



Subject/Title: Lettings Policy (Scotland)

Business Units: Sanctuary Housing Group – Sanctuary Scotland

Tenures/Activities: All

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Group Executive

Sanctuary Housing Group:
Sanctuary Housing Association (Exempt Charity)

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1. Policy Statement

This Lettings Policy sets out the standards and general guidance which we will follow to ensure that our properties are allocated to those most in need of them.

2. Aims & Purpose of This Policy

Our primary aim is to provide affordable and well managed rented accommodation to those in housing need, and at the same time contribute to providing balanced and sustainable communities. We aim to achieve this by pursuing the following objectives:

- Allocating homes to people with high levels of housing need
- Ensuring that access to the allocations process is open at all times to all sections of the community
- Making the best use of available stock and using the allocations process to assist in the creation and maintenance of balanced, and sustainable communities.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that everyone who applies to us for housing is treated fairly and consistently. It is particularly important that we are able to demonstrate that no-one who applies to us for housing is treated less favourably because of their race, colour, sex, age, religion, disability, political views or marital status.

3. Responsibilities for Implementation

- Directors
- Senior Officers
- All members of staff involved with the decanting process.

4. References and Sources

- Section 200(1) of the 1987 Housing (Scotland) Act as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#)
- Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 [Homelessness etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#)
- Performance Standards for Registered Social Landlords AS1.1 & AS1.2. http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_016327.pdf; [AS1.2 Lettings Performance and Contextual Information](#); [AS1.1 Access to Housing Performance and Contextual Information](#)
- Data Protection Act 1998 [Data Protection Act 1998](#)
- Complaints Policy – Sanctuary Housing Group (2006)
- SFHA Raising Standards.

5. Approval of this Policy and Subsequent Procedures

This policy is approved by the Group Executive of Sanctuary Housing Group.

6. Period of Review

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with a programme agreed by the Policy and Best Practice Review Group, unless:

- there are significant changes to legislation or regulation;
- there are found to be deficiencies or failures in this policy as a result of complaints, or findings from any independent organisations;

at which point the Policy and Best Practice Working Group will initiate an immediate review.

In any event this policy will be reviewed no later than three years from the effective date of this version.

A. General Information

1. Objective of this Policy

To ensure that the lettings process is carried out effectively and efficiently by all staff. This will be achieved largely through the following methods:

- by establishing comprehensive and clear targets for the allocation of properties;
- by ensuring that allocations can be readily monitored through current information systems by staff;
- that staff process applications efficiently and effectively whilst ensuring confidentiality and access to information will be in line with legal requirements.

2. Legislative/Regulatory Context

- Section 200(1) of the 1987 Housing (Scotland) Act as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#)
- Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 [Homelessness etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#)
- Performance Standards for Registered Social Landlords AS1.1 & AS1.2. http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_016327.pdf; [AS1.2 Lettings Performance and Contextual Information](#); [AS1.1 Access to Housing Performance and Contextual Information](#)
- Data Protection Act 1998 [Data Protection Act 1998](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities for Implementation

The Senior Officer in each office is responsible for:-

- ensuring that this policy is implemented by their staff
- ensuring that officers are designated to deal with the allocation of properties
- monitoring the systems and practices at local levels in terms of dealing with applications and allocation of properties, ensuring that there is a consistent, fair approach.
- preparing Local Letting Plans for approval by Committee.

4. What's New – What's Different

- Change from points based policy to a system of 'banding'
- Incorporation of new statutory requirements, in particular, the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
- Incorporation of best practice including clear statement on suspensions.

5. Definitions

Director	The person with overall responsibility for implementation of and adherence to this policy and procedure.
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Senior Officer	Senior members of staff who have delegated authority/ responsibility for implementation of and adherence to this policy and procedure.
Designated Officer	Used to refer to any officer with delegated responsibility for co-ordinating, monitoring and dealing with decants or any part of this process.
Staff	Anyone who has contact with the resident or other member of the household (e.g. a Tenancy Enforcement Officer, Housing Officer or Service Delivery Officer).
Residents	Residents, tenants and other members of the household.
Sanctuary's Banding System	<p>Sanctuary uses a banding system that allows for more flexible definitions of housing need. Depending on their circumstances customers are placed into the following bands in date order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgent Priority • High Priority • Medium Priority • Standard • There is a separate band for people who have been nominated from a Local Authority <p>The percentage of lettings from each band will be determined by Local Letting Targets to ensure reasonable preference is given to those in greatest housing need.</p>
Assessment	<p>Assessment is the appropriate consideration of an applicant's' current circumstances, housing requirements and ability to sustain a tenancy by the designated officer.</p> <p>Before any applicant is offered a property, their application must be assessed by the designated officer who must be satisfied of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the application details are correct • That all supporting evidence has been obtained • That the applicant is able to sustain a tenancy • That there is appropriate accommodation for the applicant
Lettings	A letting is the granting of a tenancy for a specific property to an applicant. Lettings must be made in accordance with the relevant LLP and the Lettings Policy. All allocations to customers in each priority band will be awarded in date order. All decisions must be recorded on the Association's monitoring system.
Formal Offer	A formal offer is an approved offer of an available property to an applicant. Before a formal offer is made to an applicant their application must have been assessed and the offer must meet the requirements of the relevant local Lettings Plan and Lettings Policy. Consideration of formal offers to applicants in each band should be made in date order.

Review of Applications	Current applications must be reviewed annually from their date of registration so that waiting lists are kept up to date and remain relevant.
Customers' Right to Review	Where a customer is not satisfied with a decision regarding their application for re-housing, they have a right to request a review by another member of staff. If the customer is not satisfied with the outcome of the review they must be referred to the Association's Complaints Policy.
Local Lettings Plans and Income & Equity Levels	<p>Local Lettings Plans (LLPs) allow the Association to respond sensitively to local market conditions to support sustainable communities and successful neighbourhoods.</p> <p>LLPs must be prepared by each area office for specific schemes that will benefit from, for example, households that are economically active. Designated staff have to be aware of the appropriate LLPs for the schemes that they manage.</p> <p>Where there are no identifiable issues affecting the management of a scheme, there is no requirement to produce a LLP. For these schemes, lettings should be made in accordance with area targets.</p> <p>Each LLP that is required should incorporate an analysis of the issues for specific schemes/properties coupled with local knowledge of these schemes, e.g. the level of rental arrears, incidences of anti-social behaviour, child density and the ethnic composition of schemes .</p> <p>Local Authority partners must be consulted with regard to LLPs particularly in relation to nominations targets. LLPs must also be agreed and approved by the Association's Management Committee.</p> <p>Designated staff must be aware that LLPs have the primary role in the implementation of the Lettings Policy. This is because LLPs will set target percentages from each Lettings Band that will determine applicants' waiting time before they are offered a property. This information will allow applicants to make informed choices regarding their registration for specific schemes.</p> <p>Within the Association's Charitable rules, there is no requirement to set specific income and capital thresholds for waiting list applicants. However, it is necessary to ensure that priority for re-housing is given to those who are not financially able to meet their own housing needs in the local market. Therefore, LLPs should set out their position on this issue which may be area specific.</p>
Nominations	Support from Local Authorities is crucial to realise the objectives of the LLPs. Senior Officers may consult Local Authorities with regard to the objectives of their LLPs and negotiate and agree the percentage of lettings from each priority band and incorporated into the Nominations Agreement.
Nomination	The Association should have a formal agreement with Local Authorities or

Agreement	other Agencies outlining the quota for nominations. Following consultation of the LLPs with Local Authorities, the standard Nominations Agreement should be used wherever possible when reviewing nomination agreements or negotiating new agreements with Local Authorities. The Nominations Agreement should reflect the objectives of LLPs and reviewed annually.
Valuing Diversity	<p>The Association recognises and values diversity in the delivery of its letting service. It is therefore imperative that full and detailed records are kept and that monitoring and reporting is undertaken throughout the lettings process, to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with letting properties on a fair and equitable basis • Adherence to LLPs (specifically where these plans address any under representation of Black and Minority Ethnic Groups) <p>It is the responsibility of the Senior Officer to ensure that the appropriate systems are in place for monitoring the allocation process, namely on the percentage of lettings from each priority band, size, type and quality of property offered to demonstrate that allocations are made equitably and without discrimination.</p>

A. Supporting Information

1.0 Access to our Housing

- 1.1 There are a number of ways of gaining access to the Association's properties depending on local circumstances, these are listed below and applicants can only gain access to our housing through one or more of these routes:-
- Our Housing List
 - Common Housing Registers, where in operation
 - Local Authority Nominations
 - Nominations from referral agencies approved by the Committee
 - Special Needs move on targets approved by the Committee
 - Existing tenants wishing to transfer
 - Mutual Exchanges
 - Reciprocal arrangements with other organisations
- 1.2 We will accept applications from any applicant over the age of 16 years regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, HIV status, religion, physical or learning disability, or financial circumstances.
- 1.3 The Association has only a small number of houses available for allocation each year, so we cannot guarantee being able to offer a house to everyone accepted on to our list. We will actively encourage applicants to apply for housing with other Housing Associations and Local Authorities, for example through Common Housing Registers. Even if the circumstances of an applicant merit a high priority, we cannot guarantee a house will become available within a reasonable timescale.

- 1.4 Applicants applying to the Association for housing come from a variety of different housing circumstances and this policy seeks to ensure that a balance of applicants from a range of circumstances are given the opportunity to be housed.
- 1.5 To ensure the best use of our stock, and in meeting the needs of applicants and the local communities, Sanctuary Scotland operates Local Lettings Plans, which are reviewed at least on an annual basis by the Management Committee, or any Sub Committee to which this function has been delegated.

Each Local Lettings Plan will set out the expected number of properties for letting during the coming year and set targets based on local population and mix. Additionally, annual Lettings Targets are set for each Housing List Band and Local Authority Nominations.

The performance of the Association in meeting the targets set will be reported regularly to the Management Committee or any Sub Committee to which this function has been delegated.

The Association may from time to time depart from the standard selection process to assist in the maintenance or development of balanced communities as agreed in the Local Lettings Plans. Any applicant by-passed due to the operation of the Local Lettings Plan would normally be offered housing in the near future. The decision to by-pass applicants must be sanctioned by the Housing Manager and provide a clear audit trail.

- 1.6 We operate a banding system to assess whether applicants have a sufficient housing need to be considered for rehousing or a transfer. Applicants will be placed on our housing list in the appropriate band in accordance with housing need and date of registration. If the applicant's circumstances change they will be placed in the appropriate new band with the date we were notified of the change. Details of the banding system we award for different needs are shown in section 6.

The percentage of lettings to be made to applicants from each band will be determined by Local Letting Plans and Targets to ensure reasonable preference is given to those in greatest housing need.

- 1.7 Where possible we will try to provide applicants with an estimate of the likely waiting time off their choice of property. This will be based on recent turnover of property and demand in their area(s) of choice.
- 1.8 If the applicant was the member of a household but not the tenant, and there is evidence of indebtedness relating to that tenancy, we will disregard these debts for the purposes of assessing their application. Neither will we take account of any arrears which are equal to or less than 1/12 of the annual rent or service charge of any tenancy the applicant held.
- 1.9 Where a tenant or applicant owes more than one month's rent or service charge to the Association or another Landlord their application will be suspended from the active housing list unless there is an appropriate arrangement to pay outstanding debts and this arrangement has been maintained for the previous 3 months. The Housing Manager has the discretion to approve an offer of housing to an applicant who does not meet these conditions where there are extenuating circumstances.

- 1.10 We will seek to enter into formal partnership arrangements with the local authorities in every area which we operate.

The partnership arrangements will set out nomination agreements between the two bodies and the basis on which we will assist the local authority in meeting housing needs and its statutory homeless duties.

The Agreement will normally allow the Council to nominate 50% of all local lets (after transfers, mutual exchanges, management transfers and decants). Nomination agreements may however, in exceptional circumstances be up to 100% in some areas where this is a contractual requirement.

We will provide both temporary and permanent accommodation for homeless people upon the request of the Council as part of its duty to secure permanent accommodation under the homelessness legislation.

Any dispute arising from the operation of these arrangements will be resolved either through the dispute process agreed with each of the local authorities or through the use of an Arbiter.

- 1.11 We may also agree referral arrangements with voluntary or other agencies that specialise in providing support to particular groups of people. Such arrangements will be identified within our Local Lettings Plans.

- 1.12 We will normally suspend any applicant, or the current spouse or partner of the applicant, for at least one year where they have:
- Provided false or misleading information or withheld relevant information, or
 - Intentionally worsened their own circumstances to promote their application for housing, or
 - Refused two reasonable offers of rehousing in their chosen areas from Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association.

- 1.13 Where applicants have caused serious anti-social behaviour problems within the previous three years, or terminated or abandoned a Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association tenancy or other Landlord's tenancy where they were responsible for wilful damage we will consider the use of other options such as granting a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy

- 1.14 These issues will be the subject of a regular review process. However, applicants may appeal in writing against a decision to refuse access or suspend them to the Senior Officer within 15 working days. If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, the next stage to follow is the Associations Complaint's Policy. We will inform any applicant in writing if we suspend their application and we will provide full reasons for any such decision.

2.0 House Types and Sizes to be allocated

- 2.1 The Association will generally attempt to allocate houses of the type expressed as a preference given on the application form.

Houses with stairs of any kind will not, however, be allocated where a medical priority recommendations states that a ground floor house all on one level is required.

2.2 General Guide to House Size: The following table is a general guide to the minimum size of houses which may be offered to applicants.

	Minimum Size	Alternative Size (subject to availability)
Single Person	1 bedroom	2 bedroom
Couple	1 bedroom (2p)	2 bedroom
Single Parent or Couple + 1 Child	2 bedroom	3 bedroom
Single Parent or Couple + 2 Children	2 bedroom (4p) or 3 bedroom*	4 bedroom
Single Parent or Couple + 3 Children	3 bedroom (5p) or 4 bedroom*	5 bedroom
Single Parent or Couple + 4 Children	3 bedroom (6p). 4 bedroom or 5 bedroom*	6 bedroom
Single Parent or Couple + 5 or more Children	4, 5 or 6 bedroom*	

* Depending on ages and sexes of children

2.3 Extent of Sharing Bedrooms: The minimum number of bedrooms that are required by a household with children will be based on the following:

- ❖ Children of the same/opposite sex under age 8 will be allocated 1 bedroom to share.
- ❖ Children of opposite sexes age 8 or over will be allocated 1 bedroom each.
- ❖ Children of same sex age 8 or over and under the age of 16 will be allocated 1 bedroom to share .
- ❖ Children of the same sex, with a minimum of 8 years age gap between them may be allocated 1 bedroom each
- ❖ Once a child reaches the age of 16, he or she will be classed as an adult and will be allocated a separate bedroom.

All the above are restricted to a maximum of 2 persons sharing a bedroom.

Note: Parent(s) will have a separate bedroom from their children.

2.4 The Association's housing stock will be divided into logical lettings areas. There will be no limit to the number of lettings areas within which applicants can request to be rehoused.

3.0 The Banding System:

3.1 Applications made direct to the Association will be placed in one of the following four bands following an assessment of the applicant's circumstances and housing needs. Within bands, applicants will be prioritised based on their dates of application or on their dates of being placed in a new band following a change of circumstances.

Band 1 Urgent Priority – The following criteria are awarded Urgent Priority banding:

DECANT	Where a Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association tenant has to move to allow repairs, refurbishment, disposal or demolition of the existing property.
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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	Where the applicant or tenant is suffering actual violence or threat of violence from a partner who is not part of the application for re-housing. Confirmation will be required from relevant agencies such as the Police, Health Professional, Social Work, Women's Aid, etc.
HARASSMENT	<p>Harassment is any conduct perpetrated as a result of age, creed, disability, nationality, race, religion, sex or sexual preference which is unreciprocated and unwelcome by the recipient; or any such conduct based on the above characteristics which affects the dignity of any individual or group of individuals in their home or workplace by creating a hostile, humiliating or intimidating environment.</p> <p>Harassment can take many forms including intimidating, threatening or aggressive behaviour, both verbal and physical, and can involve attacks on property as well as people. Incidents of harassment can include sexual comments or gestures, offensive or racist graffiti, abusive language and behaviour, violence towards people of all ages, damage to homes or possessions and threatening letters or phone calls. Harassment is often premeditated and reoccurring. Confirmation will be required either from agencies such as the Police, Social Services and Health Organisations or from other witnesses which can include staff. Where appropriate, confirmation can also be provided by the customer's advocates, i.e. local councillors, Members of Parliament, Members of the Scottish Parliament, advice workers and from voluntary organisations.</p>
RACIAL HARASSMENT	Racial Harassment can take the form of offensive or aggressive verbal remarks, physical violence or threats of violence/damage towards people or their property because of their race, ethnic origin or colour. Confirmation will be required either from agencies such as the Police, Social Services, Schools and Health Organisations or from other witnesses, which can include staff. Where appropriate, confirmation can also be provided by the applicant's advocates, e.g. Local Councillors, Members of Parliament, Members of the Scottish Parliament, advice workers or from voluntary or community organisations.
URGENT HEALTH/DISABILITY	Where the applicant's existing property is so unsuitable that re-housing would significantly result in an improvement in

	health or wellbeing. Applicants requiring re-housing on medical grounds will be assessed by an independent Medical Advisor if this service is available. Where this service is not available, a relevant health professional will be required to provide information to support the application.
INAPPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION	Where a Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association tenant no longer needs an adapted property or support provided with the accommodation.
MOVE ON	Where an applicant or tenant occupying supported housing no longer requires this service.
MANAGEMENT TRANSFER	<p>Very occasionally, it may be necessary to transfer a tenant on management grounds. The tenant will probably not have sufficient priority to be considered for a transfer on the basis of their housing need and it will for some other reason that a transfer is considered necessary.</p> <p>A transfer on management grounds should be considered only as a last resort. It should <i>not</i> take the place of other management action, or be used for the convenience of officers. However, it is recognised that other management action will not always be appropriate and in such cases it may be necessary to put the needs of the “vulnerable households” first.</p> <p>An example of the use of Management Transfers may be where a household has a substantial clash of lifestyle with immediate neighbours, or where a tenant experiences acts of harassment. A Management Transfer can often be a successful method of dealing with these situations as an alternative to taking legal action. Legal action for recovery should always be sought in cases of <i>serious or repeated</i> harassment and/or anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>If the Designated Officer feels that a transfer on management grounds should be considered, they should discuss the case with the Senior Officer. The decision to make a management transfer lies with the Housing Manager.</p>

Band 2 High Priority – The following criteria are awarded High Priority Banding

MEDICAL	Where the applicant has a medical condition which will be alleviated by re-housing. Applicants requiring re-housing on medical grounds will be assessed by an independent Medical Advisor if this service is available. Where this service is not available, a relevant health professional will be required to provide information to support the application.
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RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN	<p>Where the applicant is moving due to a breakdown in relationship and has responsibility for or access to a child/children under 16.</p> <p>Note: Supporting evidence will be required in such circumstances, e.g. confirmation from a legal representative or the Court.</p>
GIVING AND RECEIVING SUPPORT	<p>Where an applicant needs to move to either give or receive support i.e. for personal or medical care.</p> <p>The Medical Advisor will award a medical priority for re-housing for applicants requiring or providing support. Where this service is not available relevant information will be required by a health professional.</p>
CHILD IN FLAT	<p>Where the applicant has a child/children under 2 and is currently living in a flat above second floor level.</p> <p>Note: if the child/children reach their second birthday before the applicant has received an offer of a property, the application will be re-assessed and placed in the appropriate letting band.</p>
OVERCROWDING	<p>Where the applicant's current accommodation is overcrowded when assessed against the occupancy standards set out in Section 5.3.</p> <p>The household or circumstances of the applicant must have changed since they accepted the tenancy of their current accommodation before they can be eligible for overcrowding priority.</p>
UNDER OCCUPATION	<p>Applicants who are living in houses too large for their present needs.</p> <p>The household or circumstances of the applicant must have changed since they accepted the tenancy of their current accommodation before they can be eligible for under occupation priority.</p>
SHARED FACILITIES	<p>Where applicants share facilities with others who are not part of the current household (e.g. living with parents/relatives, living in hostel/bed and breakfast type accommodation).</p>
REPEATED VICTIM OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR	<p>Where there is supporting evidence from the Police, Health Professional, Social Worker or Housing Officer support that</p>

	<p>the applicant/tenant is a victim of anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour is behaviour by residents, members of their household or their visitors, which causes annoyance, nuisance, or disturbance to anyone else in the area.</p> <p>This can range from playing music too loudly, to serious criminal activity like drug dealing, domestic violence or vandalism.</p>
POOR QUALITY PROPERTY IN TERMS OF CONDITION/ DISREPAIR	<p>Where there is documented evidence from Environmental Health or another relevant agency that the existing property of the tenant/applicant is unsafe or unfit and falls into the following categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Serious structural defects ❖ No running water ❖ No inside toilet ❖ No bath or shower ❖ Damp ❖ No central heating.
NON SECURE ACCOMODATION	<p>Where an applicant has received 28 days notice/notice to quit (including lodgers who have been asked to leave), or whose home is repossessed or where the employment of service personnel is ending, or households living in tied accommodation and threatened with Homelessness.</p>

Band 3 Medium Priority

Transfer applications (is applications from existing tenants of the Association to move to another property) will generally be awarded Medium Priority banding. However, transfer cases that meet the higher priority bandings criteria are placed in the relevant higher priority bands.

Band 4 Standard Priority

- All other applicants who satisfy the eligibility criteria will be awarded a Standard Priority banding.

Nominations / Statutory Homeless Band

Persons nominated by Local Authorities or persons who have been assessed as Statutorily Homeless and referred to the Association by the Homeless Persons Officer will be placed in this band.

Designated staff must ensure that customers who have made an application based on homelessness are guided to the appropriate Local Authority Homelessness Unit/Department who are responsible for assessing homeless applications.

Sheltered Housing

Applicants who are 60 years or over requesting sheltered housing will be placed in the appropriate band following an assessment by the Medical Advisor. Where this service is not available a relevant health professional will be required to provide information to support the application.

Sheltered Housing Banding will range from -

Urgent Band – A Priority (urgent medical or social need for sheltered housing)
High Band - B Priority (high medical or social need for sheltered housing)
Standard - C Priority (standard medical or social need for sheltered housing).

The award will depend on the needs of the applicant.

Special Needs Housing

Applicants requiring specially adapted housing will be referred by the Special Needs Group where this operates within the local authorities. In these areas all applicants will be assessed by these specialist panels to determine the degree of housing need. Where this service is not available information will be required from relevant Health Professional.

We will also try to pre-allocate all new housing specially adapted for wheelchair users at the development stage to allow us to design accommodation to suit individual needs in consultation with the applicant and other relevant professionals.

Where a vacant property has special features or adaptations which would make it suitable for occupation by a person with disabilities or particular needs then the normal allocations processes may be bypassed to ensure that the property is allocated to an applicant or family who would benefit from the features available. The allocation of such properties may be made in consultation with the Social Work Department, Health Board/Care Trust of other relevant agency.

4.0 Responding to Applications:

4.1 The Association will aim to respond to all applicants within 15 working days of receipt of application advising them of the outcome of their application and whether or not any additional information in support of the application is required.

Applicants will be advised of the likely availability of housing that suits their needs and an indication of timescales will be provided if possible.

Those who are asked for further supporting information will be given 15 working days to provide it. The Association reserves the right not to process the application if the necessary information is not provided, or if no suitable response is received within that timescale.

4.2 Applicants whose applications are not processed due to non return of required information will be advised of their right to appeal against the decision reached to suspend their

application. All applicants will be advised of their right to appeal against the suspension of their application. Appeals should be made in writing to the Housing Manager within 15 working days of the date of the notification being issued. The Housing Manager will respond to the appeal within 15 working days. If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome to the appeal, the next stage is to follow the Association's Complaints Policy.

5.0 Making, Receiving, Accepting and Refusing an Offer of Housing:

- 5.1 Before a formal offer is made to an applicant a home visit will be carried out to ensure that the applicant's circumstances remain as indicated on the application form. The applicant will be required to sign a declaration confirming that the information on their form is complete and accurate and giving consent to make enquiries as necessary in confirmation of this information. Where an applicant does not live within reasonable travelling distance of one of the Association's offices a local registered social landlord may be requested to make a visit on behalf of the Association.
- 5.2 When a suitable property is available and an applicant is in a position to receive an offer following the visit/interview, an offer will be made in writing, inviting the applicant to view the property. Applicants will be given 3 working days from the date of the offer letter to respond either by refusing the offer, or by making an arrangement to view the property. Failure to do so will result in the offer being withdrawn in writing by the Association. This will count as a valid offer unless the applicant gives a good reason for the lack of response within 15 working days.
- 5.3 An applicant must accept an offer and sign the Tenancy Agreement within 2 working days of viewing the property, unless otherwise agreed. Failure to do so will result in the offer being withdrawn, but being counted as a valid offer.
- 5.4 Applicants may refuse 2 valid offers without any penalty. If a third valid offer is refused, the Association will review the application and reserves the right to suspend it. The application will normally be reinstated 6 months after the suspension date. Notification of suspension will be made in writing. A second member of staff trained in the Lettings Policy will countersign all applications suspended.

The Association reserves the right to decide whether a refusal of an offer is valid. If the applicant believes the offer should not have been made, he/she must advise the Housing Manager accordingly within 15 working days, stating full reasons. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Housing Manager, which will be given within 15 working days, the Complaints Policy should be followed.

6.0 Confirmation of Circumstances:

- 6.1 The onus of proof of circumstances lies with the applicant. Applicants unable to provide adequate evidence as to their housing needs or circumstances will not be made an offer. Further offers will be suspended until adequate evidence is provided by the applicant
- 6.2 Responsibility for notifying changes of address and other changes of circumstances lies with the applicant. Failure to notify changes may materially affect the banding priority the applicant is awarded.

7.0 Annual Review of Applications:

- 7.1 An annual review will be carried out of all those on the list. Applicants will be required to respond to a letter within 15 working days of receipt stating whether they still wish to be considered for housing, and listing any changes in circumstances. Failure to do so will result in the applicant being removed from the list. Removal from the list will be confirmed in writing to the applicant. If an applicant contacts the Association within one month of being removed from the list, giving good reasons for not responding, they will be reinstated.

Removed applicants contacting us after one month must reapply by completing a new application form. This will be regarded as the new date of application, unless the Housing Manager considers there to be mitigating circumstances.

8.0 Cancellation of Applications:

- 8.1 Any applicant whose application is cancelled or suspended will be notified in writing stating the grounds on which the decision has been made. If any applicant is aggrieved by such a decision, they have a right to appeal in writing to the Senior Officer within 15 working days of the date of notification being issued. The Senior Officer will review the case and respond within 15 days. If the customer is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, the next stage is to follow the Association's Complaints Policy.

9.0 Granting of Tenancies to Relatives of Persons Connected With the Association:

- 9.1 To ensure that the Association complies with the statutory requirements regarding the granting of benefits to Committee members and staff/agents or to their relatives, all applicants shall be asked to state whether or not, to their knowledge, they are related to a Committee or Staff / Agent member. Definition of relevant relationships is provided in Guidance Notes on the provisions of Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. No allocation shall be made to any such person without the prior approval of the Management Committee. All offers made will be entered into a register for Communities Scotland monitoring purposes.

10.0 Complaints Procedure:

- 10.1 Anyone who feels their application has not been dealt with in accordance with this policy, or that any representative of the Association has treated them unfairly or unreasonably, may register a complaint through Sanctuary Scotland's formal Complaints Procedure. A leaflet explaining this procedure is available from the following of the Association's offices :-

Glasgow Office – Sanctuary House, 7 Freeland Drive, Glasgow, G53 6PG.
Telephone number – 0141 876 4900

Dundee Office – 185 Turnberry Avenue, Dundee, DD2 3WN.
Telephone number - 01382 823 050

Anderston Office – 29/30 Elliot Street, Glasgow, G3 8EB.
Telephone number – 0141 847 0952

If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Complaints Procedure ,

he/she may complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS.

11.0 Confidentiality:

- 11.1 Confidentiality regarding an applicant's personal circumstances will be respected at all times. Members of staff who are related to, or have a close connection with, any applicants will declare the fact and have no further involvement in the allocations process.

Applicants shall have the right to inspect the information on their files, subject to our legal obligations and rights to protect third parties. Upon request we will give applicants a full explanation as to how their application has been assessed.

12.0 Policy Review

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed annually or in accordance with a programme agreed by the Management Committee of Policy Review Sub Committee, unless there are significant changes to legislation or regulation or there are found to be deficiencies or failures in this policy as a result of complaints or findings from any independent organisations at which point the an immediate review will be initiated.

In any event this policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from the effective date

We will also involve our Management and Housing Area Committees where they exist in the policy review process including the Local Lettings Plans for their area.

In addition we will also consult with a range of partner organisations as part of the review process.

We will obtain and take account of the views of Registered Tenants Organisations and other tenants in discussions concerning the review of this policy. All responses will be summarised to the Management Committee when it considers the final policy documentation.

We will ensure that tenants are informed of any changes made and that our information leaflets are updated accordingly.

13.0 Equal Opportunities/Diversity Implications:

- 13.1 The proper implementation of this Policy will assist in ensuring that the Association achieves its core principle of diversity and its aim of ensuring equal access for all to the housing and services which it provides.

14.0 Sustainability Implications:

- 14.1 While this Policy has no direct implications in terms of environmental sustainability it will be of fundamental importance in ensuring that the Association achieves its aim of creating sustainable communities which will be places where people want to live.

