants approved on the waiting lists who are likely to accept the property. Further should an individual property in another non new build close display evidence of being difficult to let then subsequent offers can be directed towards those likely to accept.

3. Facilitate a degree of choice / aspiration amongst people looking for housing.
4. Proactively minimise lost rents and maximise the speed at which applicants access housing.
5. Make the best use of stock seeking to promote sustainable communities while avoiding an over concentration of vulnerable groups in specific areas.

#### **Legal and Regulatory Framework**

The Association's policy and procedures comply with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

As per Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Where the Association grants a tenancy to any of the following;

- Employee
- Committee member
- Former employee
- Former Committee member
- Relatives of any of the above

A report confirming that the let was made in accordance with this policy and accompanying procedure will be made to the next available Management Committee with a recommendation that the Management Committee approve the let.

The Association policy and procedures follow Communities Scotland's Performance Standards originally issued in 2001 and updated in November 2006;

Activity Standard 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.

Activity Standard AS1.2 Lettings - we let houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need ; makes best use of available stock; maximises choice; and helps to sustain communities.

Activity Standard 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 as quickly as possible.

Activity Standard AS4.4 - we work to prevent homelessness arising in the first place, and its recurrence when it has occurred.

Activity Standard AS4.10 - 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 good reasons for not doing so. We make sure we treat homeless people fairly in terms of the quality of housing and location we offer them.

### **Links to Equal Opportunities and Sustainability Policies**

Parkhead Housing Association seeks to be an Equal Opportunities Association and recognises its responsibilities under Housing (S) Act 2001 section 106, the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended 2003, the Civil Partnership Act 2004, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended 2005.

To help fulfil its commitment to equal opportunities the Association will collect and monitor records of the ethnic origin of all those who apply for housing and monitor ethnic origin of all those applicants rehoused.

In allocating houses the Association will seek to create and maintain sustainable communities.

The Association identifies those properties suitably located and adapted for applicants with a disability.

All Association information documents are available for translation into another language where English is not the applicants first language.

## **Policy Statement**

### **The Association's Housing Stock**

Parkhead Housing Association manages approximately 1400 properties with a turnover of approximately 100 properties per year.

The current % of relets per apartment size is;

2 apartments 44 %  
3 apartments 39 %  
4 apartments 17 %

### **Access**

The Association will ensure that access to the housing waiting list is open to all applicants aged 16 years and over.

However although all applicants will be placed on the waiting list, the Association receives many more applicants for housing than the number of houses that become available for let.

The Association will strive to provide applicants with up to date advice re housing prospects and, where appropriate, discuss other housing options.

The Association will issue a lettings brochure and summary of the process with all housing application forms issued. The Association will similarly update its website.

Advice to existing owner occupiers applying to the waiting list be;

- PHA will accept them onto our waiting list.
- Priority for rehousing is based on housing need (see definition under aims and objectives).

- The definition of housing need per the Housing (Scotland) Act of 2001 dictates that owner occupiers would not normally be made an offer of rehousing while still owning a property.

## Assessment

The Association operates a points/target system of allocations based on housing need.

Assessment is carried out by allocating points based on the applicant's;

- Housing need
- Social need
- Medical need

As described in the applicant's application form.

Admission to the waiting list does not mean an applicant will be allocated a house and this will be explained to applicants at the point of admission.

The decision on who is allocated a house and when will be determined by;

- The priority given to the circumstances of the applicant (i.e. the number of points an applicant is awarded).
- Availability dependant on turnover.
- Any Parkhead Housing Association Management Committee decisions to prioritise clearance cases from either internal or external stock.
- Funding, e.g. where GHA fund a new build site GHA may determine that all lets go to existing GHA transfer or clearance tenants and the Association must comply with this.

In the absence of clearance ahead of stock demolition the Association will typically aim to balance its annual lets as follows;

Source	%
Transfers	20
Waiting list	60
GCC section 5 homeless	20

## **Transfers**

Tenants of Parkhead Housing Association can apply for a transfer provided they meet the following criteria:

- There is no more than one month's rent outstanding prior to transfer and an arrangement to clear it is in place.
- Any outstanding recharges must be cleared.
- There are no ongoing actions re anti social behaviour, specifically a live notice; a recent Acceptable Behaviour Contract or Unacceptable Behaviour Contract; a live Anti Social Behaviour Order.

Tenants who have been allocated the correct size of house for their needs but who later require a larger house may only claim overcrowding for additional members of the household who are either dependant or under 16 years of age. The exception to this is where the tenant moves in a partner and their current accommodation is for a single person.

## **The Points Scheme**

The priority awarded to an applicant is dependant upon the number of points that the application attracts in terms of the points scheme as detailed below: -

### **Security of Accommodation**

1. Applicants sharing facilities in multi occupied or hostel accommodation or of no fixed abode or in temporary furnished supported accommodation. 110

While owner occupiers can be admitted to the list security of tenure points will only be accessed upon sale of the house being confirmed.

2. Applicants about to be made homeless and where legal proof can be provided of a date to leave. 110

This will escalate at the actual point of becoming homeless. 130

3. Applicants staying c/o another household and sharing/lacking amenities. 60

## **Lacking Amenities**

These points are only awarded where the applicant is currently a householder:

1. Without a separate kitchen 30
2. Without either a bath or shower 40
3. Without an inside WC 40
4. Without a hot water supply 20
5. Without full central heating 10

## **Overcrowding**

1. For each additional bedroom required. 40
2. Where the applicant is an Association tenant – for each bedspace short e.g. 2 children under 10 sharing a single bedroom. 30

Points for overcrowding will be based on the following criteria: -

- Applicants and partner to occupy one bedroom with the exception of couples or children under the age of ten years, persons of different sex shall not share a bedroom.
- Any members of the household over 16 years old require a separate bedroom.
- Normally there should be no more than two occupants in any bedroom.
- Where overcrowding will occur as a result of pregnancy a medical certificate will be required and points awarded 12 weeks prior to the date of confinement.

## **Under occupation**

For each bedroom surplus to requirements. 40

## **Separated Households**

Applicants whose households are forced to live apart. 20

## Age at Height

1. Where there is one or more persons of pensionable age and the household lives on the third floor or above. 20
2. If there is one or more children under 10 years of age within household living on fourth floor or above. 20

## Medical Factors

The award of medical points based on medical categories of Physical A and B, and Mental Health A and B, plus category C, seeks to allow applicants to access housing which is more suited to their medical condition. At all times the award should be made in the context of it improving the quality of life of the applicant by accessing more suitable housing.

A separate medical self-assessment form should be completed for each household member to be considered for medical points and submitted at the time of the application for rehousing or when medical problem arises.

The Association may ask you to provide supplementary information where appropriate.

An applicant or member of their household may be awarded medical points based on the person with the greatest need. **Only one such award will be made.**

Asthma on its own will not merit medical priority.

Only 1 medical award can be claimed per application.

## Physical Category A

Applicants will be largely housebound in their existing accommodation and suffer a severe health and/or mobility problem e.g. chronic heart condition, terminal illness. 100

All applicants wishing to claim medical points in this category will only be queued for ground floor property and will not be queued for any property with internal stairs.

The Lettings coordinator will take steps to ascertain the validity of the applicants condition being one or a combination of; sight of benefit book; visual observation at interview; letters of support from doctor or other health professional; letters of support from carer or social worker.

### **Physical Category B**

Applicants will have moderate health and or mobility problems which is adversely affected by current housing e.g. arthritis. 50

All applicants wishing to claim medical points in this category with a mobility problem will be offered accommodation at a maximum of first floor level and all on one floor i.e. will not be offered a house with internal stairs.

### **Mental Health Category A**

Applicants will have severe mental health problems. 100

There will be no restrictions placed on house types queued for.

In all cases a doctors and / or other appropriate health clinicians report will be required to validate both the mental illness and that a house move would significantly improve quality of life for the applicant.

### **Mental Health Category B**

Applicants will have moderate mental health problems. 50

In all cases proof as above would be required.

Depression and nervous anxiety on their own would not merit medical priority.

### **Medical Category C**

Applicants will require sole use of a bedroom due to a medical condition and that cannot be facilitated by existing accommodation. 40

A letter of support will be required from a doctor or other health professional.

## **Social Factors**

Social factors will be taken into account where it can be shown 200  
that alternative accommodation could alleviate the condition or  
improve the quality of life of the applicant or members of the family,  
e.g. person experiencing racial harassment or domestic violence

Cases under this section will be dealt with sensitively and on its own merits  
based on the evidence it is possible to gather e.g. Police, Social Work Dept,  
Doctor, Education Dept, Hospital or other advice agencies.

Evidence to support the social factors will be collated by the Housing  
Services Team and the decision to award the 200 points will be made by the  
Lettings Coordinator, ratified by the Head of Housing and reported to  
Committee.

One offer of accommodation will be made and if this is refused the social  
points will be removed.

For current Association tenants the offer of accommodation will be based on  
equivalent demand.

## **Internal Transfers**

1. If an applicant currently lives in a non-newbuild property but 2  
wishes to move to a newbuild property, for every year of the  
tenancy in the present accommodation.
2. Lacking a kitchen with natural ventilation 20

## **Priority of Applicants**

Where two or more applicants have the same number of points the following criteria will decide who has the highest priority;

1. The length of time the applicant has been in known housing need.
2. The size and suitability (including medical) of the property in relation to the needs of the applicant and the applicant's household.
3. The best use of stock in relation to promoting a balanced and stable community within the Parkhead area.
4. The stated preferences are the requirement of the applicant.

## **Suspension of an application**

The Association may suspend an applicant for any of the following reasons;

1. The applicant knowingly supplied false information either on their application or at subsequent interviews. If this becomes apparent after a tenancy is granted the Association may serve a Notice of Proceedings with a view to recovery of possession.
2. Repeated failure to respond to Association communications. The application will be reinstated after contact from the applicant.
3. Failure to advise the Association of any change in family circumstances or change of address. In this case a new application form would have to be completed.
4. Where three offers of accommodation have been refused by a waiting list applicant. In this circumstance the application will be suspended for twelve months and the applicant will require to advise the Association of their desire to remain on our list after the twelve month period.
5. Following receipt of an unsatisfactory tenancy reference and where the issues remain unresolved.

The Association will consider each case on its merits and applicants will be advised of their right to have the Head of Housing review the suspension decision. This is a separate process from the Association's Complaints Policy.

## **Relationship breakdown**

In cases of relationship breakdown within an Association tenancy the Association will give consideration to the granting of an additional tenancy to the partner moving out. In cases where children are involved the matrimonial home will remain with the party granted custody of the children.

The Association will not consider any cases for housing until both parties have been interviewed and the party that no longer wishes to remain in the matrimonial home has completed an application form.

One offer of equivalent accommodation will be made and if refused the applicant will be placed on the waiting list.

## **Custody**

The Association will allow applicants to queue for a larger house on the basis of shared/joint custody of children or on the basis of overnight access to the children.

Proof of this arrangement is required.

## **Carers**

The Association will allow applicants with carers to queue for a larger house where the carer sleeps over for three nights or more in any given week.

Proof of such an arrangement is required however the Association recognises that some carers do not either qualify for payment or opt not to take payment as it impacts adversely and disproportionately on other benefits.

No additional overcrowding points will be awarded.

## **Sheltered housing**

The Association has a stock of 60 sheltered properties. The allocation of these properties is covered by a separate policy.

## **Wheelchair / ambulant disabled**

The Association has a small stock of wheelchair/ambulant disabled properties which has a very low turnover and waiting times for this type of house may be lengthy.

A separate list of applicants requiring this type of house will be maintained. Priority will be given to transfer applicants.

### **Adapted & Specialist housing**

Adapted housing and specialist housing will be identified and matched with the applicant who will benefit most from the adaptation/specialist housing. In the latter case Glasgow City Council Social Work Services will initially identify a suitable applicant.

### **GCC Section 5 homeless referrals**

The Association will meet its obligations under the joint Glasgow City Council/Registered Social Landlord protocol in relation to homeless applicants. All referrals must come via the Glasgow City Council East Homeless Casework Team.

### **Mutual exchanges**

Association tenants may apply in writing for a mutual exchange. However the Association will not normally grant such an exchange where;

- It results in overcrowding
- It results in under occupancy
- There is an ongoing investigation into, or recent history of, anti social behaviour
- If one party is external to the Association there is an unsatisfactory landlords reference
- A home visit will be carried out to Association tenants

Written confirmation of the Association's decision whether to grant or refuse an exchange will be provided within 28 days receipt of the application.

Tenants can advertise for an exchange in the register held in the office

## **Outcomes and Targets**

The Association will seek to achieve the following:

1. Lets will be made in accordance with the policy while also considering the best use of stock in relation to promoting a sustainable community within the Parkhead area.
2. Lets will be made within the targets agreed by the Management Committee.
3. On an annual basis to coincide with the budgetary process the Association will produce a lettings plan.

## **Responsibilities and Delegated Authority**

The Lettings Co-ordinator is responsible for managing lettings on a daily basis reporting to the Head of Housing Services.

The Head of Housing Services will report to the Management Committee quarterly on:

- Number of lets in each category
- Number of days to let in each category
- % of lets in each category

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years. The Policy and Procedures were reviewed ahead of schedule in 2008 as part of a drive to improve lost rents performance and accordingly the next review date is 2011.

**Review is due in August 2011**

## Allocation Procedures

### Procedure

All new applicants, be they waiting list, transfer, or sheltered will at the time of requesting an application receive ;

- The appropriate application form
- The letter outlining the application process stressing that only fully completed application forms will be accepted ( and then immediately made live )
- The Association's lettings brochure

Offers will only be made upon completion of satisfactory references.

Upon receipt of a completed housing application form Association staff will ensure the application form is completed and appropriate proof is provided ;

- Proof of national insurance number ( DWP letter, Income Support letter, wage slip, National Insurance Card )
- Proof of address ( any of the above plus a utility bill )
- Proof of private let ( copy of lease )
- Proof of family composition ( eg utility bill in other person's name or other person's missive )
- Access ( letter from ex partner or lawyers letter and child's birth certificate )

Housing prospects interviews can now be pre booked in the Lettings Diary for Thursday mornings at 15 minute intervals between 11am and 1245pm.

### Waiting List

- Applicants are restricted to one application per applicant.
- Applicants who are tenants or have held a tenancy previously will be required to provide authorisation for the association to contact current/previous landlords to obtain a tenancy reference.
- If an applicant, being considered for a property, has any outstanding rent

arrears or other outstanding arrears, then Section 20 (2) (ii) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended, applies. If the outstanding arrears are less than one month's liability, then those arrears will not stop an offer being made. However, if the outstanding arrears are more than one month's liability, then an offer of housing will only be made if an arrangement to clear the arrears has been made and adhered to, normally for a period of at least three months.

- An application will be accepted from an applicant where legal action by his current or previous landlord has been successful on the grounds of anti-social behaviour. Such an application will be suspended and therefore will not lead to an offer. Suspension is expected to take place where there have been serious anti-social issues that have caused significant distress or harm to others and which will normally (but not always) have occurred on a number of occasions. The length of any suspension of an application on these grounds will be proportional to the behaviour concerned. Such applicants will be given a clear indication of the change in circumstances required to allow them to have their application processed. Applicants who feel that the suspension is unjustified may appeal against the decision.
- Where appropriate and following the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 an applicant with a history of anti social behaviour may be offered a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy.
- Applicants who have absconded from their previous Association property will not normally be considered for housing for one year and will be required to pay or make arrangement to pay any outstanding rent or rechargeable repairs.

## **Interview**

Prior to viewing a property applicants will be invited to the Association's office for an interview. This interview will now take place at the time of offer ie when tenant comes in to collect keys to view a property and will focus on confirming current circumstances.

The Association may request to visit applicants in their current accommodation.

## **Offer of rehousing**

When the Association makes an offer of rehousing the applicant will be allowed a maximum of three days to accept or refuse the offer. After three days if the tenant has not contacted the Association then the offer will be considered to have been refused.

Wherever possible the Association will make the offer by telephone, text or e mail with a letter to follow up.

Whenever possible the Association will seek to have a response earlier than three days but if three days will be the maximum time allowed to an applicant to respond.

## **Refusals**

The Association will make a waiting list applicant up to three offers of rehousing. After three refusals the applicant will be informed in writing that no further offers will be made for the next twelve months and that they will require to contact the Association after the twelve month period to advise that they wish to be considered for offers again.

## **Transfer List**

- Transfer applicants may specify areas within which they wish to be housed. Thereafter offers will be made according to points order with due regard to apartment size, age, and profile of existing tenants in the area selected.
- Prior to receiving an offer transfer applicants will be visited by an Area Coordinator and Technical Services Officer. The latter will identify any repairs that are required to be carried out. The Area Coordinator will check that the tenants circumstances are as detailed in their application.
- The Technical Services Officer will give the tenant a list of the repairs to be carried out and will return to check that they have been done within seven days. If the repairs are not satisfactorily and timeously completed then the transfer offer may be withdrawn.
- A transfer inspection will be valid for a maximum of three months.
- Tenants wishing to move within a close should submit a request in writing to the Lettings Coordinator. Such a move will be considered and given priority only where there are valid medical or social reasons. The decision to grant such a move will be taken by the Lettings Coordinator after

consultation with the relevant Area Coordinator.