
ALLOCATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Title:	Allocations Policy and Procedures
Purpose of Procedure:	To ensure all Allocations are carried out efficiently and fairly in accordance with both the policy and procedures.
Section:	Housing Management
Date:	15th December 2009
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Performance Standards:	AS1.1, AS1.2 & AS1.3
Reference:	

BLAIRTUMMOCK HOUSING ASSOCIATION
ALLOCATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Blairtummock Housing Association takes recognition of Communities Scotland Performance Standard AS1.1 and AS1.2/AS1.3.

Access to housing

“We ensure that people have fair and open access to our housing list and assessment process. We work with others to maximise and simplify access routes into our housing”.

Lettings

“We let houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need; makes best use of available stock; maximises choice; and helps to sustain communities”.

Tenancies

“We offer the most secure form of tenancy compatible with the purpose of the housing. The agreement makes clear the rights and duties of the tenant and landlord. We act to uphold these rights and duties in a fair and responsible manner”.

The aim of this policy and procedures is to ensure that all allocations are carried out in accordance with the Association's Allocation Policy.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE ASSOCIATION

2.1 Blairtummock Housing Association is a community-based Housing Association registered since 1990 and operates in the Blairtummock and South Rogerfield areas of Easterhouse.

The Association's stock consists of the following:

	Unimproved	Refurbished	Newbuild	RTB	Improvement for sale / sold	Shared Ownership	Completion Date	Total
Rehab 1		39					March 1993	39
Rehab 2		38		3			March 1993	40
NB1			43 (2 Wheel-chair)				February 1995	43 (2 offices)
NB 2			16				May 1996	16
NB 3			24			10	November 1997	34
NB 4			26		1	2	July 1998	29
Area 1A Rehab 3 NB 5		18	3 (1 Wheelchair)		13	2	May 1999	36
Area 1B NB 6 Rehab 4		12	28				June 2001	40
Area 3 NB 8							On site May 2003 (89)	89
Area 4 NB 7			51				June 03	51
SOOTS South Rogerfield		1			2	2		5
Rented South Rogerfield		3					April 2002	3
Community Care			9				March 2002	9 (1 Mainstream)
Self Build						10		10
Totals	0	111	200	5	16	26		445

3.0 AIMS OF THE ASSOCIATION

3.1 The Association is controlled by a Management Committee of local residents and the organisation has the following aims:-

- To provide good quality housing for people who need it
- To work with Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) and private sector to improve the housing and meet the housing needs of the area

To tackle the severe housing, environmental, social and economic problems of the area.

4.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION'S ALLOCATIONS POLICY

4.1 For the Association, the end result of an effective Allocations Policy is to rebuild the Community.

The Association would therefore wish to recreate a stable environment and attract people who are committed to living in the area and not applicants who have come here because of no other option.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 5.1** Blairtummock Housing Association has an Equal Opportunities Statement with regard to: sex, marital status, family circumstances, race/ethnic or national origin, physical ability, health, age, religion and sexual orientation.
- 5.2** Any person of the age of 16 can apply for housing, the Association's policy does not require applicants to have a local connection, and it does not exclude owner occupiers.

6.0 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1** The Association may grant a tenancy to employees, committee members, former employees, former committee members and close relatives of the aforementioned persons. In the event of such a tenancy being granted, the following requirements must be met:
- a) The allocation is in accordance with the Association's Allocation Policy.
 - b) The allocation has been specifically agreed at a Management Committee meeting.
 - c) The details of such allocations are duly recorded in the Schedule 7 Register.

7.0 ACCESS

Any applicant aged 16 years or over can apply for housing from the Association. The Association will accept all applications in line with provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. However not all applicants will be considered for housing. This is due to the limited supply of accommodation and the fact that we do not wish to raise applicants' hopes where no opportunity of re-housing can be given. All applicants will be advised accordingly.

The Association will hold a register of all applicants received but will keep a small list of applicants where allocations may be made within a reasonable period of time. Regular contact will be maintained as our Lists will be regularly reviewed, and at any time the Association may have to advise people that we cannot help because others in the List are in greater need.

All tenancy selections and lettings will be carried out fairly and efficiently by the Association.

When making a let the Association will consider the household composition of those living within neighbouring properties, in order to help create balanced communities.

7.1 Arrears

If an applicant has outstanding arrears to a previous/present landlord, the factor of having arrears will never rule out an application or allocation from being considered by the Association. However, the circumstances surrounding the arrears will be investigated and be discussed with the applicant giving them an opportunity to explain how the arrears occurred.

If arrears accumulated due to persistent non-payment to the landlord, the applicant will be asked to demonstrate a commitment to clearing current arrears by making an arrangement with the landlord. Once the applicant has demonstrated a willingness to pay the arrears they will be considered for re-housing.

7.2 Anti-Social Behaviour

Where the Association has received information from an official source, e.g. Police, social landlord, that anti-social behaviour has occurred and legal action commenced, the Association will fully investigate the circumstances which may result in an application being refused.

If an application has been refused, the applicant has the right to appeal the decision.

In circumstances where charges are pending, due to properties being used, or allowing to be used for illegal or immoral purposes (eg drug dealing), existing tenants of the Association and waiting list applicants will not be considered for re-housing or transfer to another property.

Charges of this nature which lead to conviction may result in the Association pursuing legal action and seeking recover of possession of the property.

7.3 Domestic Abuse

The Association recognises that all people have a right to life free from violence and abuse.

Victims of domestic abuse will be given priority wherever possible; however, this is dependent on the availability of suitable properties at the applicant's time of applying.

Rent arrears outstanding at a former or current tenancy will not be used as grounds for refusal.

7.4 Registered Sex Offenders

The National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO) was introduced as part of the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) in March 2007. No education or training programme has been provided or consultation for Housing Associations. MAPPA, NASSO and other publications from Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and the University of Glasgow highlight the role of housing organisations in maximising community safety and minimising the risk from Registered Sex Offenders.

Following discussions with committee the association does not have the capacity to form the role of maximising community safety by minimising the risk from Registered Sex Offenders.

Raising Standards in Housing by the Scottish Federation of Housing Association 2002 stated that Housing Associations are best placed to identify risks they face and that outside advisors should not assess risk on their behalf. Blairtummock Housing Association will assess the risk if a sex offender applies for housing or is referred by another agency.

The CIH in Scotland report in 1999 by Andrea Moore "Housing and Sex Offenders in Scotland" has recommended that sex offenders should not be housed near to victims or potential victims. The Association has no properties that would be suitable due to the child population and number of facilities for children in the Blairtummock area

Where a housing applicant or any member of the applicant's household has to register with the Police under the Sex Offenders Act 1997, Blairtummock Housing Association will work with the relevant authorities to establish whether there is a risk to community safety. Where a threat is deemed to exist the application for housing will be suspended.

The position will be reviewed if there is a material change in the circumstances and the applicant will have the right of appeal against the decision. See section 14 below

8.0 WAITING LISTS

8.1 The Association operates a points/quota system of Allocations, based on housing need. Applicants will be placed on one of the following Waiting Lists:

- A. 10% of all allocations: Homelessness
- B. 35% of all allocations: Transfer Applicants - existing Blairtummock Housing Association tenants, Aspirational transfers
- C. 55% of all allocations: Mainstream Waiting List Applicants
- D. Mutual Exchanges

Applicants are placed on the appropriate apartment size waiting list, depending on the number of rooms required, as calculated in Section 9.1, Housing Need.

The Association will assess requests for additional bedrooms on an individual basis. Should an applicant require an additional bedroom due to medical reasons, they will be required to complete a "Medical Priority – Self Assessment Form".

In the case of custody arrangements for children, the Association would require legal documentation to confirm the existing arrangement. In cases where amicable arrangements have been made, the Association will fully investigate each case.

The Association will also endeavour to assist GHA with rehousing tenants who are currently living in clearance areas within Greater Easterhouse.

HOMELESSNESS	Points		
Statutory – in priority need and unintentionally homeless	30		
No Priority Homeless Cases (Roofless) - change to no priority cases	25		
Constant Change of Address	20		
No Use of Bedroom	15		

The Association has also signed up to the New Homelessness Protocol for Glasgow. Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced a new duty upon RSL's to comply with a request from a local authority to house a homeless household.

The Association will work within the terms of this document and assist Glasgow City Council to alleviate homelessness.

9.0 MAINSTREAM AND TRANSFER WAITING LIST

55% of all allocations will be made to applicants from the mainstream waiting list.

35% of all allocations will be made to transfers of existing Blairtummock Housing Association tenants who will be awarded points from Section 1, Housing Need and Section 6, Medical and Disability and Social Factors. 5% of the quota will be allocated to these applicants wishing to transfer for operational reasons.

9.1 Housing Need

Overcrowding and under occupying

The following factors will be used to determine the above:

- No more than 2 persons would share a bedroom
- Children of 10 years and under could share a bedroom regardless of sex
- Children under 16 years could share a bedroom if of the same sex
- All adults over 16 years and over, if not partners, should have individual bedrooms

Applicants will be awarded 5 points for every bed space short of requirements.

Applicants will be awarded 4 points for every bed space surplus to requirements.

9.2 Lack of Amenities

Points will be awarded when existing accommodation lacks the following amenities:

- | | | |
|---|---|----------|
| - | lack of Useable drying facilities | 3 points |
| - | lack of central heating/ adequate house heating | 3 points |
| - | Adequate cooking facilities | 6 points |
| - | Piped supply of hot water | 6 points |
| - | Inside w.c. | 9 points |
| - | bath/shower | 9 points |

9.3 Condition of Property

The following property conditions will be considered:

- | | | |
|---|---|----------|
| - | Dampness | 3 points |
| - | Accommodation declared as an Area of Improvement/demolition or being transferred To Association for improvement | 6 points |

9.4 Sharing Facilities

Where applicants are currently residing in lodgings with friends or relatives, sharing with family **BUT** wish independent accommodation, or in temporary or homeless accommodation, points will be awarded on the following basis:

- Shared living area 3 points
- Shared cooking facilities 3 points
- Shared bath or shower 6 points
- Shared inside w.c. 6 points

9.5 Social/Family Support

Points will be awarded on the following examples:

- A relative lives in the area 3 points
- Work close by 3 points
- School/further education commitment 3 points

In need of support as a result of:

- separated households 9 points
- Violence - outwith home 9 points
- Sexual abuse - outwith home 9 points
- Harassment - 9 points
- Relationship breakdown 12 points
- Daily or regular care of sick/elderly 12 points
- Physical violence - within home 12 points
- Sexual abuse - within home 12 points
- Physical harassment involving violence 12 points

Support points will only be allocated to applicants living outwith the Association's area of operation and wish to move in order to receive/provide support.

The above list is not exhaustive.

9.6 Medical and Disability and Social Factors

In order to apply for medical points a "Medical Priority Self-Assessment Form" is given to applicants on request.

Where clear physical conditions exist and current housing circumstances are inadequate, priority will be awarded in this category:

- locational difficulties 6 points
- Problems with stairs 6 points
- Elderly (OAPS) 9 points
- Mental Health Problems 9 points

Social factors - the following examples will be included:

- Environmental issues 6 points
- Young children and stairs 6 points

9.7 House Tenure/Security

Consideration will be given on the basis of the applicants' current tenure arrangements:

- Lodgers 3 points
- With friends or relatives 3 points
- With family but wish independent Accommodation 3 points
- In temporary homeless accommodation, e.g. bed-sit, B&B, hostel, caravan 6 points
- separated households 6 points
- As a result of marital breakdown 6 points
- Owners Occupiers 6 points

9.8 Aspirational Transfer

The Association is aware of the aspirational needs of current tenants which may not necessarily be met through the points system. A small quota is set to accommodate tenants "aspirational transfer" in the following category:

Tenants wishing to transfer for reasons of personal preference eg, parking space, private garden etc.

Applications for aspirational transfer will not be refused providing that:

- Applicants current tenancy is a minimum of 3 years
- There are no outstanding rent arrears or re-chargeable repairs

10.0 MUTUAL EXCHANGES

10.1 The Association will allow, subject to conditions, mutual exchanges with another tenant of the Association or other public sector landlord.

All requests for exchanges will be considered on a case by case basis and provided both parties will be suitably housed by this arrangement. A satisfactory tenancy reference report for incoming tenants is required from their existing landlord. Refer to Mutual Exchange Procedures.

At present the Association have a register of those wishing to exchange, this is promoted through newsletters and interviews with applicants.

11.0 ABUSIVE AND THREATENING BEHAVIOUR

- 11.1 If an applicant uses threatening or violent behaviour towards any staff or committee member of the Association or towards any member of the local community the application may be suspended. The applicant will have the right of appeal. See section 14.

12.0 MONITORING

- 12.1** To help fulfil its commitment to equal opportunities, the Association will collect and monitor records of the ethnic/racial origin of all those applying for housing. Records will be reviewed annually.

13.0 CANCELLATION OF APPLICATIONS

13.1 An applicant who lies or knowingly gives false information or withholds relevant information will have their application cancelled and the Association reserves the right to refuse any further application.

If applicants fail to respond to a review application form or a request for further information within 14 days, the application will be cancelled.

14.0 APPEALS OR COMPLAINTS

14.1 There is an important distinction between appeals and complaints.

Appeals refer to a request to review a decision relating to an application.

The Association has clear procedures for dealing with appeals arising from decisions made in respect of their application. If any applicant is unhappy by the way in which they have been treated, then the process of appeal is:

- (a) Director
- (b) Management Committee

All details of appeals should be submitted in writing.

A complaint would refer to dissatisfaction with the service provided. A copy of the Association's Complaints Policy is available on request.

15.0 ACCOUNTABILITY AND REVIEW

- 15.1** Blairtummock Housing Association has a commitment to ensure that all tenant selections and lettings are carried out fairly and efficiently.

The Association has a high demand for accommodation; however, has a low turnover of properties.

All applicants will be placed on a waiting list, however, those applicants with less than 9 points will be placed on a low priority register and advised that it would be very unlikely that the Association will be able to offer rehousing.

A copy of the Policy will be available from the Association's Office, GHA (Easterhouse Office, City Centre Office and the Hamish Allan Centre).

16.0 PROCEDURES

- 16.1** When a property becomes vacant, the relevant waiting list is checked and the top 3 applicants, who have expressed an interest in the particular street where a property is available, are notified and a home visit is arranged. Their application is checked to ensure present, and previous (where applicable), tenancy references have been requested. This is done as a matter of course when applicants are placed near the top of the waiting list.
- 16.2** During the home visit, the applicant is required to provide 2 forms of identification to prove residency ie, benefit book, bank statement, driving licence etc.
- 16.3** All information provided on the application form is discussed with the applicant and any discrepancies discussed.
- 16.4** After completion of home visits, each individual's circumstances, and level of housing need is discussed fully with the Housing Manager. The applicant with most housing need and/or points is allocated the property.
- 16.5** A formal letter is sent offering the property. This allocation is also noted in the Allocations Register and countersigned by Housing Manager/Housing Officer. An Allocations Audit Trail should also be completed (Appendix A)
- 16.6** The offer letter advises the applicant to contact the Housing Officer in order to arrange a viewing of the property. After the viewing, whether the property is accepted or not, the applicant is required to complete and return the tear-off slip at the bottom of the offer letter.
- 16.7** Where the property is accepted, the Scottish Secure Tenancy Procedures are followed.
- 16.8** Where the property is refused, the applicant is placed back on the waiting list and the property is offered to the next applicant.

BLAIRTUMMOCK HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED ALLOCATIONS POLICY

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>
10% Homelessness	30% Transfers (including aspirational) 5%	55% Mainstream	Mutual Exchanges
Statutory Roofless Constant change of address No use of bedroom	Overcrowding Under-occupying Medical factors Disability factors Social factors Aspirational	Housing Need Overcrowding Under-occupying Lack of amenities Condition of property Sharing facilities Social/family support Disability factors Medical factors House tenure/security	

NOTES:

1. Wheelchair housing will require a separate list.