

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

AS WITH ALL OF THE ASSOCIATION'S POLICIES, THIS POLICY, IN FULL AND IN PART, IS AVAILABLE IN SUMMARY, ON TAPE, IN BRAILLE, AND IN TRANSLATION INTO MOST OTHER LANGUAGES –

PLEASE ASK A MEMBER OF STAFF IF YOU WOULD LIKE A VERSION IN A DIFFERENT FORMAT

Approved May 2009.

Amended January 2010.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Elderpark Housing Association is a registered social landlord, set up to operate in Elderpark in 1975 to improve housing conditions in the area by providing good quality, affordable rented housing to those in housing need. It operates on a “not-for-profit” basis, and is run by an elected Management Committee consisting of local residents who employ a staff team to manage the Association on a day-to-day basis.

1.2 The Association is committed to:

- Providing quality rented accommodation affordable to those in housing need
- Contributing to the physical, social and economic regeneration of the area
- Providing a safe environment in which all residents can live

1.3 The Association owns 1083 properties in the Elderpark, Ibrox, Kinning Park and Cessnock areas of south west Glasgow, provides a factoring service for 185 owner occupiers and commercial owners. The type of housing presently provided by the Association is mainly for general needs, although housing developed in recent years observes the principles of barrier free design.

1.4 You can contact Elderpark Housing Association at:

31 Garmouth Street
Glasgow
G51 3PR
Tel: 0141 440 2244
Fax: 0141 445 5345

1.5 Elderpark Housing Association is not the only landlord that operates in the Greater Govan area of Glasgow. Details of other landlords are available in Appendix 2 of this policy.

2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 In all areas of this policy Elderpark Housing Association will carry out its function with strict regard to equality of opportunity. This means that there will be no discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin or family circumstances, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions. :

- This also means that the Association will actively promote its services with the aim of ensuring that no person or group of people is excluded from receiving information about the services of the Association; or from applying to it for

housing; or is excluded because of a lack of appropriate accommodation suitable for their needs at that time.

- Applicants are asked, but not obliged, to provide details of their gender, disability and ethnic origin in order that this part of the policy can be monitored.

3 FORMULATION OF POLICY

3.1 This policy adheres to legal requirements contained within:

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Race Relations Act 1976

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Data Protection Act 1998

The Access to Personal Files Act 1987

Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Human Rights Act

3.1 This policy also takes account of good practice and guidance documents such as, Performance Standards for Social Landlords updated version the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations' Raising Standards document, and Chartered Institute of Housing's 'Housing Allocations in Scotland' (September 1997).

CONSULTATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

3.2 Consultation with the community and resident participation has always been one of the key aspects of the way in which the Association operates. We therefore welcome the statutory provisions in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which requires all social landlords to take tenant's views into account when formulating key service delivery policies.

3.3 At the present time, there are two strands to policy consultation within the community:

- firstly, we believe it is important to inform all tenants when a policy review is due, together with some information on what changes are likely to be proposed by the Association. We do this by including summaries of policies in our tenant's newsletter, and by giving drafts of the policies to the resident's and tenant's groups we work with.
- the next stage is to invite feedback from tenants, residents, and their representatives about (i) how well they feel the proposals address the needs of the

community and (ii) whether there are any particular amendments they would like to see. Also, all policies have to be formally ratified by the residents on the Association's Management Committee.

4 THE ROLE OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 4.1 While our permanent staff carry out most of the work in relation to our housing list and allocating houses, our management committee also plays an important role. They help formulate the allocations policies and procedures and monitor the effectiveness of them when they are in place, as well as reviewing them every three years, or as dictated by our Risk Management Policy or to reflect new legislation. They review complaints and appeals, decide on any special case allocations and discuss Schedule 7 applications (more information on these will be given later in this document).

5 THE ASSOCIATION'S PRINCIPLES IN RELATION TO ALLOCATIONS

- 5.1 We are committed to providing the best **customer service** possible. We have tried to design our allocations systems to make applying for housing as simple and straightforward as possible for the applicant and our staff are keen to help.
- 5.2 The Association believes that **openness** and **accountability** are very important in allocations. The information we have made available to the public and our regulators about how we allocate houses, and the monitoring methods we use in the process, ensures that any interested party can understand how we work and hold us to account.
- 5.3 Everyone, 16 or over, has a right to apply for housing and we believe that every application should be assessed in a fair and impartial manner. This is because we have a strong commitment to **equal opportunities** in the allocation of housing.
- 5.4 The Association also believes in giving **choice** and **opportunity** to applicants. (See the next section for details).
- 5.5 An allocations policy should address the needs of the **local community**. (See next section for details).

6 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ALLOCATIONS POLICY

- 6.1 The policy will ensure that the Association provides good quality, affordable housing to those in housing need. It does this by setting out a pointing system which gives priority to applicants in housing need.
- 6.2 The policy will maximise the choices and opportunities that applicants receive by providing them with information and advice about other providers and the different opportunities for housing within the local area. Applicants are also encouraged to

consider using the mutual exchange scheme and, where appropriate, national mobility schemes. The Association also promotes choice by establishing applicant's preferences in relation to the types of homes they want and their location. The only exception to this is with our homeless applicants, whose urgent situation demands a less constrained approach to re-housing.

- 6.3 The policy will try to promote stable communities which we have defined as encouraging people to reside in the area who have a range of life and employment experience and or will support and strengthen family networks. Points are awarded in Appendix 1 point 3.5.8 to achieve this. In addition by giving applicants choices when applying we are helping to promote stable tenancies and, as a result, stable communities. The Association will at the point of allocation be mindful of ensuring tenants who are vulnerable are offered additional support to help sustain their tenancy by referral to the Social Work Department, or other appropriate support service. The Association will aim to avoid housing those people with dependency needs in locations where their vulnerability will be increased.

7 HOW TO APPLY FOR HOUSING and Verification of Circumstances

7.1 How to Apply for Housing

- 7.1.1 If anyone is interested in becoming an applicant they can visit our office at 31 Garmouth Street, Glasgow, G51 3PR. The applicant then has the option of
- Completing an application form with the Duty Officer
 - taking the form away and filling it in themselves.
 - phoning us on 0141 440 2244 and having the application form posted out to them.
- 7.1.2 When we have the completed application forms our staff will then assess them using the points system shown in Appendix 1.
- 7.1.3 Within seven days of receiving a completed application form we will write to the applicant to tell them how many points their application has received and the application will have been put on our housing list. For an application to be complete the minimum requirement is have proof of identify and address. The applicant's position on this list will depend on the number of points they have. The list is divided up according to the size of accommodation requested, for example, there is a one bedroom list, a two bedroom list etc. It should be noted by the applicant that we are receiving new applications almost every day and, as a result, the housing list is constantly changing, and so is the applicant's position on the list.
- 7.1.4 We aim to maximise choice to applicants by providing a comprehensive guide to the property available and to give applicants information on the likelihood of being re-housed in their preferred location. Should an applicant fail to respond to communications regarding additional information or in relation to an offer of accommodation in their preferred location we will invite the applicant to review their

application and update preferred locations. The procedure will follow that for the waiting lists review. This will ensure that their aspirations and needs are clearly defined but at the same time ensuring an effective allocation process.

7.2 Verification of Circumstances

7.2.1 The application form provides a basis for assessing housing need. However, in some cases further investigation of the applicants circumstances will be required. In many cases this will involve the provision of evidence or supporting documentation, for example where applicants state the move is due to employment, evidence of offer of employment may be required.

In other case, this may involve a more detailed assessment by other agencies in relation to housing needs.

7.2.2 To ensure we accurately assess the housing needs of applicants, we generally need applicants in the following circumstances to provide some verification, as outlined below, before points can be awarded.

Circumstances	Proof Required
All applicants	Proof of identity and proof address before an application can be put on the waiting list.
Homeless or threatened with homelessness	Assessment undertaken by homelessness advisor (Glasgow City Council)
Asked to leave current accommodation	Copy of valid Notice to Quit / letter with drawing consent to occupy.
Moving to be near essential education /Training	Confirmation of place at the educational / training establishment
Moving to help sustain employment	Reason why a move will help sustain employment and confirmation of employment.
In need of re-housing as health affected by current housing circumstances.	Completion of medical self assessment form.
Access arrangements	Letter from child's other parent, or letter from lawyer
Household member temporarily living away from home	Letter from this individual confirming they wish to be considered part of the household
Experiencing violence or harassment	Position of belief
Home Owner Repossession Action	Letter from Mortgagor regarding legal action
Property Below tolerable standard.	Confirmation from the landlord or the City Council, Private Rented Housing Panel.

We recognise that in some cases the information required may be sensitive and of a personal nature. In such circumstances, we will adopt a position of belief and trust.

8 ADMISSION TO THE HOUSING LIST

- 8.1 Anyone who is 16 years or older has the right to apply for housing and to be admitted to our Housing List. This right is protected by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 8.2 Applicants must understand the difference between the right to be admitted to the Housing List and the right to be allocated a house. The number of allocations that we are able to make each year depends on the number of houses becoming empty – empty houses are known as “voids”. As demand for housing in most areas exceeds the supply, regrettably the Association is not in a position to assist all applicants with re-housing. Consequently, we cannot provide any guarantees that any applicant will be successful in being made an offer of housing.
- 8.3 Information about the types of properties we have and the level of turnover for them is available with the application form and booklet. We can also give the applicant this information if they contact the office. This information can be used by applicants to get an idea of their likelihood of being offered housing, especially when they take into consideration the streets, or apartment sizes, they have selected. The Association will make a special effort to inform applicants who - due to their low number of points or the selections they have made – will have a very low chance of receiving housing from us. We will make it clear to all applicants that they should consider applying to other landlords to increase their chances of being re-housed (again, see Appendix 2).

9 HOW WE ASSESS APPLICATIONS.

- 9.1 The Association operates a points system for allocating its housing. This is a system which is easily understood, simple to administer and aims at giving the highest priority to applicants in the greatest housing need. It is a fair system of assessment and does not discriminate against any applicant.
- 9.2 In determining housing need, reasonable preference is given:
- a) to persons who:
- are occupying houses which do not meet the tolerable standard; or
 - are occupying overcrowded houses; or
 - have large families; or
 - are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions; and
- b) to homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness (within the meaning of Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the 2001 Act).

The five main categories used to assess housing need are:

- security of present accommodation.
- condition of property
- health or medical needs
- overcrowding or under-occupation
- social, financial and environmental factors.

The following factors will NOT be taken into account when assessing an application:

- the length of time for which an applicant has resided in the area for which he/she is applying for housing (there is no minimum period of residence)
- any outstanding liability (such as rent arrears) attributable to a house of which the applicant was not a tenant
- any rent or service charge arrears accrued by the applicant in a previous or current tenancy which are no longer outstanding
- any rent or service charge arrears accrued by the applicant in a previous or current tenancy which are not more than one month's charges
- where the applicant has rent or service charge arrears but has made an arrangement with the landlord for clearing the arrears, has kept to the arrangement for at least three months and is continuing to make payments
- any outstanding debts (including council tax arrears) of the applicant or anyone who it is proposed will reside with the applicant which do not relate to the tenancy of a house
- the age of the applicant provided that the applicant is sixteen years of age or over, except in the allocation of (a) houses which have been designed or substantially adapted for occupation by people of a particular age group or (b) houses to people who are, or are to be, in receipt of housing support services for people of a particular age group
- the income of the applicant and his/her family
- whether (or to what value) the applicant or any of the applicant's family owns or has owned heritable or moveable property.

9.3 Occupancy Standards

With regard to the Association's aim to make best use of its housing stock, occupancy standards will be applied when assessing the size of housing required by an applicant and his/her household.

The size of housing an applicant and his/her household will be considered for is detailed below.

Occupancy standards

- Children of the same sex are expected to share a bedroom up to sixteen years old unless circumstances require this should not happen, for example, where individuals require separate bedrooms for medical reasons.

- Children of the opposite sex over eight years old should have separate bedrooms.
- No more than two children should normally share a bedroom.
- Adults living together as partners will be expected to share a bedroom unless circumstances require this should not happen, for example, where individuals require separate bedrooms for medical reasons.
- Adults should not share a bedroom with a child

There are exceptions as follows.

1. If an applicant has access to children they will be assessed as requiring one additional bedroom, irrespective of the number of children involved. The applicant will need to provide written confirmation about the access arrangements from the children's main carer. Alternatively a letter from another official source would be sufficient.
2. Expectant mothers will be treated as two or more people dependent on the number of children expected. A certificate of confinement is required.
3. Single elderly applicants over 60 years old and childless couples can be considered for a 2bed property. Please note that these applicants, living in a one bed property, do not constitute overcrowding.

10. Supported Independent Living

10.1 Applicants with support needs

We are committed to providing accommodation which enables independent living and the integration of people with support needs into the community. This could include people with learning difficulties, physical disabilities, mental health issues, dependency (i.e. drug and or alcohol) issues and vulnerable young or older people.

The Association has in place a protocol with the Mungo Foundation to help protect the quality of the service they offer and also improve access to accommodation for those with learning difficulties. This protocol will apply to the properties the Mungo Foundation provide support to current clients. .

In all cases we will work jointly with appropriate agencies and organisations to ensure that applicants receive appropriate support to sustain their tenancy. We will aim to ensure that applicants are not offered inappropriate tenancies without support which may result in failed tenancies.

- **Gathering information on support needs** – our ‘ **Housing Application Cover Sheet and Tenancy Reference form and Medical Self Assessment form** gathers information on the health and support needs of applicants. The information provided by the applicant will trigger a decision on whether accommodation with support is required and whether support needs should be explored further.
- **Working with the applicant and other agencies** – if the applicant indicates that accommodation with support is required, we will work with each individual to determine the availability of this support. This may also involve liaising with other agencies as appropriate.
- **Receiving Referrals from other agencies** – we also work with a number of agencies to provide accommodation to households in need of support.

In all cases, accommodation will only be offered where it is clear that support needs will be met – through confirmation in writing from a relevant organisation such as Social Work or the support provider. Although every effort will be made to work with other agencies to ensure that support is in place, applicants assessed as in need of support but without a support package may be suspended until such time as the support is available. This will be used as a last resort, with all efforts made to work with the applicant to ensure that adequate support is available.

11. How we Allocate our Houses

When a property becomes available for allocation, we will produce a shortlist of applicants whose needs and preferences most closely match this property, in order of their placing on the housing list.

11.1 Accountable discretion and sensitive lettings

In the interest of achieving balanced and sustainable communities and making most effective use of housing stock, the process of matching applicants to properties will require a level of discretion in order to:

- **Match people with appropriate properties** - for example to ensure that physical mobility needs are met and adapted properties allocated appropriately
- **House people in appropriate locations** – for example to ensure that older people or households with young children are close to transport links and/or schools
- **Avoid potential clashes of lifestyle** – based on analysis of the circumstances of individual applicants rather than generalisations
- **Avoiding over concentrations of household type** – for example avoiding high levels of child density or unduly high proportion of vulnerable people in one area, estate, street or close

- **Ensure the quotas are being achieved between the lists** – for example discretion has to be exercised in deciding which list to allocate a vacancy from.

To ensure a clear and accountable audit trail in allocations we ensure that every offer and allocation made is countersigned by two members of staff. In addition “sensitive” let will be reported to the committee and the reason for the allocation fully explained.

12 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE HOUSING LIST

- 12.1 In order to help ensure that the information held on the list is up-to-date and that each applicant still wishes to be considered for housing by the Association, the list will be subject to a minimum of a review every twelve months.
- 12.2 At the time of the review, the Association will ask applicants to confirm (i) that they still want to remain on our housing list (ii) any changes to their circumstances. Applicants indicating a change of circumstances will have their application re-assessed and will be advised of their new status.
- 12.3 The review will be done by post and where there is no response within 21 days the application will be cancelled. The Association will then send a second letter advising that the applicant has been cancelled with the advice that they should contact the Association immediately if they wish their application to be reinstated.

13 SUSPENSIONS AND REMOVAL FROM THE LIST

13.1 Suspensions from the Housing List

- 13.1.1 Elderpark Housing Association will ensure a continuous opportunity for people to apply for housing, be assessed using the needs-based points system, and to access the housing list. However, in certain circumstances, we will suspend applications. While an application is suspended it cannot receive any offers for housing. Suspensions are never permanent. The reasons we will suspend an application are shown below, along with how and when the suspension can be brought to an end.

13.1.2 Suspension Table:

Reason for Suspension	Length of Time Application will be Suspended	How the Suspension can end
The applicant has rent arrears, service charges or rechargeable repairs which they incurred while a tenant equivalent to one months charge, or more, with a current or previous landlord, unless the debt	The application will remain suspended for as long as it takes the applicant to make the repayment agreement with their current or previous landlord and keep the	The current or previous landlord of the applicant must confirm that the applicant made a repayment agreement

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<p>has been repaid in full or the debt is more than 5 years old and has not been pursued by the landlord or when The debt was less than or equal to 1/12 of their annual rent, or An arrangement has been made to repay the debt and that arrangement has been kept for at least 3 months and is continuing to be met.</p>	<p>agreement for three months in a row</p>	<p>and has kept this agreement for the last three months.</p>
<p>It can be shown that the applicant intentionally provided false information during the application process so that they could receive more points for their application</p>	<p>Twelve months</p>	<p>The suspension will end when the twelve months have passed</p>
<p>Serious anti-social behaviour, which was relatively recent and confirmed by an official source, shall be grounds for a possible refusal of an application.</p> <p>Serious anti-social behaviour shall be in connection with the conduct of a tenancy, or shall have caused significant distress or harm to others and will normally (but not always) have occurred on more than one occasion.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour may be accepted as having happened even if an eviction for this behaviour has not been carried out.</p> <p>Serious anti-social behaviour shall be deemed to cover such issues as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Noise pollution ▪ Drug dealing ▪ Racial Harassment ▪ Vandalism by children of, or visitors to, the household ▪ Acting in a violent or threatening manner. 	<p>Applicants may not be indefinitely excluded from being considered from housing, each case will be considered on its merit. The Association may consider the use of a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy as permitted under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.</p> <p>The general rule is that suspension will continue for no more than twelve months since the last known case of anti-social behaviour by the person in question</p> <p>For as long as the ASBO still stands</p>	<p>The applicant's current landlord must confirm that the person has not committed any anti-social behaviour in the last nine months.</p>

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The applicant, or someone planning to move with them, has been violent or acted in threatening manner towards a member of Elderpark Housing Association's Management Committee or staff. The result is that staff are unable to fulfil their function in safe environment	Each case will be looked at on its merit. The suspension will continue for no more than five years since the last incident of violence towards our Committee members or staff. If the person acted in a threatening manner they will be suspended for a maximum of 12 months.	Five years must have passed since the last violent incident. In relation to acted in a threatening manner the suspension can be removed if the person gives an explanation for their conduct.
The applicant has been evicted from a tenancy within the last year	The suspension will continue for no more than one year since the last time the applicant was evicted	It must be confirmed that the applicant has not been evicted in the last year. The applicant must approach Elderpark Housing Association when the year has passed.

13.1.3 Applicants who are suspended from the list will be notified of this in writing. An explanation will be provided on the reasons and the time period that the suspension is to apply will be clearly noted. This letter will also state clearly how the suspension can be brought to an end.

A suspended applicant will also be advised of their right to appeal through the Association's Appeals Procedure.

The association may decide not to suspend an application where in the view of the Housing Manager the needs of the household outweigh any other concerns.

13.2 Removal from the Lists

13.2.1 It will not be usual practice for the Association to remove applicants from the lists and, where this does occur, it will be confined to the following circumstances:

- the applicant has been offered a tenancy by us and this has been accepted
- the applicant has requested to be removed from the list
- the applicant has died
- the applicant has not responded to the annual review process

14 THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

14.1 When the applicant fills in the application form they must ensure that all the information they give us about their circumstances is correct. This is important

because it means we can make an accurate assessment of their housing needs.

- 14.2 The applicant must provide the following information before we can process their application, this includes the applicant's name and address, national insurance number, date of birth, household composition and proof of identity and proof of address.

Proof of ID and address would be as follows e.g, a bank statement, utility bill, letter from employer, passport or driving licence.

- 14.2 If we request further information from the applicant to assess their application then they need to supply us with this, within the timescale we state, so we can complete their assessment.
- 14.3 When we write to the applicant to carry out a six monthly review of our housing list they must complete and return the annual review form.
- 14.4 When the application is on our housing list the applicant needs to tell us if their housing circumstances change. This is so we can update their application and make sure that they have the correct amount of points.
- 14.5 If their application is suspended because the applicant has been evicted or they, or someone they want to move with, has an Anti-Social Behaviour Order against them, then they must contact the Association when it has been one year since the eviction, or when the Anti-Social Behaviour Order has been dropped.
- 14.6 Applicants are required to declare on the application form that all information supplied is true and are reminded to be accurate with the detail they provide. Should it come to the Association's attention that false or misleading information has been given or information withheld in order to obtain a tenancy, the application will be reviewed and action will be taken to recover possession of the property for which a tenancy has been granted (if that false information was the basis on which the tenancy was granted).

15 INTERNAL TRANSFERS

- 15.1 Internal transfers occur where a current tenant wishes to move to another one of the Association's properties. As with Housing List lets, these allocations are made principally on the basis of housing need based on points and a quota system. All applicants for an internal transfer must therefore complete an application form, following which a number of points will be awarded.
- 15.2 In order to ensure mobility and best use of housing stock, the association has set a quota on internal transfers, see Section 19.

- 15.3 Transfer applicants should also note that those with tenancy related debt may be overlooked from being offered a property or suspended if the level of arrears fall within this suspension criteria. The general rule is that the rent account should be cleared. However in, exceptional circumstances, tenants may be allowed to transfer with arrears. Exceptional circumstance will take into account the degree of housing need in comparison to allocations from the waiting list and also the likelihood of the tenancy related debt being repaid.

16 MUTUAL EXCHANGES

- 16.1 Association tenants may apply for Mutual Exchanges:

- (i) With other Association tenants.
- (ii) With tenants of other registered social landlords in the United Kingdom

- 16.2 The Association will maintain a register for persons seeking a Mutual Exchange, and this will be available to all tenants at the Association's office.

Details of our procedure for mutual exchanges are held in a separate policy and procedure document.

17.0 MOBILITY SCHEME

Currently there is no official mobility scheme which helps facilitate people to move nationally. There are two web based organisations which help people find a mutual exchange, they are HomeSwapper, www.homeSwapper.co.uk and Use My Place www.usemyplace.com. Details of these organisations are held in the mutual exchange register. The onus is on the applicant to find a suitable match and on doing so make an application through our mutual exchange procedure.

18 LETS TO STAFF OR COMMITTEE OR MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES (SCHEDULE 7)

- 18.1 The staff and Committee of the Association (and their families) are prevented by law from obtaining any benefit as a result of their connection with the Association. The appropriate legislation is Schedule 7 Part 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. This means that any lets made to staff, Committee or their families **must only be done** on the basis of housing need as determined by our Allocation Policy.

- 18.2 In other words, the let would have been made to that person in any case where he/she exhibited the greatest housing need at the time the selection was made.

- 18.3 The Association has a Schedule 7 Part 1 Register in which it details every allocation made in this way, all such allocations having been checked and approved by the Management Committee. This provides additional safeguards to our tenants and

members as this Register is inspected by Communities Scotland as part of its regulatory function and our internal auditor as part of any audit visit, with individual allocations being selected at random and checked for appropriateness by either of these parties. Penalties for breaching this legislation are significant.

19 WORKING WITH GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

19.1 Homelessness

- 19.1.1 The Association works in partnership with the Council in tackling homelessness by assisting the Council in re-housing homeless applicants.
- 19.1.2 It is the Association's intention to comply fully with the duty under Section 5 of the 2001 Act which requires the Association to comply with any request made by the Council to provide accommodation for a homeless household, unless there are good reasons for not doing so.
- 19.1.3 If one of Elderpark Housing Association's tenants, or the people that live with these tenants, become homeless the Association will give advice to them and accept applications for housing from them. In particular, if they are forced out of their home, for example, because of violence, then the Association will take further steps. They will contact other housing providers to try to secure accommodation for them. In a case of fleeing violence any new accommodation will be outside of the Elderpark area. While the Association will make the best effort it can in these cases, it cannot guarantee that it will find alternative accommodation. The person reporting that they are homeless should not rely solely on the Association in these cases.

19.2 Sex Offenders

- 19.2.1 The Association will work in very close liaison with the Council's Social Work and Police divisions when a known sex offender is to be re-housed. This will involve identifying a link person from the Association's staff team who will consider re-housing options with the Council, with particular reference to the risk assessment carried out under the Sex Offenders Act 1997. This means, for example, a sensitive approach to the location of potential offers.
- 19.2.2 Sex offenders will not be considered for re-housing through the Section 5 homeless route.

20 THE QUOTA SYSTEM

- 20.1 In order to maintain a balance between the various categories of lets, the Association operates a quota system. Target percentages within the different categories for are reviewed to reflect current priorities. An example of the system is detailed below:

Priority	Source of Application	Quota
Ist	Transfer (our tenants wishing to move)	12% of lets
2nd	Homeless People in “Priority Need” as determined by the City Council. (Section 5)	Open access no quota.
3 rd (a)	Other housing and social factors,	Remainder of lets = 70% of lets to (3 a).
3rd (b)	Homeless People as determined by Elderpark H.A. or not statutory homeless as determined the City Council	Remainder of lets = 30% of lets to (3b).

20.2 The percentages outlined in the quotas are not absolute figures which must be attained. Rather, they show how we hope to ensure a balance in our overall annual lettings to each group. An imbalance in quotas towards the end of the year will therefore mean that we should not necessarily make lets to redress the imbalance, in order to catch up.

20.3 We will ensure selections are made on a rotational basis to help ensure that quotas are broadly achieved on an ongoing basis. This is detailed in Appendix 1, The Selection Process. To assist this process monthly outcome reports detailing allocation made will be prepared. However to achieve sustainable communities and make the most effective use of our stock we may deviate from the rotational selection process. For example this may be necessary due to sensitive lettings as described in point 11.1 entitled “Accountable discretion and sensitive lettings”.

21. THE TENANCY AGREEMENT

21.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST), and almost all lets after 30 September 2002 have been made on this basis.

21.2 In certain very limited circumstances, however, the Association may decide to let on the basis of a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy. The circumstances are:

- where the tenant/joint tenant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the past three years
- if the tenant or member of the household is subject to an Anti-Social Behaviour Order
-

21.3 The Short SST is let for a period of at least six months and is subject to tacit

relocation in the same way as a Short Assured Tenancy was. We will, however, aim to convert any Short SST to a full SST within 12 months.

21.4 Summaries of these tenancies are available from the Association on request.

21.5 Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers cannot be offered permanent housing while they are still subject to immigration control. Asylum seeker applications will be coded as suspended applications. Any requests to house asylum seekers on a temporary or permanent basis whilst an application for residency is still pending will only be considered as a nomination from the National Asylum Seekers consortium and in liaison with the local authority.

Once a household has been granted leave to remain in the UK the suspension will be lifted and applications will be considered for housing in accordance with our policy.

Separate arrangements are in place to re-house asylum seekers who cannot be given access to permanent accommodation.

22 MEASURING THE OUTCOMES OF THE POLICY

22.1 The Association formally records all its allocations decisions and the current reporting framework used by the Management Committee provides quarterly reports and an annual report on numbers on the housing lists and details on lets made. This will continue to be the case, however, the annual report will contain the following **additional** information:

- details on any Short Scottish Secure Tenancies let in the year
- details on any instances where the Association has not complied with a request from the Council to provide accommodation to a homeless household
- the number of suspensions applied in the year and the reasons for these
- equal opportunities monitoring information (this will be supplementary to the outturn report on the Equality Action Plan)
- number of lets against quota to internal transfer applicants, housing list applicants A and B, section 5, mutual exchanges, successions and assignments.
- the extent to which staff have been meeting deadlines for processing applications
- the Association's partner's satisfaction with the operations of the Association
- the Association's results compared with similar organisations in our benchmarking club.
- details of complaints and appeals regarding allocations

22.2 There will also be a commentary on how the main objectives of the policy have been achieved, together with suggestions on any improvements that need to be made at the next review (or immediately if this is required).

22.3 A summary of this report will be disseminated to the tenants and members as part of one of our regular newsletters and will also be used as part of the consultative process. Other interested parties can receive this on request.

22.4 Every six months the Housing Manager will randomly select and check 10% of all allocations decisions. This will ensure that decisions are being made in accordance with our policy, with the good practice established by the regulators, and with the law.

23 WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY WITH OUR DECISION ON YOUR APPLICATION

23.1 Appeals

23.1.1 If an applicant is dissatisfied regarding any decision made during the allocation process, she or he has the right to appeal. For example, the applicant may be of the opinion that the points awarded do not reflect their circumstances accurately.

23.1.2 The appeal should be made, in writing, to the Housing Manager. We can supply a standard appeal form on request.

23.1.3 Where the initial appeal is not upheld by the Housing Manager, applicants can appeal to the Association's Director.

23.1.4 Where the initial appeal is not upheld by the Director, applicants can appeal to the Association's Management Committee.

23.1.5 Details of how to appeal are provided in a separate information sheet to all applicants. The applicant may be required to provide evidence to support their appeal.

23.2 Complaints

23.3. Appeals must be distinguished from complaints for which a separate procedure exists. For example, complaints could involve applicants not receiving offers of housing that they are entitled to, or our failure to provide services in line with our customer service standards.

23.3.2 Details of how to complain are provided in a separate information sheet. The applicant may be required to provide evidence to support their complaint.

23.3.3 We have set time scales for dealing with both appeals and complaints to ensure that applicants have their cases dealt with promptly. Applicants also have the right to attend meetings where their case is being discussed, including the right to bring representatives.

23.3.4 Where matters are not resolved, we will provide details of other appeal options. For example, we will advise applicants of their right to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman 4 Melville Street Edinburgh EH3 7NS Telephone 0870 011 5378 Email enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk or to seek other independent advice.

24 CONFIDENTIALITY

24.1 The Association recognises the confidential nature of the information given to it by applicants and respects that it should not disclose to anyone who does not have both a need and a right to know it.

24.2 In assessing an applicant's housing need, the Association may ask for confirmation of certain situations that are of a highly personal nature. In providing this information, it is sufficient for the applicant to give the Association sight of a document/report/letter and for the applicant to retain it without the Association keeping the original or a copy. Similarly, an applicant may request certain documents are returned to him/her once they have served their purpose, for example, after an assessment has been carried out or after an allocation has been made.

24.3 The Association undertakes to dispose of cancelled applications in a confidential way. Cancelled applications and all associated documents will be shredded one year after the cancellation date.

APPENDIX I

THE POINTS SYSTEM

SECTION 4: SELECTION PROCESS

1.0 This section outlines the type of allocation system that we use and how we prioritise allocations made. This is first clarified by reference to good practice and organisational objectives.

1.1 Firstly

In selecting a tenant for an empty property the Association will give priority to Transfer applicants until such time as the quota of transfer lets is achieved. The transfer applicants with the highest number of points will be considered for the property first in accordance with their stated preference.

This is in recognition that to obtain a stable community we need to give people the opportunity “to continue to want to live in the same community, both now and in the future” Key Issues for Sustainable Communities’ Derek Long, European Institute for Urban Affairs, Liverpool, John Moores University August 2000).

1.2 Secondly

Thereafter should the quota for transfers be exceeded the property will be offered to Local Authority Homeless Referrals (Section 5’s). Such referrals are people who have been assessed by the City Council as being statutory homeless. The Association aims to re-house referrals within six weeks of the original request. This should also ensure that homeless applicants have access to a wide variety of offers. Currently there is no quota for homeless applicants. Section 5 applications will receive 1pts and selected on date order.

1.3 Thirdly

Thereafter the property will be offered to waiting list applicants.

This will be split into two.

2.0 Waiting list A. – Homelessness As Assessed by the Association.

Applicant is Homeless	40 points
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Applications from homeless households, (who are not statutorily homeless as assessed by the City Council), will after our assessment be awarded 40 points.

This approach aims to assist in re-housing homeless people without the need to go through the section 5 referrals.

Elderpark Housing Association recommends that all homeless applicants should present themselves to the Glasgow City Council, as well as applying for our housing each homeless applicant will be advised of this by a member of staff. This is because the Association cannot offer a cast-iron guarantee that an offer will be made whereas the Council may have a statutory duty to provide accommodation (although this could initially be temporary). The Council's Homelessness Service's details are available in Appendix 2

For our waiting list we define homeless circumstances to include the following:

- a) They are living in a hostel for homeless people which only allows people to stay temporarily
- b) They are living in supported accommodation for homeless people
- c) They are living in temporary accommodation found for them by the Local Authority because they were homeless
- d) They are living in a moveable structure, e.g. a caravan, and they are not entitled or permitted to put it anywhere
- e) They are leaving long term hospital care
- f) They have accommodation which they could live in but they cannot secure entry to it, e.g. they are a private landlord and cannot currently repossess their only property
- g) Homeless due to a relationship breakdown, for example a lodger has been asked to move and the applicant has provided the pro-forma "Declaration by Person Withdrawing Consent For Applicant to Occupy Accommodation"

They are going to find themselves in any of the above situations a) to g) **within the next three months**. If they are going to be homeless within the next three months because the rented flat they live in is to be repossessed (this includes Tied Housing), or the privately owned home they live in is to be repossessed or sold then the applicant must provide written evidence of the date that repossession, sale will make them homeless. Note: the applicant in this situation does not need to be the tenant or the owner.

There is an onus on the homeless applicant to advise the Association if there is a change in their circumstances, particularly if they continue to reside in the property after the date they have been asked to leave.

Waiting List B - Points based Housing Needs.

This waiting list will take into account the remaining categories used to assess housing need, for example security of tenure, condition of property, health or medical needs, overcrowding or under-occupation and social, financial and environmental factors

3.5.2 Insecure Housing Situation

Applicant in Insecure Housing Situation

Applicant's who receive points for Insecure Housing Situation cannot receive points for Homelessness as well. If the applicant is to become homeless they move to the Waiting list A and will also be advised to apply to the city council as a homeless person.

15 points will be awarded for this category to:

- a) An applicant who has a Short Assured Tenancy
- b) A home owner who cannot afford their mortgage and legal action has commenced to repossess their home.
- c) An applicant has broken up with their partner (whether they were married or not) and still has to live with them due to lack of alternative accommodation.

10points will be awarded for this category to:

- a) An applicant who is a lodger and is living with friends or family.

3.5.3 Overcrowding and Under-Occupation

For Every Bedroom Lacking	8 points
For Every Bedroom Extra	4 points

NOTE: The living room/bedroom of a studio flat counts as a living room, therefore, an applicant who lives in a studio flat will be seen as having NO BEDROOMS

The overcrowding points are awarded in accordance with occupancy standards as detailed in section 9.3 of the allocation policy.

Under occupying points refer to Elderpark Housing Association tenants.

3.5.4 Condition of Current Property

Property is Below Tolerable Standard.	30 points
Property has dampness / condensation or does not have full central heating.	10 points

Within reason there is an onus for the applicant to provide evidence to support claims of dampness. Points in this category are awarded to tenants and owner occupiers.

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The tolerable standard for housing is defined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the 2001 Act. Verification document can be provided the City Council

3.5.5 Sharing Amenities

Applicant Sharing kitchen/Cooking facilities with Other Household	2 points
Applicant Sharing a Living Room with Other Household	2 points
Applicant Sharing W.C. Shower/Bath with Other Household	2 points

3.5.6 Mobility/Medical Condition

The Location/Layout of the Current Home of the Applicant, or a Someone Moving in with the Applicant, is so detrimental to their Mobility or Medical Condition that:

Moving House is Considered to be Essential	25 points
Moving House is Considered to be Advisable	15 points

Points are not awarded for medical reasons simply because an applicant has a particular medical condition. Points are awarded only when the applicant satisfies two tests:

- 1/ The applicant's accommodation is unsuitable because of the applicant's medical condition
- 2/ Alternative accommodation requested would alleviate this medical condition.

An assessment will be made as to whether the provision of alternative accommodation is "essential" or "advisable". In order to determine the appropriate points we will ask the applicant to complete a Medical Self Assessment Form.

Where more than one party to an application attracts medical points, the individual points awarded to each applicant are added together

Points will be awarded to an applicant suffering from anxiety or depression only if he/she is receiving medical treatment on a regular basis.

Points will be awarded to applicants who have a disability or disabling illness which affects their mobility when they consider ground floor or first floor accommodation.

3.5.7 Sustainability Grounds

We aim to achieve a balanced and sustainable community. We have defined this as encouraging people to reside in the area who have a range of life and employment experiences. We also want to strengthen social, community and family networks.

To assist this objective we have awarded the following points:

Applicants moving nearer to relatives, to give or receive support are awarded **5 points**.

Applicants moving to help sustain employment/training are awarded **5 points**.

In seeking to create and sustain social, community and family networks we will adopt a broad interpretation of social support. Applicants will need to detail on the application form how they fall within the above criteria.

In relation to employment points will be awarded if the applicant, or someone moving in with the applicant can describe on their application from why moving will help sustain employment/training/education. Confirmation of employment training, education must be provided. In addition applicants will need to detail on the application form how they fall within the above criteria.

3.5.8 Abuse, Harassment, Discrimination or Victimization

Applicants facing any form of abuse, harassment, discrimination or victimisation are awarded **25 points**

The terms above are defined by different legislation. For example, abuse includes violence, harassment, threatening conduct, and any other conduct giving rise, or likely to give rise, to physical or mental injury, fear, alarm or distress.

(Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001, section 7)

Housing staff will assess each case using the appropriate legal provisions. Evidence will normally be required from appropriate agencies where they are involved with applicants, for example, Social Work or the West of Scotland Racial Equality Council and Police.

3.6 Date of Application

Date of application will be used to determine priority in cases where applicants share the same points totals and aspirations

3.7 POINTING JOINT APPLICATIONS

- 3.7.1** In the case whereby joint applicants live at different addresses, the applicants will identify who is the main applicant and their housing circumstances will be assessed and pointed in accordance with the policy.

Housing Information and Advice

We aim to ensure that applicants receive high quality information and advice which enables them to make informed choices about their housing. We provide information and advice on:

- How to apply for housing and how the application will be dealt with
- Timescales for processing and assessing applications
- The role of applicant and what information they are expected to provide
- Applicant's realistic chances of obtaining a tenancy from the Association
- Other housing options
- Income, Benefit and Housing Benefit advice

Other Local Housing Providers

Lighthouse Housing Association 1 Cressy Street Govan Glasgow G51 4RB 0141 445 4418 Monday to Friday 9:00am -12:30pm and 1:30pm – 5:00pm	Govan Housing Association 35 McKechnie Street Govan Glasgow G51 3AQ 0141 440 0308 Monday to Friday 9:00am – 1:00pm and 2:00pm – 4:30pm
Clydeview Housing Partnership 780 Govan Road Govan Glasgow G51 2YL 0141 274 8720 Monday to Friday 9:30am – 4:00pm	

Homelessness Services

The Hamish Allan Centre 180 Centre Street Tradeston Glasgow G5 8EE Freephone 0800 838 502 Open every day of the year, 24 hours a day	South West Community Casework Team 299/301 Shieldhall Road Govan Glasgow G51 4HB 0141 880 9936 Monday to Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm
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Preventing Homelessness

South West Area Social Work Services 1 Merryland Street Govan Glasgow G51 2QG 0141 276 6480 Monday to Thursday 8:45am – 4:45pm
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ELDERPARK HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD.

Friday 8:45am – 3:55pm

Emergency out of hours service: Freephone 0800 811505

Glasgow Women's Aid

4th Floor

30 Bell Street

Glasgow

G1 1LG

0141 553 2022

Drop In - Monday to Friday 9:30am – 3:45pm, except Wednesdays 9:30am – 1:00pm

Phone – Monday to Friday 9:30am – 5:00pm, except Wednesdays 9:30am – 1:00pm

Applicants will need to detail on the application form how they fall within the above criteria