

GARDEEN HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

ALLOCATION POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

Gardeen Housing Association is a community based not-for-profit Charitable Housing Association that operates in the Barlanark area of Glasgow. The Association is managed by an elected and voluntary Management Committee made up of local tenants and residents. All policies of the Association (including this one) are agreed and approved by the Management Committee (or relevant Sub-Committee as appropriate), with the implementation of the policies being the responsibility of legally employed staff.

The Association aims to provide and manage good quality, affordable homes within the Barlanark area for people in housing need.

The Association's Allocation Policy covers the management of the Association's Housing Register and the letting of all properties owned by the Association as they become vacant.

1.2 Aims of the Allocation Policy

The prime aim of the Association's Allocations Policy is to provide good quality rented accommodation and to allocate accommodation in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need, whilst at the same time, making the best use of our stock in order to try and help to build, and maintain, a balanced and stable and sustainable community.

The Association aims:

- To allocate our houses in an objective, fair, accountable and efficient manner by means of a published Allocations Policy that meets both legislation plus the requirements contained in 'Performance Standards' (The Scottish Housing Regulator) and 'Raising Standards in Housing' (Scottish Federation of Housing Associations).
- To recognise the different needs and aspirations of all groups of applicants and prospective applicants and to give reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need.
- To operate an Allocations Policy that is easily understood and simple to administer.

The Management Committee believe each of these aims can be achieved through the operation of an open Housing Register in which targets are set to rehouse different groups of applicants who are rehoused in order of points.

The policy aims to assess the needs of each individual applicant whilst balancing their needs against other applicants and making the best use of the Association's stock. The Association uses a points system to measure housing need.

Demand for available accommodation can exceed supply and in such circumstances the Association cannot realistically hope to re-house all applicants. However, the Association will seek to maximise the opportunities for re-housing open to each applicant.

The policy aims to be fair and to be seen to be fair, by operating in an open and accountable environment.

1.3 Equal Opportunities & Confidentiality

Gardeen Housing Association continually strives to be an equal opportunities organisation. The Association' seeks to ensure that all allocations of housing are made on the basis of housing need and that people are not disadvantaged in terms of access to its housing services.

The Allocation Policy and procedures will not unfairly discriminate against any individual, household or group of persons applying for housing on the grounds of:

Race, ethnicity, national or social origin.

Disability including physical, learning or mental health.

Gender or marital status.

Sexuality or sexual orientation.

Religion, religious beliefs or opinions such as political opinions.

Age, appearance or financial status.

Employment or economic status

The Association wishes to ensure there are no barriers in accessing its Housing List. Relevant documents can therefore be translated into a range of languages on request. We will also ensure that translation services are available for those who wish more detailed information and to assist those who wish to make personal enquiries. For anyone with visual impairment relevant documents can also, on request, be made available in larger print, on tape or in Braille.

In our pursuance of ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment for all applicants, the Association will collect and monitor details, such as those of ethnic origin, race, gender, age and disability status of applicants and of those to whom allocations are made.

All information supplied to Gardeen Housing Association by applicants will be treated as confidential and will not be revealed to any other party without the prior consent of the applicant, other than detailed within the application form and any subsequent tenancy agreement or as required by statute.

Information which is required to reach Committee level (other than that required under Section 63, Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001), e.g. special cases, will be provided in such a way that protects the identity of the applicant.

1.4 Legal Framework

Sections 19 and 20 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by Sections 9 and 10 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, set out the legal rules about social housing lists and allocations and this policy is devised to try and ensure compliance with these rules. All aspects of the Allocation Policy and procedures are designed to adhere to Equality & Housing legislation, including the following:

Race Relations Act 1976 & Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
 Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 & Disability Discrimination Act 2005.
 Human rights Act 1998.
 Data Protection Act 1998.
 Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981.
 Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.
 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
 Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003.

1.5 Section 63, Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Association will follow the strict guidelines outlined in Section 63, Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. This section and schedule controls the types of payments and benefits that landlords can make to their employees, committee members or close relative of employees or committee members. This includes any former employees or committee members within the previous 12 months. This section and schedule are designed to make sure that none of the above either abuse their position or benefit in any way from their connections with the Association. They therefore play an important part in maintaining the Association's good reputation. The

Association will aim to not simply meet the legal requirements but to exercise at all times good governance and judgement and maintain high ethical standards of honesty, integrity and probity.

There are however circumstances under which payments can be made and benefits granted and these are allowed in the following ways:

The Association may grant a tenancy, transfer of tenancy or mutual exchange to an employee, former employee, committee member or former committee member providing that the person:

- Fully meets the Association's published allocations criteria
- Has had no involvement in or influence over the process by which the Association has allocated the tenancy in question

There is a duty on all applicants to declare if they are related or connected to any staff or committee member in the appropriate section of the Housing Application Form.

Any application that falls into this criteria and is being considered for a tenancy, will be formally referred to the Management Committee for approval prior to any offer of housing being made. If necessary, a special meeting of the Management Committee will be called to avoid delay in an allocation that would result in rent loss. Any such allocation will be recorded in the Section 63 Register.

A list of all current staff and committee members, including former staff and committee members in the previous twelve months, will be on display in the reception area of the office and should be issued with application forms and reissued with any offer of accommodation.

1.6 Guidance & Good Practice

Every effort has been made to develop the policy with regards to guidance and good practice, including the following:

- Performance Standards (The Scottish Housing Regulator), SFHA, Cosla, 2001)
- Raising Standards in Housing Allocations (SFHA, 2004)
- Suspending Housing Applicants: A Practical Guide (Chartered Institute of Housing, 2010)

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 – Housing Lists and Allocations (Scottish Executive, 2002)
- Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Control of Payments and Benefits, Communities Scotland Guidance Note 2003/02.
- The Scottish Housing Regulator Guidance, 'Performance Standards for Housing Associations' (particularly GS1, GS2, GS3, AS1, AS4).
- 2010 Scottish Government Social Housing Allocations Guide

Within Performance Standards, The Scottish Housing Regulator set out the following specific Guidance and Activity Standards in respect of Policies and Procedures and Access to housing and Lettings, which the Association strives to achieve:

GS1.2 Policies and Procedures

We have high quality written policies and procedures to guide our actions.

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 greatest housing need; makes best use of available stock; maximises choice; and helps sustain communities.

Raising Standards in Housing (published jointly by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and The Scottish Housing Regulator provides detailed guidance to RSLs towards complying with Performance Standards and the Association aims to meet the following key principles:

➤ Housing need

Prioritise allocations of property to people with high levels of housing need (and/or support need, where appropriate) without discriminatory restrictions

➤ Choice and Empowerment

Seek to maximise the opportunities for greater access to housing and the ability of applicants to make informed choices through the provision of good information and advice, reducing complexity and bureaucracy wherever possible

- Accountability

Be accountable to the tenants and communities we work within for allocations policies and processes

- Sustainable Communities

Make the best use of available stock and use the allocations process to assist in the creation and maintenance of communities where people want to live and remain.

- Partnership

Work in partnership with other bodies and organisations where possible and consider opportunities that may exist for joint work with local authorities or other housing associations to work together to identify and alleviate housing need.

- Equality of opportunity

Allocation policy and practice should not unfairly discriminate against any individual, household or group on the grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions

- Compliance

Meet relevant legal requirements and comply with The Scottish Housing Regulator /SFHA/COSLA Performance Standards

- Customer service

Good, open communication with applicants should be observed at all stages of the allocations process from the initial enquiry onwards. This should include appropriate observation of confidentiality.

- The role of governing body members

The day to day operation of the allocations process should be undertaken by staff and not by governing body members, whose involvement should be limited to setting and reviewing agreeing the policy, considering appeals and special cases, and monitoring the outcomes of the policy.

➤ Audit trails

Through appropriate record-keeping, the Association should maintain audit trails to enable us to show how and why any given let was made to a particular household, having due regard to data protection legislation. The overall allocations process should be transparent both to outside agencies and to people whose applications are unsuccessful.

➤ Monitoring and review

Results of the allocations process should be regularly monitored, reported to the governing body and acted upon as part of an ongoing review process.

1.7 Publicity & Information

The Association will publish and publicise its Allocation Policy and Housing List, including doing so in the following ways:

- At each policy review copies of the Allocations Policy shall be sent to The Scottish Housing Regulator, Glasgow City Council (Hamish Allan Centre, local Community Casework Team, Social Work Department, Housing Benefit Office and Councillor), Local MPs and MSPs, Positive Action in Housing, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, EHRA landlords plus any other relevant local organisations and venues that may become apparent.
- Articles in the Association's newsletter.
- Allocations Policy available to view on the Association's website
- Allocations Policy made available free of charge on request.
- Allocations Information Summary Leaflet to be made easily available.
- Allocations Policy made available on request in any of the ways outlined under Section 1.3 of this policy 'Equal Opportunities'.
- Local press when required given our low turnover of stock.

1.8 Partnership Working

The Association is a member of the Easterhouse Housing & Regeneration Alliance (EHRA) that comprises eight local landlords. EHRA landlords work closely together to ensure applying for housing in the Greater Easterhouse area is made as simple and as straightforward as possible for all applicants.

To this end a Common Housing Register has been developed in which seven of the EHRA landlords participate. This means any applicant seeking housing with any number of the seven EHRA landlords need only complete one Housing Application Form. In addition an annual EHRA wide review of all applications on the CHR takes place. Again the aim is to make the process as simple as possible for applicants as regardless of how many landlords each applicant has requested housing, the applicant will receive and need only respond to a review letter from one landlord.

The Association is also committed to working with other relevant partners in the area of allocations. This includes support organisations such as GENR8, Womens Aid, The Glasgow Simon Community, The Glasgow Rent Deposit Scheme, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living. Where possible and relevant, the Association will aim to assist such organisation in the rehousing of appropriate clients, either by means of a formal referral agreement or through the open housing register.

1.9 Role of the Management Committee

Staff will undertake the day to day operation of every aspect of the allocations process. The role of the Management Committee is to agree and review the policy, consider any appeals or special cases and monitor and review the outcomes of the policy.

2.0 ACCESS TO THE HOUSING LIST

The Association operates an open Housing List to which all applicants aged 16 years or over are entitled to apply and have their application assessed.

2.1 Eligibility

Eligibility for admission will be as determined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, most especially Part 1 Sections 9 & 10.

Applications will be accepted and assessed from any person who is 16 years or over in age. Any applicant may apply and have their circumstances assessed at any time. Applications can be made directly to the Association

by completion of the Association's application form or through the EHRA CHR system. Alternatively, applications can be made indirectly through nominating agencies, who nominate people from their own housing need register under a relevant Nominations or Referral Agreement between both organisations.

2.2 **Verification**

In order to be admitted to the housing register an applicant only requires to verify who they are and their age.

As an applicant's circumstances may be of a delicate nature, the Association's staff will endeavour to deal sensitively with the issues when requesting verification. Verification will be required in line with the availability of evidence and the circumstances of the case.

2.3 **Change of Circumstances**

It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the Association of any change in their circumstances as it may result in a change to their relative priority. Depending on the change, the applicant will be required to complete a change of circumstances form or to complete a new application form, which will be reassessed. Applicants who move to a different address from their original application but still want to be considered for rehousing must complete a new housing application form and provide proof of their new address as per section 2.2 of this policy in order to have their new circumstances assessed.

2.4 **False Declaration**

Any applicant who lies or knowingly gives false information or withholds relevant information in order to increase their chances of re-housing, will be interviewed to discuss the matter and obtain their true details. They will then have their application assessed on the basis of their true circumstances.

2.5 **Permission To Reside**

An applicant who is staying care of another household, and who is not a permanent member of the household, will not require formal permission to

reside but will require to demonstrate that they are registered at the property with the relevant authorities, for example, housing benefit, council tax, employment of benefit agency.

2.6 **Community Care Assessments**

Where an applicant may have community care or support needs, the Housing Association can request that a Community Care Assessment is carried out prior to processing the application. Any offer of accommodation will be on the basis that support needs identified are to be met by an appropriate agency.

2.7 **Tenancy Record**

Where an applicant has a previous or existing tenancy, and has a reasonable chance of being rehoused, the Association will request a tenancy reference. Where concern is raised over arrears, rechargeable repairs, anti-social behaviour or any other significant breach of tenancy (as permitted within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001), the application may be suspended and any offer of re-housing may be withdrawn until the matter is investigated. Consideration will be given to:-

- the seriousness of the breach;
- any arrangements to remedy the breach including the applicant's commitment to remedying past problems;
- the time lapse since the breach;
- any change in the applicant's circumstances which may affect their conduct in any future tenancy.
- The personal circumstances and extent of housing need of the applicant.

Any suspension must be reasonable with appeal rights being made clear to the suspended applicant. The decision to suspend must be agreed by the Property Services Manager before being implemented.

Suspensions will be reviewed on a quarterly basis, or on request by the applicant. Applicants will be informed in writing of the reason for the suspension, how regularly the suspension will be reviewed, any steps they can take to remove the suspension, and their right of appeal.

2.8 **Joint Applications**

Where a joint application is made, the availability of accommodation to either party will be taken into account in assessing the application. Either party can

make a separate application to have their individual needs assessed and the Association will award points in line with the highest points total.

2.9 **Relationship Breakdown**

Where the relationship of existing joint tenants has broken down, the Association will advise them to reach agreement on who will retain the tenancy. If agreement cannot be reached, the Association must take account of any Court Order determining who is entitled to the tenancy.

Either party can apply for re-housing and will be treated as a separate household without security of tenure for the purposes of awarding points to the application.

2.10 **Domestic Abuse & Harassment**

Gardeen Housing Association recognises that people have a right to a life free from violence and abuse. The perpetrator of abuse is the party responsible for the abuse not the victim.

Where tenants or applicants allege they are the victims of harassment, the application will be considered for the award of harassment points. For existing tenants and in urgent cases where there is a danger to life or limb, a Management transfer can be considered.

In addition, such applicants will be advised of the appropriate agencies to approach should they wish to do so and their right to apply to the Glasgow City Council under the provisions of the Homelessness legislation. They will be advised of their right to remain safely in their existing accommodation.

2.11 **Sex Offenders**

Applicants are required to declare on their application form if they or anyone in their household is required to register with the Police under the Sex Offenders Act 1997. Where an applicant or tenant declares or faces allegations that he/she is a sex offender, an approach will be made to the relevant authorities to ensure a risk assessment is carried out. Where permission to make the above approach is refused by an applicant, the application for re-housing will be suspended until permission is granted.

Rehousing of such applicants will only take place through the requirements of relevant Management of Offenders Legislation.

2.12 Orders relating to Children

When assessing points, children will only be accepted as part of an applicant's household when they either reside with the applicant or the applicant has access arrangements for the children. Access arrangements for children must be detailed on the housing application form along with details of the applicants ex-partner including name, address and contact telephone number so that these details can be verified. A letter confirming legal access agreements can also be accepted as verification of these circumstances. One additional bedroom will be granted to applicants who have overnight access to children regardless of how many children the applicant has access to.

3.0 Allocations System

3.1 Categories of Lets

The points awarding system is devised to try and give priority to the groups that the housing legislation advised that we need to give reasonable preference to. The resultant applications will then be offered rehousing through the following categories of let:

- Waiting List Applicants: Applicants who apply for rehousing with the Association and have a housing need, as defined in the points system, will be offered a % of vacant properties. The % to be offered will be reviewed each year. At the time of review (2010) the current target is 45% of all allocations.
- Transfer Applicants: Current tenants of the Association who have applied to transfer to another Association property and who have a housing need, as defined in the points system, will be offered a % of vacant properties. The % to be offered will be reviewed each year. At the time of review (2010) the current target is 15% of all allocations.
- Section 5 Homeless Referrals: Applicants who have been assessed by Glasgow City Council as being in priority need of rehousing and for whom the Association receives a Section 5 Homeless Referral for will be offered a % of vacant properties. The % to be offered will be reviewed each year. At the time of review (2010) the current target is 25% of all allocations.
- Nominations / Other: Applicants who are receiving assistance from housing support agencies such as GENR8, The Glasgow Simon Community, The

Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, and where the Association has a nominations agreement with the support agency, will be offered a % of vacant properties. The Association also recognises that from time to time, exceptional cases can arise where an applicant may have a level of need greater than other applicants and require to be dealt with outwith the normal allocations procedure, such as a management transfer. Any such allocations would have a thorough audit trail showing why the allocation had been made. The % of allocations to be offered to nominations or other special allocations will be reviewed each year. At the time of review (2010) the current target is 15%.

3.2 Glasgow City Council Section 5 Referrals

Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives local authorities the power to make a referral to an RSL of a statutorily homeless household for housing, and imposes a duty on the RSL to comply with unless it has good reason not to.

A model protocol on Section 5 referrals has been developed by the SFHA and COSLA. The protocol provides a practical means by which Section 5 can operate effectively, e.g. it is suggested that the local authority will make initial contact with the association by telephone to establish if there is a suitable property available and, if not, timescales in which a suitable property might become available.

Section 5 referrals are likely to impact significantly on the lettings practices of housing associations. The provisions of the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003 will be unrolled from 2004 until 2012 and will include among other changes the abolition of priority need. In housing more people local authorities will have an increasing number of statutory homeless people to whom they owe a duty to provide an offer of housing and who are statutorily homeless. The balance of “lettings outcomes” may shift over time, and housing associations will not be able to exercise the same degree of control or autonomy over their allocations as in the past.

The Association will endeavour to create a good working relationship with the local homeless casework team to ensure our responsibilities can be met under this legislative requirement.

3.3 Housing Register

3.3.1 Administration of Application Process

The Association is a member of the Easterhouse Housing Regeneration & Regeneration Alliance (EHRA) common housing register. The intention of this process is to make application for rehousing much simpler for an applicant and to give a better indication of housing need within our wider environment. This system involves the 7 local RSLs, but not Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) at present.

With this system applicants need only complete one application to be considered for rehousing by all 7 members. If an applicant also wants to be considered for GHA rehousing they will also need to complete a GHA form. This should mean that an applicant only has to complete a maximum of 2 forms to be considered for rehousing locally, much easier than the previous system whereby 8 forms would have been required.

3.3.2 Administration of Housing Registers

In line with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 the Association will maintain a register of all applicants who submit an application to the Association for rehousing. This will simply be an overall list detailing every completed application submitted to the Association.

This list will then be broken down in to two broad lists:

1. External Housing Register
2. Internal Transfer Register

These two broad lists will then be both broken down further into the following:

1. Active Register - for applicants with housing need points as determined by the Associations Allocation Policy.
2. Suspended Register – for applicants who have had their application suspended in line with the Association’s Allocation Policy
3. Cancelled Register – for applicants who have had their application cancelled, e.g. no response to review, been rehoused and no longer want to be considered.

Each of these Registers will then be analysed for the following types of accommodation:

- | | | | |
|---|-------|---|--------------------------|
| > | 2 Apt | > | Elderly Accommodation |
| > | 3 Apt | > | Wheelchair Accommodation |

- > 4 Apt > Adapted/Amenity Accommodation
- > 5 Apt > Floor level Preference
- > 6 Apt

and any other category as relevant to the stock available.

Applicants will be entered on the appropriate register in accordance with their housing need and household composition.

3.3.3 **Service Standards**

The Association will aim to:	<u>Within</u>
Assess an application & advise	7 working days
Review Applications	Annually
Review Suspensions	Quarterly

The Association aims to process 98% of all applications within 7 working days.

After assessment and/or review applicants will be advised, in writing, of their application status and advised of their right to appeal if they disagree with anything.

3.3.4 **Priority**

Priority is determined by the housing need as assessed in line with the Points System laid out in this policy. Offers will be made to the applicant who has the correct household composition with the highest housing need points total (at the time of the offer) for the appropriate sized property & area, and subject to any letting initiatives the Association may decide to operate from time to time.

For applicants who have no housing need, but have an aspiration to be re-housed, the Association will provide advice to them regarding other possible options such as seeking a mutual exchange, and provide them with advice on how to maximise their chances of achieving a move. Applicants with no

housing need will be re-housed only where there are no applicants with housing need seeking any particular offer of accommodation.

Tied Points levels

Where applicants for the same type and size of property have the same level of housing need points, the following shall be used to determine priority for the allocation:

- a) No current breach of tenancy
- b) Less recent breach of tenancy
- c) Length of time in need
- d) Waiting time

3.3.5 Grounds for removal from registers

Applicants have the right to cancel their application at any time if they wish. The Association will confirm any such request to the applicant, in writing.

Applications will be removed from the active register if any of the following apply:

- The applicant fails to respond to a contact from the Association within a given timescale, failed to respond to annual review, failed to provide requested information, or mail is returned stating that the applicant has 'gone away'. The application may be cancelled and details retained on the cancelled register.
- The applicant has died.

Applicants will be informed, in writing, of any changes to their application status and advised of their right to appeal any change.

3.4 Transfer Register

Priority on the register will be determined by housing need as determined by the points allocation of this policy.

On receipt of a housing application form from an existing Association tenant and on a regular basis thereafter, a tenancy check will be carried out. If the tenancy has not been conducted satisfactorily the transfer application will be suspended and the transfer applicant informed of this fact and of their right to appeal. The suspension will be subject to regular review on a quarterly basis, or sooner if the applicant requests.

Prior to a transfer occurring the Association will carry out a tenancy check including an internal inspection of the applicant's home. If the tenant is found to be in breach of the terms of their tenancy agreement, as permitted by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the offer will not be confirmed. The tenant will be informed of the nature of the breach of tenancy, their right of appeal against the decision taken against them and the action required to remedy the breach or to obtain a lifting of the suspension against their application. The Property Services Manager will deal with appeals against suspension from the Transfer registers.

Tenants may not be permitted to transfer if there are live legal notices against them for breach of tenancy, subject to any restriction placed on this by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Tenants may not be permitted to transfer if they have an ongoing non – rent related breach of tenancy, for example a rechargeable repair debt, neighbour nuisance etc. Such applications will be suspended and reviewed on a quarterly basis..

3.5 **Mutual Exchanges**

Tenancy exchanges will be considered between tenants of Gardeen Housing Association, other RSL tenants, and tenants of private landlords.

The Association has Mutual Exchange application forms at reception, along with a Mutual Exchange folder with details of applicants who have already applied for an exchange so that interested parties can find a potential home swap opportunity.

Exchanges within properties awaiting development are not permitted.

All incoming applicants must meet the criteria for application to the housing register set out above.

Incoming applicants should not overcrowd or under-occupy (unless agreed by the Association) the Association property, which is the subject of the mutual exchange. The property should be appropriate to the incoming tenant's requirements (e.g. a sheltered or amenity or adapted property would normally be let to a tenant in need of that kind of property).

Applicants must have an acceptable rent account, no other outstanding debts in respect of the tenancy, their existing house must be in good condition (in respect of items for which the tenant is responsible) and they must have had a satisfactory tenancy reference, in as far as allowed by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

“Three-way” plus exchanges will be considered at the discretion of the Association.

3.6 Mobility Schemes

The Association will advise applicants of national mobility schemes such as Homeswapper, Houseexchange and ukhomeswap, which are websites in which applicants who are tenants of Housing Association's or Local Authorities can enter details of their own home and the type of home they are looking for in order to find a potential home swap opportunity.

The Association is now a member of the Homeswapper scheme, where tenant of the Association can register their details at www.homeswapper.co.uk and receive potential matches from tenants all around the UK.

3.7 Suspending Applications

There are circumstances in which applicants on the Housing Register can be suspended from receiving offers of housing for a period of time. Applicants will only be suspended for the following reasons:

- Where there are current or former tenant rent arrears or other rechargeable tenancy related costs of more than the equivalent of one month's rent outstanding and no payment agreement is in place, or the full payment agreement has not been paid for at least a three months period.
- Where there is clear evidence of anti social behaviour regardless of whether legal action seeking eviction has been instigated or carried out or ASBO granted.

- Where the responsibilities of an applicant, who is a current tenant, in relation to their legal and/or contractual duties regarding their tenancy, are clearly not being adhered to. Examples of this may include:
 - Very poor condition of the tenant's home with evidence of vandalism and examples of abuse over and above general wear and tear.
 - Applicant not taking their turn of cleaning and keeping tidy their garden or other common areas such as landing and stairs.
 - Not controlling pets etc.
- Where applicants have displayed threatening or violent behaviour towards staff of the Association or its representatives including committee members and contractors.
 - The applicant has failed to allow access for a home visit to allow confirmation of housing need.
 - The applicant has failed to provide additional information requested in order for their application to be accurately assessed.

Each application will be considered on its own merit with clear, reasonable and justifiable reasons for suspension. Each applicant suspended will be notified in writing together with details of why the suspension has been applied, what this means, ie the applicant will not be considered for any offers of accommodation whilst the suspension is in place, length of time the suspension will be in force and what action can be taken to end the suspension. Details confirming their right of appeal and information on the Association's complaints procedure will also be included. Quarterly reviews of each suspended application will take place. Suspensions will also be reviewed upon request by the applicant.

3.8 Cancelling Applications

The Association may cancel and remove an application from the Housing List in the following circumstances:

- The applicant has requested removal from the Housing List.
- The applicant has failed to respond to correspondence regarding their application or the periodic review of the Housing List.
- Death of an applicant.
- The Applicant has been rehoused / moved away from the address they applied from and they can no longer be contacted.. If the applicant still wishes to be considered for rehousing from their new address a fresh form

must be completed with their new circumstances in order to have their need from their current circumstances assessed.

- An applicant who has had their application cancelled will be notified in writing together with details of why their application has been cancelled. Details confirming their right of appeal and information on the Association's complaints procedure will also be included.

4.0 Assessment of Housing Need and Allocation of Points

As determined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Association in allocating its properties must give reasonable preference to persons who:

- a) are occupying houses which do not meet the tolerable standard (as defined by section 86 of the 1987 Housing (Scotland) Act and amended by section 102 of the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act);
- b) are occupying overcrowded houses (as defined in Part VII of the 1987 Housing (Scotland) Act);
- c) have large families;
- d) are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- e) homeless persons and threatened homeless persons/

This means that the Association must give due weight to the above factors, but it does not restrict the Association to taking only these factors into account

In accordance with these requirements the Association's points priority is as follows:

POINTS

4.1 Management Transfer

Where a management transfer is necessary
These points will be awarded in the following circumstances:-

50

- to aid the development process
- to deal with a serious management problem
- where, following an application for an assignation or succession, the Association decides the best use of the stock would be achieved by offering alternative accommodation

These points should not be regularly awarded and The Property Services Manager or the Director must ratify the decision taken to award points under this category.

4.2 Overcrowding/Under occupation

Points for this category reflect serious mismatches of an applicant's household size as measured against their present accommodation.

Unborn children are considered to be members of a household.

Under Occupancy points are not awarded when:

- An applicant is not the householder
- The whole current household is not part of the application and as such under occupancy would be increased by rehousing the applicant.
- An applicant requests the same size of accommodation as that they are currently under occupying.
- In the case of a transfer applicant, the tenant accepted a flat that was under occupied by the household at the time of the let and there has been no relevant change in circumstances.

Applicants will receive points as detailed below where overcrowding/under occupation occurs:

	Number of Bedrooms Required					
		1	2	3	4	5
Number of Bedrooms Presently	0	15	20	30	40	50
	1	-	10	20	30	40
	2	5	-	10	20	30
	3	15	5	-	10	20
	4	25	15	5	-	10
	5	35	25	15	5	-

If there is overcrowding and it involves children the following additional points are awarded:

10 points per child in property

An additional one allocation of points will also be made to take account of the following:

5 extra points where children, of the same sex, are aged 10 or older and are sharing

7 extra points where children, of different sexes, are aged 10 or older and are sharing

Encouraging applicants in large properties to downsize to more suitable sized accommodation helps to assist to meet the needs of larger families in overcrowded housing circumstances. To this end the Association will award a blanket set of points to households wanting to down size and free up underoccupied properties. **20**

The Association may also consider additional incentives to encourage tenants to free up underoccupied properties.

4.3 Lacking Amenities/condition of Dwelling

The following points will be awarded to applicants who lack amenities. The applicant's ability to rectify the lack of amenities will be taken into account:

No inside w.c. **30**
No bath or shower facilities

25
No adequate supply of hot and cold water **25**
No kitchen separate from sleeping space **20**
No double glazing **5**
No gas central heating or electric storage heating system **10**

Where there is evidence of rising or penetrating dampness in the applicants home that is not caused by the applicants lifestyle
Where there is evidence of Mild/moderate dampness **10**

Where there is evidence of severe dampness **20**

Where there is any other serious defect in the property as determined by the visiting officer of the Association **20**

4.4 **Sharing Amenities**

Where an applicant is not a householder and shares the use of facilities with another household, including members of their original own family, points will be awarded as follows:-

Where the existing household includes children:

Sharing a kitchen/bathroom **10**

Where the existing household is for adults only:

Sharing a kitchen/bathroom **5**

4.5 **Broken Households**

Where a household is unable to live in the same accommodation due to the lack of suitable accommodation being available **10**

Where an applicant is requesting alternative accommodation away from their cohabiting partner following a relationship breakdown.

10

4.6 **Medical Points**

Points will be awarded to applicants suffering a serious medical condition where a change of accommodation will alleviate the condition or reduce its effect, benefiting the applicant's physical and / or mental health or significantly improving their quality of life.

The Association will endeavour to objectively assess medical points, however, relevant medical information may be requested before points are awarded. The onus will be on the applicant to provide this information, which should be from a Doctor or other relevant health care professional, and set out why the applicant's medical needs would be met by rehousing. The award of points will be based upon whether

the need for alternative accommodation is essential, urgent or advisable.

The points awarded will be as follows:

Essential	<u>30</u>
Urgent	<u>20</u>
Advisable	<u>10</u>

4.7 **Harassment**

Where the applicant is a victim of racial or other harassment 70

Points in this section will be awarded on the basis of information available after investigation by Association staff and confirmation of circumstances. Applicants will always be advised of their opportunity to pursue action against those responsible or how to obtain support provided by agencies e.g. Police, Social Work Department, Womens Aid or other advice agencies.

4.8 **Exceptional Factors**

Where there are exceptional circumstances not covered under any other category points will be awarded, subject to the discretion of the Property Services Manager. 20

4.9 **Insecurity of Tenure and Homelessness**

Where an applicant's circumstances can be confirmed, they will be encouraged to make a direct application to the Association. If the applicant's circumstances cannot be confirmed they will be given advice on how to seek assistance for rehousing.

Any applicants who consider themselves to be "homeless" will be referred to Glasgow City Council who will investigate whether or not this is the case, as they would do with any applicant under the relevant legislation.

Insecurity of Tenure

These points will be awarded to applicants who have no permanent tenancy or if their residency is being threatened. The onus, if required, will be on the applicant to provide proof of the current residency. Applicants in tied accommodation will require their employer to confirm the termination date of their employment and tenancy.

Points will be awarded for

Living in Hostels, Hospital, tied accommodation, caravan 10

OR

Being Statutory Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness

Homelessness points will be awarded to applicants who have been assessed as Statutorily Homeless or threatened with Homelessness by their Local Authority. Written confirmation of this will be required. The onus will be on the applicant to provide this information. 30

4.10 **Social or Family Support**

Where an applicant is required to move to give or receive adequate family or social support such as:

- Childminding
- Housekeeping
- Emotional Support
- Community Support

Applicants should give details of such support needs in the relevant section of their housing application form. Further evidence may be requested from the Association before points are awarded. There requires to be a fully justifiable reason for the support need, for example, childminding in order to allow someone to retain employment etc

10

4.11 **Employment, Education or Training**

Where an applicant currently lives outwith the Greater Easterhouse area and wishes to move to the area due to being employed or in education or training within the area. Verification of this will be required from the applicant before points are awarded. **10**

5.0 **Allocations**

5.1 **Size of Accommodation Offered**

The Association will not offer accommodation that results in overcrowding of the permanent members of the household as defined under the Allocations Policy. Housing of a size in excess of the applicant's needs will not be offered unless a valid reason exists to do so, i.e. one that relates to the housing need of the applicant or good management of the Association stock. Where an applicant is pregnant, the unborn child will be considered part of the household.

In allocating the larger sized properties where the number of eligible household members can vary, the Association will determine the allocation on the basis of the housing need of the qualifying applicants and the density of the surrounding area.

The normal occupant size per property is as given below:

Children will only be considered to share a double room up to the age of 10.

SIZE OF ACCOMMODATION Persons/Apt Size Bedroom Size	NORMAL ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLD
1 person 2 apt. (1 single)	single person
2 person 2 apt. (1 double)	single person, or couple
3 person 3 apt. (1 double, 1 single)	single parent/couple <u>with</u> one child/one other permanent member of household
4 person 3 apt. (2 doubles)	single parent/couple <u>with</u> one child/2 children aged 10 years or under/another permanent member of household
4 person 4 apt. (1 double, 2	single parent/couple <u>with</u> 2

single)	children/2 other permanent members of household
5 person 4 apt. (2 double, 1 single)	single parent/couple with 2 or 3 children/required number of other permanent household members
5 person 5 apt. (1 double, 3 single)	single parent/couple with 3 children/required number of other permanent household members
6 person 5 apt. (2 double, 2 single)	single parent/couple with 3 or 4 children/required number of other permanent household members
7 person 5 apt. (3 double, 1 single)	single parent/couple with 3 to 5 children/required number of other permanent household members
8 person 5 apt. (4 double)	single parent/couple with 3 to 6 children/required number of other permanent household members

UNDER-OCCUPATION

Applicants may be allocated a home with more bedrooms than their permanent household size requires if the extra space is required for medical or support needs, which are confirmed.

In any such cases, under occupation will only be allowed to the maximum of one room.

Due to a lack of 2 apt sized properties within our stock base, particularly compared with the demand on our housing register, up to 30% of 3apt vacancies may be offered to applicants on the 2apt register who are happy to accept a 3apt sized property. This category of permitted under occupation will be restricted to flatted properties and will be used primarily in blocks with high child density or density issues.

Child density matters will also allow an under occupation of properties of a 4apt or larger size. Under occupation will be restricted to a maximum of one bedroom.

5.2 Making of Offers

All offers will be confirmed in writing from the Association and will be provisional until verification of the applicant's circumstances has been provided to the satisfaction of the Association. Viewing of the property will be by way of an accompanied visit in the presence of a member of staff. Where possible, viewing will be carried out before the outgoing tenant vacates the property.

The processing of an application form and selection of an applicant prior to an offer being made, will involve a minimum of two members of the staff.

5.3 **Home Visits**

Home visits will be carried out prior to any offer of accommodation being confirmed. The purpose of this visit will be to verify the applicant's circumstances are as stated on their application form. The Association may carry out random visits to a proportion of those applicants on the housing register in order to check the authenticity of their applications.

5.4 **Acceptance/Refusal of Offers**

Acceptance or refusal of an offer should be in writing by completion of the Associations acceptance/refusal form or, if given verbally, should be confirmed to the applicant in writing,

Where two reasonable offers are made in line with the applicant's choices for re-housing and refused by the applicant, an applicant will not be considered for the next 2 available appropriate lets. The Association will also hold a discussion with the applicant to ascertain which types of property they are looking for and any relevant changes to be made to their area choices or house type preferences.

Applicants should indicate why a refusal is being made. This will help to ensure no further unsuitable offers are made.

Offers, which are demonstrated, to be unreasonable (as determined by the Property Services Manager) may be disregarded, as are refusals by an applicant because of a material change in their circumstances. Applicants will be requested to confirm any such changes.

An applicant will have 24 hours in which to accept or refuse any offer. This time runs from the date of the viewing the offered property.

5.5 Tenancy Granted

Other than where required or permitted by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, any tenancy offered will be a Scottish Secure Tenancy.

Where a Short Secure tenancy is granted, the presumption will exist that a full Scottish Secure tenancy will be granted at the end of the short tenancy period subject to the reasons for granting the short tenancy being satisfied.

6.0 Decision Taking and Appeals

Housing Management staff will deal with straightforward cases falling within the policy guidelines in this document. All applicants will have a right to appeal in relation to any decision taken in relation to their application.

If an applicant wishes to make an appeal against a decision, they should follow the process outlined below progressing to the next stage if they remain dissatisfied. The applicant should:

- Write to, or request an interview (either in person at the Association's offices or a telephone interview) with the Property Services Manager detailing the nature of the appeal. If after doing so they are still dissatisfied, they should then:
- Write to, or request an interview (either in person at the Association's offices or a telephone interview) with the Director detailing the nature of the appeal. If after doing so they are still dissatisfied, they should then
- Write to, or request an interview (in person at the Association's offices) with the Committee of Management detailing the nature of the appeal.

If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the response to their appeal, they will have further recourse through the Association's Complaints Procedure. Ultimately, the complaint can be referred to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Complex cases that fall outwith the policy guidelines will be treated as Special Cases and the Property Services Manager will prepare a report to Committee for consideration. Special Cases should be highly exceptional. If it is found that approval is being sought frequently, then the Allocation Policy will be reviewed in order to accommodate such matters.

7.0 Monitoring and Review

7.1 The Association will monitor the outcomes of its Allocation Policy in order:

- to ensure that it operates in such a way as to grant offers of accommodation to those in housing need
- to ensure all applicants are treated equally irrespective of their ethnic origin, gender, age, family composition or disability
- to ensure the quotas for housing are applied
- to ensure standards of service are maintained
- to ensure that any discretionary powers are being used properly

7.2 Quarterly reports will be made to the Property Management Sub-committee giving details of the following:

ALLOCATIONS & VOIDS

- Properties let in the preceding quarter by phase
- Number of offers and reason for refusals
- Performance against targets for void turnaround time
- Void levels, void losses and turnover by phase
- Quota sources of lets

HOUSING REGISTERS

- Number of applications made, and details of which register they are entered.
- Time taken to process applications
- Use of discretionary powers
- Applications suspended from the active registers
- Number of applications cancelled and reasons for cancellations
- Equal opportunities statistics

7.3 An annual report will be provided to the Property Management Sub-committee giving details of the following:

- Summary allocation statistics for the past year
- Any letting plan for the following year
- Applicants profile in relation to their ethnic origin, gender, age, family composition and disability
- Results of survey of applicants' satisfaction levels with the Association's allocations service, if relevant

- Any recommendations for interim changes to the policy prior to the full 3 year review.

7.4 The outcome of the Allocations Policy will be subject to annual review to ensure it meets with the criteria above. The terms of the Policy will be subject to review on a three yearly basis, or sooner if legislation changes.