

West of Scotland Housing Association

Housing Services Policy & Procedure

Subject	Allocation Policy & Procedure
Implementation date	1 st May 2007
Relevant legislation	Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Race Relations Act 1976 Sex Discrimination Act 1975 & 2005 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Human Rights Act 1998 The Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981 Data Protection Act 1998 Civil Partnership Act 2005 Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
Relevant policies	Harassment, Mutual Exchanges,
Relevant clauses of Tenancy Agreement	
Other information	'Performance Standards for Social Landlords' Communities Scotland, SFHA
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Statement of Equal Opportunities

The Association has developed our policies and procedures in accordance with the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice for rented housing and employment and the Equal Opportunities Commission's code of practice for employment. Our Equal Opportunity Policy covers the Association's:

- Assessment of housing need
- Letting of our houses
- Provision of housing and services to residents
- Membership of the Association
- Recruitment of Committee and staff
- Training and development of Committee and staff
- Conditions of service for staff
- Conduct of Committee members
- Appointment of consultants and contractors.

The policy covers gender, marital status, family circumstances, disability, race, ethnic or national origins, age, religion, political or sexual orientation. The Association is opposed to discrimination in any form and at all levels, and is committed to take all steps within its power to counteract it. The Association will respect community diversity and seek to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and equally. The Association has systems in place for monitoring our performance on equal opportunities in all areas of our work.

Section 1 - Introduction & General Issues

1. Introduction

1.1 Compliance with Performance Standards, Legislation and Good Practice

In developing this Policy the Association has taken into consideration:-

Communities Scotland Performance Standards Activity Standards 1.1 and 1.2 which state:-

- 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.”
- 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.”

The legislative framework affecting the allocation of properties namely:-

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 2005
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection)(Scotland) Act 1981
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Civil Partnerships Act 2005

Good practice guidance issues by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

1.2 General Aims & Principles

West of Scotland Housing Association's aim is to provide good quality housing at affordable rent levels to people in housing need. This is the Association's allocation policy. It lays down the methods

by which the Association will select new tenants for all vacant properties.

1.3 Background

The Association accepts that the Housing [Scotland] Act 2001 sets tight controls on the way it lets its houses. This gives limited scope to vary the allocation policy. We also recognise that, increasingly, many of our houses are let outwith our allocations points policy. This includes

- Section 5 referrals
- Other Council nominations
- Common Housing registers allocations.

1.4 Principles: -

- To ensure that people have fair and open access to our housing list and assessment procedures.
- To give reasonable preference to those in housing need, makes best use of available stock, maximises choice and helps to sustain communities.

1.5 Objectives

- To offer a system that covers the allocation of all our housing.
- To ensure that a balance of applicants from a range of circumstances are given the opportunity to be housed. To achieve this, the policy is based on a group plus points system of assessment.
- To assist local authorities and other housing organisations to relieve homelessness, poor housing conditions and other housing need through nomination agreements.
- To ensure that successful applicants are offered accommodation suitable to their needs.
- To assist in providing the opportunity for tenants of other social landlords to move as their needs change.
- To provide a source of housing to other organisations assisting

those in housing need that have additional support needs through referral agreements.

- To operate a system of allocating houses that is consistent, fair, easily understood and simple to administer.
- To ensure we comply with legislation and best practice
- To maintain list and allocate houses as efficiently as possible.
- To make the best use of the housing stock and minimise the time that properties are vacant.

2. Section 2 -General Issues

2.1 Scope of Policy

This policy outlines how the Association allocates its houses.

2.2 Sheltered Housing

The Association manages a variety of sheltered accommodation. Selection is normally restricted to applicants who are aged 60 years or over and who can live independently. Applicants under 60 may be considered where the applicant is assessed as being suitable for and would benefit from this type of housing.

Due to the specialised nature of this stock, a separate sheltered housing list is maintained for each complex with applicants being assessed in accordance with this allocations policy.

2.3 Supported Accommodation [including very sheltered]

The Association has a range of specially built or equipped houses where support is provided by an independent support provider. This support is funded by the Local Authority. Given the expertise required to assess and compare the competing needs for this type of accommodation, the Association will work in partnership with the funding body to allocate these houses.

2.4 Wheelchair Housing

The Association owns some houses specially adapted for people who use wheelchairs. Priority will be given to applicants who can demonstrate the need for such accommodation.

2.5 Medically Adapted Properties

The Association has accommodation with specialised features (e.g.) community alarm provision, medical adaptations in terms of non-slip shower units, ramps and accommodation supplied with fire safety appliances and some provision for the deaf and blind. We will allocate these properties to applicants that have a health need for this type of accommodation, this may not be the applicant that has the most points.

2.6 Amenity Housing

The Association has a number of houses built to amenity standard. These will be allocated, in the first instance to households that have at least one person aged over 60 or with specific needs that would benefit from the features of amenity housing.

2.7 Equal Opportunities

The Association aims to provide all its customers, including applicants for its housing, with equity of access to its housing and other services. We will therefore provide support and assistance to ensure that all applicants are able to apply for housing and to remove any unfair discrimination to particular groups of applicants.

2.8 Confidentiality

All information provided to the Association shall be treated in the strictest confidence, and will not be revealed to a third party without the applicants consent. Applicants shall have the right to examine information held by the Association regarding their application in accordance with legislation

2.9 Misleading Information

The Association may, in accordance with legislation, seek to repossess any tenancy that it considers to have been granted on the basis of the applicant intentionally providing false or misleading information, or the withholding of relevant information. The Association may also suspend applications where an applicant is found to have intentionally provided false or misleading information or has withheld relevant information

2.10 Local Lettings Initiatives

In addition to the standard rules governing the allocation of houses the Association may agree Local Lettings Initiatives to achieve aims specific to a particular area. Section 7.1 outlines guidelines under which the Association may establish local letting initiatives.

Local Lettings Initiatives shall be developed where the Association is convinced that specific and targeted action is required to try to achieve balance and stability in particular communities or to achieve the aims of a specific development.

2.11 Publicising the Allocations Policy

The Association will take appropriate action to publicise its services to ensure the applications it receives reflect housing need.

The nature of this publicity will be consistent with the turnover of housing in the various allocation areas.

The Association will provide translating services to assist applicants with the policy and submitting applications.

A free copy of the full allocations policy can be viewed at any of the Associations offices or if requested sent to an applicant's address. A summary of the allocations policy and guidance for applicants are available from all the Associations offices free of charge.

The Association will provide a copy of this policy to each Council where it has housing available to let.

2.12 Appeals

Applicants have the right of appeal against any decisions made in connection with their application. A senior member of the Associations' staff who was not involved in making of the original decision will consider the appeals. If the applicant is still dissatisfied then (s) he has the right of appeal to a review panel of Management Committee Members. All appeals should be made in writing.

2.13 Schedule 7 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

All applicants will be asked to state whether or not, to their knowledge, they are related to any current or former Committee or Staff Member. This will ensure that the Association complies with statutory requirements regarding the granting of benefits to current or former committee members or staff of the Association, or their relatives. No allocation shall be made to any such person without the prior approval of the Management Committee. (See appendix 1 for more details)

2.14 Monitoring & Review of Policy

The Management Committee will receive annual and quarterly monitoring reports that detail the key outcomes of the policy including the effectiveness of meeting the housing needs on people from minority groups.

This policy will be reviewed two years after its implementation or sooner if required. This policy is effective from 1st May 2007.

3. Section 3 - Access

3.1 General Issues

3.1.1 Open Waiting Lists

The Association maintains open lists for housing. Any one aged 16 or over can apply at any time to be assessed for housing. Only a small number of houses are available for allocation by the Association each year. Applicants are encouraged to speak to a member of staff for help and advice on their housing options

3.1.2 Welfare Benefits

The Association will seek to ensure that all applicants are able to maintain independent tenancies. If required the association can provide a benefit advice service prior to any allocations being made.

3.2 Routes to Rehousing

3.2.1 Local Authority Nominations

The Association enters into Nomination Agreements with each Council in whose area it provides housing for rent. Generally 50% of relets will be to applicants nominated by local authorities or by agencies nominated by the local authority. However, the Association may agree to offer the council nomination rights to 100% its houses in some areas. The Local Authority will generally have 100% nomination rights to new-build houses. People who wish to be considered for housing by the Association should ensure that they are on the housing list of the relevant local authority as well as applying direct to the Association.

3.2.2 Direct Applications

Applicants who apply direct to the Association will have their applications assessed in accordance with this policy.

3.2.3 Current Tenants

Current tenants of the Association may apply for transfer to another of the Association's houses. This is detailed in section 5 of this policy.

3.2.4 Agency Referrals

The Association will work in partnership with other agencies to try and rehouse applicants who are seeking assistance from other help groups

3.2.5 Mutual Exchange

The Association recognises that for many tenants a mutual exchange [swap of houses] represents the only way to satisfy their housing aspirations given the increasing pressure on waiting lists for social housing in all sectors. The Association will facilitate mutual exchanges between its own tenants and other tenants where possible. This is detailed in our mutual exchange policy (available free on request).

4 Section 4 - Current or Previous Tenancy Reports

4.1 General

The Association will normally seek a tenancy report from an applicant's current or previous landlord before the applicant is considered for a house.

4.2 Suspension

The Association may suspend applications in a limited number of circumstances. Where a suspension is to be applied, the applicant will be notified clearly of the reason for the suspension, the timescale involved, and advised of action that can be taken to end or appeal the suspension. This practice will be kept to a minimum and will only be implemented following full consideration and assessment of the applicant's circumstances. The Association will however take into consideration the safety of existing tenants, stability of the community and the public investment in its properties.

Circumstances in which suspensions may be applied are detailed below: -

4.2.1 Housing Debt

We will suspend a tenancy offer where housing debt is more than 1 month unless the applicant: -

- has arranged with the landlord to repay the debt
- has kept to the arrangements for 3 months,
- and is continuing to make such payments

The Housing debt includes service charges and rechargeable repairs. It does not include mortgage arrears, or council tax.

The Housing Services Manager will consider whether we should suspend due to arrears outstanding on a private tenancy (as the rent may have been unaffordable) and whether we should exclude any debts arising from a failure to claim Housing Benefit.

The suspension will last until they have reduced the debt to less than one month's rent or made and kept to arrangement as in 5.1.1 above.

Evidence required – confirmation from landlord that payments made for three consecutive months in line with agreement.

4.2.2 Anti-Social Behaviour

Applicants who have been evicted for anti-social behaviour or have had an ASBO granted against them within the last 3 years may be suspended. The length of suspension will be determined on an individual basis taking account of good practice guidelines. We will review the decision at the end of the suspension period and advise the applicant of the outcome e.g. further extension.

The Area Manager may also advise on other applicants who are to be suspended because they have an active Notice issued on them for anti-social behaviour.

4.2.3 Condition of House or Tenancy

An offer of housing will be withheld where the tenant has not adhered to the conditions of tenancy in respect of the property as stated in their tenancy agreement.

Matters related to the tenancy include state of the garden or common areas, control over pets, rubbish and vandalism.

Where a home visit or a tenancy reference show that a tenancy condition in respect of the property has not been adhered to, the application will be suspended for a period of 3 months. This can be reviewed earlier where the applicant has brought the property up to an acceptable standard.

Suspensions may also occur where debt is owed for the cost of making good repairs which are the tenants responsibility or for reinstating fixtures.

4.2.4 Refusal of Offers

Applicants who refuse two reasonable offers of housing made in accordance with both their needs and their stated preferences will be advised that their application may be suspended should a third and suitable offer be made and refused.

If an applicant refuses a third suitable offer they will normally be suspended for 1 year.

4.2.5 Providing false/misleading information

Where an applicant is found to have intentionally provided misleading/or withheld information to gain additional points they may be suspended and the application assessed in accordance with their actual circumstances. The suspension will normally last for 6 months.

4.2.5 Applying to buy an Association House

Although applicants who apply to buy their Association tenancy are entitled to register on the housing list, such tenants will be suspended from receiving an offer. The suspension will remain until the tenant completes the purchase or withdraws their application to buy.

4.2.6 Abandonment/worsening situation

An applicant who previously has had a house recovered through abandonment procedures in the last 3 years may be suspended from receiving an offer of housing for 6 months. The terms of Section 5.2 may also apply in these instances. In such cases abandonment procedures will have been applied in terms of legal and best practice requirements.

4.2.7 Asylum seekers

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (applicable from April 2000) prevents local authorities from allocating a house to a person 'subject to immigration control'. In practice, housing for asylum seekers is arranged centrally by the National Asylum Support Agency via contracts with housing providers. If asylum seekers are granted leave to remain, they become eligible for a tenancy.

The Association meets the Housing Needs of Asylum Seekers by leasing some of its houses for other providers to house asylum seekers. Applications from asylum seekers will be accepted on to the list at any time. The application will be suspended until a decision on the asylum application has been confirmed unless the applicant can demonstrate that they have a source of income that would allow them to sustain a tenancy. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide the evidence to the Association.

Evidence required – Original documentation from Home Office confirming that applicant has a right to a tenancy.

4.2.8 Migrant workers with ‘No recourse to Public funds’

Migrant workers from the ‘new’ European states are eligible to apply for housing with the Association and will be accepted onto our waiting lists. However, they may not be entitled to housing benefit during the first 12 months stay in the UK. The Association wishes to ensure that every applicant is able to sustain a tenancy. Migrant workers will therefore have to demonstrate that they have a visible means of support to enable them to sustain a tenancy. The Association will ensure that applicants in this group are aware of responsibility to pay rent etc and that they may not be entitled to benefit. The Association will suspend applications where the applicant is unable to demonstrate a visible means of support.

4.3 Notifying Applicants of a Suspension

We will write to any applicant that has been suspended from receiving an offer of a house. The letter will state:

- The reasons for the suspension
- The length of the suspension
- How they can appeal against the suspension

4.4 Removal of an Applicant from the Waiting List

The Association would only remove an applicant from the waiting list where:-

- The applicant has requested in writing that they wish to be removed from the list.
- The applicant has died.
- The applicant has failed to respond to the periodic review of the waiting list.

5 Section 5 - Assessing Applications From Current Tenants

5.1 General

All applicants will apply using the standard forms available from the Association. If assistance is required with the form, staff will be available to help.

5.2 Association's Current Tenants General

Current tenants of the Association may apply for a transfer to another house with the Association.

5.3 Current Tenants- Points Framework

Applicants from current tenants shall have points awarded as detailed in table 1 below:

TRANSFER LIST

Category	Points awarded
Overcrowding	5 per person who is overcrowded [see appendix 1]
Underoccupation	3 for one bedroom, 5 for two or more bedrooms Points only awarded if applicant moves to smaller house
Health	15 - high 10 – medium 5 – low 3 – additional points if more than one person in family will benefit
Social	5
Harassment	15 – category one 10 –category two 5 -category three
Domestic abuse	15
Priority	100 – due for demolition or assessed by funding council for supported accommodation

5.4 Overcrowding/members of household

An applicant may claim that there are people, currently not living with him/her that are part of the household and will be housed with him/her. Where it is accepted that they are part of the permanent household [eg couple living apart because insufficient space at either parents' house] then overcrowding points will be awarded as if they were living together. The applicant will also be permitted to apply for the size of house required by the permanent family.

An applicant may include as part of the household, some people that are not part of the permanent household. This is particularly the case where the applicant's children stay with the partner but regularly visit him/her. In these cases a decision will be made on where the permanent home of the children is [this is where they spend most time/name on Inland Revenue award letter]. The applicant will not receive overcrowding points if the children are not part of his/her permanent home. The applicant will however be allowed to apply for a 3 apt house to provide a bedroom for his/her visiting children.

Evidence required – Written confirmation from solicitor or ex-partner of arrangements for children. Name on Inland Revenue award letter etc.

5.5 Health Points

Applicants who wish to be considered for points under this category will be required to complete a self assessment form. This form shall provide the details of the medical condition and how a move to alternative accommodation, suitable to the applicants medical needs, will alleviate the medical condition. Applicants should complete separate self assessment forms for each member of the household that would benefit from the move of house.

Association's staff will consider a point's award when the applicant returns the self -assessment form. We will also consider any evidence provided by GP or consultant on behalf of the applicant.

If there is a dispute between the Association and the applicants GP on how the existing accommodation may be exacerbating the applicants health condition then, the Association reserves the right to employ a suitably qualified independent advisor to assess the medical condition and its relationship to existing housing. This shall apply to all applicants regardless of source of application.

Award will be based upon whether the need is high, medium or low priority.

High Priority

Points will be awarded where it is demonstrated that the current accommodation is greatly worsening the health problem.

This will include:

- Severely restricting the person's access to essential facilities within the property rendering the person housebound.
- Severely restricting the person's daily activities because the present accommodation is totally incompatible with the person's health
- Severely affecting the person's quality of life,

Medium Priority

Points will be awarded where it is shown that the current accommodation is:

- Aggravating the medical condition or health problem restricting the applicant's mobility within the property
- making it difficult for the sufferer to enter and leave the property independently
- Moderately affecting the quality of life,

Low Priority

Points will be awarded where it is shown that the current accommodation

- Hinders the person's quality of life and the problem cannot be reasonably resolved through an adaptation.

If more than one applicant will benefit, additional 3 points per person will be awarded. Health points can be awarded where the impact is on the person's physical or mental health.

Unless otherwise confirmed by a health specialist, all health applicants will normally only be considered for ground or 1st floor accommodation.

Evidence required – self assessment form plus any submission from a health specialist

5.6 Social Points

Social points can be awarded where the applicant is moving for any of the following reasons –

- To receive support/care from a relative or friend and/or
- To provide support/care and/or
- To move closer to work or access cultural or religious needs etc.

Evidence required- confirmation of employment, letter from friend/relation confirming they will be receiving or providing support.

5.7 Harassment Existing Tenants

Harassment can take many forms racial, sexual, harassment against people with mental health problems, learning or physical disabilities, people with HIV, and gay and lesbian people. Each case shall be dealt with sensitively and on its merits based on the evidence it is possible to gather. The Association's procedure on harassment contains guidelines for staff on progressing harassment cases.

The Housing Services Manager shall be responsible for approving points awarded for harassment cases. The Association identifies three levels of harassment.

Category One – Assault, violence, serious harassment

Points will be awarded where an applicant has to be rehoused quickly due to serious harassment. This will normally be violence towards or threats of violence against a household member. Points awarded in this category shall be sufficient to secure the victims of harassment a move to the first suitable vacancy.

Category Two – Threats or abuse, vandalism

Points will be awarded where there is harassment however there is no immediate danger to any member of the household and the applicant is wishing a particular area for rehousing. If the situation escalates an application can move from Cat. 3 to Cat. 2.

Category Three – Low level, initial incident, name-calling etc.

Points will be awarded when there is a relatively low level of harassment. This can include a difference in life styles and the applicant wishes to move to a specific area.

The Association may treat incidents as higher category if the victim appears vulnerable or the incident appears likely to escalate. The Association will treat all complaints of racial harassment as being at least category 2.

Evidence required – applicant to submit a standard form and any supporting evidence from police, landlord or other agency.

5.8 Domestic Abuse

The Association has a separate policy statement on domestic abuse that recognises that people have the right to a life free from violence and abuse and guides staff on offering a victim centred service to tenants. If the Association is unable to re-house victims of domestic abuse quickly enough or in the location of their choice we will give appropriate advice and assistance and contact other agencies on their behalf.

5.9 Priority

This will be awarded where a tenant has to be rehoused to facilitate the Association's development programme or they have been nominated by the funding agency for a vacant supported tenancy

5.10 Homelessness Amongst Existing Tenants

Where an existing tenants or their registered partner is made homeless as a result of a relationship breakdown, and one partner has agreed voluntarily to move out then the partner that agreed to move voluntarily shall be eligible to apply as a direct applicant and awarded homeless points. This is subject to confirmation of the relationship breakdown and an undertaking that the best use of the stock is implemented so that the majority of the family unit remain in the initial property and the partner leaving is housed in accommodation suitable to their needs.

The partner will also be offered information on other rehousing

options given that the Association may be unable to re-house them quickly or in the location of their choice.

Evidence required – confirmation from solicitor or ex-partner.

5.11 Time in Housing Need

Current Tenants who are eligible for a transfer will be placed on the appropriate list in point's order. Where applicants have equal points then priority will be given on the basis of how long they have been in housing need by date of application.

6. Section 6 - Assessment of Applications - Direct Applicants

6.1 Direct Applications- Points Framework General

Applications from direct applicants shall have points awarded as detailed in table below:

WAITING LIST

Category	Points awarded
Overcrowding	5 per person who is overcrowded [see appendix 1]
Underoccupation	3 for one bedroom, 5 for two or more bedrooms
Health	15 - high 10 – medium 5 – low 3 – additional points if more than one person in family will benefit
Social	5
Harassment	15 – category one 10 –category two 5 -category three
Domestic abuse	15
Priority	100 assessed by funding council for supported accommodation
Property condition	12 if house does not meet the Tolerable Standard
Sharing Amenities	8 Where applicant is sharing cooking/washing facilities, including members of their family.
Homeless	30 where local authority has assessed applicant as homeless and in priority need.
Insecure tenancy	10 A tied tenancy, or NTQ served or short tenancy
No tenancy agreement	10- Where living at an address with exclusive occupation but without a tenancy agreement

6.2 Guidance

Guidance on most of these awards is provided in section 5. The categories not covered in section 5 are covered below.

6.3 Property Condition

This will be awarded where house fails the tolerable standard. Where a property is in serious disrepair and 12 points are awarded Association staff will refer the property to the relevant Local Authority department to serve a closing order at the time of rehousing.

Evidence required – Letter from Council confirming that the house is below the tolerable standard.

6.4 Sharing Amenities

These points will be awarded where an applicant is sharing washing, cooking and/or toilet facilities with others that are not part of the household to be housed with the applicant. It will therefore be awarded where an applicant is living with his/her family or friends.

Evidence required – Council tax records etc confirming that applicant lives at that address.

6.5 Homelessness

We will award homeless points where a Local Authority has assessed them as being homeless and they have a duty to secure permanent housing for them.

Evidence required – Letter from Council confirming applicant has been assessed as homeless and in priority need.

6.6 Insecure tenancy

These points will be awarded where the applicant has a tenancy, but it is for no more than 6 months. This includes personnel leaving HM forces.

Evidence required – copy of tenancy agreement. Service personnel to provide confirmation of discharge date and tied tenants to provide copy of tenancy agreement and confirmation of termination date from employer.

6.7 No Tenancy

This will be awarded where the applicant has exclusive occupation but does not have a tenancy agreement for the accommodation

they occupy, [not a lodger etc]. This does not include applicants staying care of family and friends. Where applicant has purchased property they are currently living in, but have transferred ownership of the property to another party, they will not be eligible for no tenancy points.

Evidence required – Bills from utility companies, Council tax records etc confirming that applicant lives at that address.

6.8. List of Applicants

Applicants will be notified of their points' award and placed on lists for the relevant areas in point's order. When an applicant is nearing the top of the list a home visit may be made to review the point's award and verify the applicants housing circumstances may be required. Where applicants have equal points then priority shall be given on the basis of the length of time in housing need by date of application.

7. Section 7 - Assessment of Other Categories or Applicants

7.1 Local Authority Nominations

7.1.1 Assessment of Housing Need

Applicants nominated by Local Authorities under the terms of the agreed nomination arrangements shall normally be accepted provided that they are assessed as having at least one of the needs factors detailed in table 2 section 4.1. This assessment will be carried out by means of a home visit by a member the Association's staff. The Associations guidelines on medical conditions shall apply equally to nominated applicants.

7.1.2 100% Nomination rights and Common Housing Registers

In areas of high demand and limited turnover, the Association may grant 100% nomination rights to the Council. In these cases the Association would not maintain a waiting list but would seek nomination from the council. The Association may also participate in a Common Housing Register with a Local Authority and other landlords.

7.1.3 Section 5 Referrals

The Association will endeavour to establish Section 5 protocols with each local authority. The protocol will confirm how the Association and Council will work together to secure housing for households assessed by the Council as Homeless.

7.2 Unsuccessful Nominations

The Association reserves the right to refuse any applicant nominated by any other agency. However it shall only do so in exceptional cases, with good reason and in accordance with legislation. We shall provide its reason(s) for any refusal to the agency concerned. Unsuccessful local authority nominees visited by the Association staff will be advised of the outcome of the nomination.

7.3 Successful Nominations

Applicants nominated by other agencies shall normally be accepted provided that they comply with the terms of the

agreement between the Association and the agency concerned.

Applicants accepted shall be placed on the list(s) with a view to housing being offered as quickly as practicable.

7.4 Priority Cases

7.4.1 Demolition

Where the Association is demolishing the house of an Association tenant and building new houses as part of a regeneration programme, then the displaced tenants will automatically be offered new houses. They would not normally have to submit an application as their housing needs will have been assessed at the planning stage new houses would only be allocated to other categories of applicant after these tenants have been rehoused or offered the new houses.

7.4.2 Housing Improvement Areas

Tenants who live in property that is due to be improved by the Association and who require to be rehoused to allow the improvement project to proceed shall be rehoused on a priority basis. Rehousing of owner-occupiers or tenants of other landlords within improvement projects shall only be considered once the Association has concluded missives for the purchase of their property.

7.4.3 Association Staff in Tied Accommodation

Priority Case status may be awarded to staff employed by the Association living in tied accommodation, for example, Sheltered Housing Wardens that require rehousing due to reaching statutory retirement age or retiring due to ill health. Applicants accepted as priority cases shall be placed on lists for rehousing in the relevant area(s) and shall be considered for all suitable vacancies which arise.

7.4.4 Special cases

A special case allocation should be deemed such if it cannot be addressed within the existing allocation policy or requires a variation from the policy, in which case the approval of the Management Committee is required. Special cases will be highly exceptional circumstances, each case will be considered by the

committee and receive their approval before a points award is made. Applicants accepted, as special cases shall be placed on lists for rehousing in the relevant area(s) and shall be considered for all suitable vacancies, which arise.

7.4.5 Supported Accommodation [e.g. very sheltered]

Where the support is funded by the local authority, then the applicants will be assessed by the local authority and the applicant assessed as having the greatest need will be allocated the house.

8. Section 8 - Rules on Choices of Size & Location all Applicants

8.1 Size of house to be offered

The size of house to be offered will depend on size and composition of the applicant's household based on the following: -

Size of House to be Offered

Household	1 apt	2 apt	2 apt	3 apt	3 apt	4 apt	5 apt
		1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person		
Single person	*	*	*	*			
Couple			*	*	*		
Single parent & 1 child				*	*		
Couple & 1 child				*	*		
Couple/single parent & 2 same sex children					*	*	
Couple/single parent 2 children of opposite sex						*	
Couple/single parent & 3 children						*	*
Couple/single parent & 4 children of same sex of 2 of each						*	*

Couple/single parent & 4 children of mixed sexes						in areas with no 5 apts.	*
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Where a household includes adults (persons over 16) not living together as partners then accommodation will be allocated on the basis of one bedroom per adult unless they express preference or agreement to share a bedroom.

Where a need for an additional bedroom on health/care grounds is substantiated then this will be taken into account.

Where more than one size is available to an applicant then (s) he may specify the size(s) for which (s) he wishes to be considered.

Where there is little or no demand for a particular property for whatever reason and it is considered desirable then a property may be let to an applicant even if it means the property is underoccupied. These lets will be authorised by the Housing Services Manager. Such lets will be reported retrospectively to the Management Committee.

8.2 Areas Which Applicants May Be Considered

The Association's housing stock is divided into a number of areas. Applicants may choose up to 5 areas in which they may be considered for housing. Applicants should however only choose areas in which they would be prepared to accept an offer of any of the properties in that area. Details of these allocation areas are available and will be sent out with the application.

8.3 House Types Which Applicants May Be Considered

There are a number of different house types within the Association's housing stock. Applicants, except those with medical points, will be allowed to specify the house types for which they wish to be considered. There shall be no limit on the number of house types which applicants may request provided that the types chosen are compatible with the housing need expressed

9. Section 9 - Other Matters

9.1 Local Lettings Initiative

At present the association does not operate any local letting initiatives. A Local Lettings Initiative however may be established by the approval of the Management Committee to ensure the best use of the available stock and to use the allocation process to assist in the creation and maintenance of balanced, stable communities. All reports seeking the approval of committee will detail:

- The aims of the initiative;
- How it will operate;
- The duration of the initiative;
- Provisions for monitoring and review

9.2 People With Support Needs

Applicants that require significant support may apply direct to the Association for housing. Housing needs will be assessed in line with the allocation policy. We will obtain the applicants consent to contact appropriate support agencies to for an assessment of their support needs. The purpose of obtaining an assessment of the support needs is to assist the applicant to sustain a tenancy. Where specialist support is required then the Association will seek to ensure that this is in place before the offer of a tenancy is made.

Where the support is funded by the local authority or another agency, they may carry out a needs assessment. The Association will accept their assessment of priority for that housing and offer the property to the applicant assessed as being in greatest need.

9.3 Registered Sex Offenders

The Association Housing Services Managers shall be the senior link person to deal with all aspects of applications from sex offenders/alleged sex offenders as confidentiality is crucial at all times.

Where an applicant discloses, or the association is made aware, that an applicant is a sex offender, the Association shall seek his/her permission to approach the police/social work department designated senior link person in the first instance to ensure that a

risk assessment will be carried out before making any decision to re-house.

Where the applicant refuses to consent to contact with the police/social work department the application will be rejected on the grounds that rehousing is not possible without a risk assessment having been carried out.

9.4 Granting of a Tenancy to Relatives of Persons connected with the Association.

To ensure that the Association complies with the statutory requirements regarding benefits to Committee members/officers and employees and/or to their relatives, all applicants shall be asked to state whether or not, to their knowledge, they are related to a Committee member/officer or employee. Definition of relevant relationships is provided in Communities Scotland Guidance Notes 03/02 on the provisions of Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

All "Schedule 7" allocations will require to meet the following criteria:-

1. Demonstrate that the allocation complies with the Association's published policy and procedures.
2. The person in question has no involvement or influence over the process by which the Association allocates the tenancy.
3. The applicant's circumstances will not be discussed with the Committee, although the Director of Housing Services will verify that the allocation is in line with the policy.
4. Any decision to allocate a property will be made by the Management Committee.
5. The decision is recorded in the Association's minutes.
6. The Association will enter details of any let into the appropriate Register of Interest, which will be held in the Association's office. Each entry is required to be counter-signed by the Director of Housing Services, or the Chief Executive.

10. **Section 10 - Allocations Procedure**

10.1 **Quotas**

To ensure that the Association achieves its aim of housing applicants from a variety of circumstances the following targets or quotas for allocation to each group shall apply on an annual basis:

Group	Quota
Priority Cases/ Special Cases	As required
Current Tenants of the Association	Maximum 20% in any one area
Local Authority	50% or % as defined by the nominations agreement Section referrals – as required by protocol
Direct Applicants	Balance of allocations

The number of allocations made to each group shall be reported to the Management Committee on an annual basis.

10.2 **General Selection Procedures**

The procedures are designed to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and that the selection considerations detailed in this policy are applied.

The Association accepts applicants from sources detailed in section 10.1 above.

10.3 **Priorities For Rehousing**

Each Area team will nominate every second vacancy to the local authority; those houses allocated by the association will be allocated as follows

- 1) Applicants in the Priority/ Special Cases groups
- 2) Agency Nominees
- 3) Progress towards meeting the quotas in section 10.1 above.

Matching Applicants to a Property

Once the decision has been made as to which group the allocation should be made, then the offer of housing will be made to the applicant in the group with the highest points total, provided that (s) he meets all the qualifying criteria for the vacant property. Applicants will only be considered for homes that match their preferences as expressed on their application form. In particular the following criteria will be used to shortlist applicants for available properties:

area of choice, size of property, type of property, type of heating, and any other requirements particular to the application.

Homes that have been adapted or built for persons with specific needs may not be allocated strictly on the basis of points or quota obligations to ensure that they are allocated to applicants that require specialist provision.

10.4 Home Visit

The Association will arrange to interview all applicants (normally at home) and normally no offer of housing shall be made until a home visit has been carried out. The purpose of the interview shall be to verify the information on the housing circumstances of the applicant and explain to those applicants who have not previously been tenants of the Association what is involved in becoming a tenant. With the applicants permission further information may be requested from statutory bodies, voluntary bodies or other agencies with whom they have been involved, if required, to verify the applicants housing circumstances. The Association will then consider this information and decide whether the applicant can be rehoused in the light of the Associations allocation policy and the availability of suitable accommodation.

House visits shall not normally be carried out when applicants live out-with reasonable travelling distance of the Association's offices. In these circumstances a local agency may be requested to undertake the visit on behalf of the Association.

10.5 Offer of Re-Housing

The Association will make all offers of housing in writing and an applicant will normally be allowed 5 working days to accept or refuse an offer. To reduce void times, a telephone call, may also be made to applicants to discuss the formal written offer and the

need to respond within 5 working days. If the applicant fails to respond to the offer after 5 working days the offer will be withdrawn and shall count as a refusal.

10.6 Refusals

Applicants who refuse a third offer of housing without good reason shall not be offered housing for a period of 1 year.

10.7 Review of Applications

All direct and transfer applications will be reviewed at least on an annual basis with applicants being asked to confirm that they still wish to be considered for re-housing. Review letters shall advise applicants that failure to respond within 28 days shall result in cancellation of the application.

10.8 Cancellation of Applications

Applicants who fail to respond to any contact from the Association regarding the progress of their applications shall be advised in writing that their applications would be cancelled if they fail to respond within 28 days.

Appendix 1

Overcrowding Standard

In the calculation of the overcrowding, allowances shall be made for the following: -

Circumstance	Bedroom Requirement
Each couple living together as partners	One bedroom
Parent in a single parent family	One bedroom
Two children of the same sex under 16 years old	One bedroom
Two children of opposite sex	Two bedrooms
Any member of the household other than applicant or partner; aged 16 or over	One bedroom

Where two people are required to share a single bedroom then this shall be classified as overcrowding and points awarded accordingly. Single bedrooms shall be defined based on the standards laid down by the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

Overcrowding points shall not be awarded in cases where single persons occupy bed-sit /studio type accommodation.

Appendix 2

House Types-Mainstream And Amenity Housing

1. Tenement/Common Entry - Ground Floor (including main doors)
2. Tenement/Common Entry - First Floor
3. Tenement/Common Entry - Second Floor and above
4. Own Door Flat – Ground Floor
5. Own Door Flat – First Floor
6. Semi-detached House or Bungalow
7. End Terrace House or Bungalow
8. Mid Terrace House or Bungalow
9. Detached House or Bungalow

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