



ALLOCATION POLICY

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Ochil View Housing Association is a Housing Association registered with Communities Scotland and with Charitable Status. We provide quality, affordable and sustainable housing and associated services for people in housing need in Clackmannanshire and West Fife.

1.2 Most of our properties are allocated through Homehunt, our Choice based lettings system. Some are not, and this includes

- Housing for sale, whether outright sale, shared ownership or shared equity sales
- Properties let at market rents.
- Properties where allocations have been delegated under a lease of other agreement to another agency as set out in Section 6.5 below.
- Any other properties that the Association decides should be the subject of special allocation arrangements.

2.0 Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the Allocation Policy are to:

- Allow fair and open access to our affordable housing for rent
- Give preference in the allocation of houses to applicants in housing need, particularly to applicants who must receive reasonable preference under the law
- Make the best use of our housing stock
- Maximise the choice available to housing applicants
- Be accountable to our tenants and the communities we serve in the development of our Allocations Policy
- Allocate properties in a fair and consistent manner that does not unfairly discriminate or exclude applicants
- Increase commonality and co-operation with other landlords in our area of operations.
- Develop and maintain sustainable communities

2.2 The Allocations Policy also aims to assist the achievement of Departmental Objectives set out in the Housing Services Departmental Plan, as follows:

- To provide a quality management service to tenants and customers
- To ensure the tenant participation and communication elements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 are maintained,
- To participate positively to the creation and maintenance of

- balanced, sustainable communities;
- To achieve consistently high levels of customer satisfaction from the delivery of housing services
- To strive to achieve an A Grading at the next regulatory inspection.

2.3 The Allocation Policy will achieve these objectives by:

2.3.1 Allowing fair and open access to our housing register

We recognise the criteria for admission to housing lists as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and Guidance on Housing Lists and Allocations (SEDD Circular 1/2002).

We also recognise that people cannot apply unless they are aware of our housing services and their eligibility to apply. Hence we will publicise our operations and service by a range of methods, including the following:

- Distributing publicity and promotional material in places where people in housing need are likely to find it
- Our website
- Training and information sessions provided to staff of agencies working with people in housing need.

We will maintain audit trails to enable us to show how and why any given allocation was made to a particular household, having due regard to Data Protection legislation

2.3.2 Meeting housing need

There are not enough houses for all who need them, and for this reason, this Policy is designed to make best use of the housing supply by giving preference to applicants in housing need. We will meet all relevant legal requirements and comply with the Scottish Housing Regulator's Performance Standards. We will give priority in the allocation of housing to people with high levels of housing need as set out in our **Priority Pass** system without any discriminatory restrictions. We recognise the need to give priority to applicants who must receive reasonable preference under the law, specifically those who are

- Homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Occupying houses that do not meet the tolerable standard
- Are overcrowded
- Have large families
- Are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions

2.3.3 Make best use of our housing stock

We make best use of our housing stock by

- Allocating homes to people in housing need
- Matching applicants with properties to utilise features and amenities
- Maximising occupancy levels (except when allocating homes to OVHA tenants who are downsizing)
- Giving a high priority to OVHA tenants who want to move to a smaller home.

2.3.4 Maximising choice available to applicants

We will maximise the opportunities for greater access to housing and the ability of applicants to make informed choices through

- the provision of good information and advice,
- Reducing complexity in our allocations systems and eliminating bureaucracy wherever possible.

We operate Homehunt, a form of Choice Based Lettings where vacant properties are advertised and applicants apply for the ones they want. We aim to keep the system as straightforward and easy to understand as possible and to provide good information and advice so that applicants can make informed choices.

2.3.5 Being accountable to our customers

We will achieve this by involving tenants and the wider community in the development of the policy and by making available information about our targets and performance in providing an allocations service. We will achieve good communication with applicants at all stages of the allocations process from the initial enquiry onwards. This will include observation of confidentiality and Data Protection. We will treat all personal information as completely confidential and use it only for the purpose of operating our allocations policy.

2.3.6 Helping to develop sustainable communities

The Allocations Policy aims to assist in the creation and maintenance of stable and sustainable communities that are places where people want to live and remain. To achieve this aim we will avoid over concentrating any particular group. Wherever possible, we will identify an imbalance, and the action required to address it, before the property is advertised, and we will include information about any criteria to be applied in the property advert. Where an applicant is by-passed in the interests of maintaining a sustainable community we will always try to balance the interests of the individual with the interests of the community and will bear in mind the requirement to give reasonable preference to certain categories of applicant. We will record the reasons for the decision and report such allocations to our Housing Services Sub-Committee.

2.3.7 Promoting partnership

We will work in partnership with other bodies and organisations where possible. We will consider opportunities that may exist for joint work with local authorities or other housing associations and voluntary organisations working together to identify and alleviate housing or support needs.

2.3.8 Promoting Equality of Opportunity

We will not unfairly discriminate against any individual, household or group on the grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions. We will make information available in different formats as required and will provide translation services free of charge. We will monitor our allocations to ensure that nothing in this policy leads to unfair discrimination.

2.3.9 Properly defining the role of Governing Body Members

The day to day operation of the allocations process will be undertaken by staff and not by Management Committee members. Committee members will

- initially agree and review the policy
- consider appeals, special cases and allocations made where Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 applies
- Monitor the outcomes of the policy through the Association's established Performance Monitoring and Risk Management framework

3.0 Legislative and Regulatory Framework

3.1 Ochil View Housing Association will comply with the requirements of relevant legislation, regulatory standards in the form of the Scottish Housing Regulators Performance Standards and be guided by SFHA publications, most particularly Raising Standards in Housing and other examples of good practice.

Relevant and applicable legislation includes:

3.2 Housing (Scotland) Act 1987

In accordance with Section 21 of this Act we will

- publish our Allocation Policy
- send a copy to Fife Council, Clackmannanshire Council and the Scottish Housing Regulator
- supply a copy on request to anyone
- Publish it on our website.

3.3 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

In accordance with Section 5 of the 2001 Act we will house homeless applicants referred to us by Fife Council and Clackmannanshire Council (unless we have a "good reason" not to do so as defined by the Scottish Government's guidance and protocol agreements with the local authority). We will develop Protocol Agreements with our Local Authority partners. We will review their operation regularly.

3.4 In accordance with Sections 9 and 10 of this Act we will hold and operate a housing waiting list that meets the requirements of legislation.

3.5 In accordance with Section 54 of the Act we will consult with tenants and registered tenants organisations regarding significant changes in our Allocation Policy

3.6 In accordance with Section 106 of this Act we will act in a manner which encourages the prevention and elimination of discrimination between persons on the grounds of disability, age, sexual preference, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

3.7 Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

We understand that Committee members, officers and employees of housing associations cannot be in a situation where their duties and personal interests conflict, or might conflict, and they must not benefit in any way from their connections with the Association except in the ways that Schedule 7 allows. We will only grant a tenancy (whether by allocation of a new tenancy, a transfer of tenancy or a mutual exchange) to an employee, former employee, Committee Member or former Committee Member, or a close relative of such a person (a relevant person) if the allocation is

- Fully in compliance with our Allocations Policy, **and**
- the relevant person has had no involvement in or influence over the process by which the we allocated the tenancy **and**
- the offer of tenancy is approved in advance by our Management Committee

Our Allocation Audit trails will show that we have followed these rules where they apply. We will record the details of any such allocations in our Schedule 7 register which is held by the Director.

3.8 Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003

We will assist Clackmannanshire and Fife Councils in implementing their homelessness strategies, mainly through the provision of accommodation to homeless people and by co-operating with local authorities to minimise the incidence of homelessness among our own tenants.

3.9 Race Relations Act 1976

We will promote racial equality.

We will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on the basis of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin when we:

- Let properties.
- Set conditions of tenancy
- Are considering the needs of applicants on our housing list.

3.10 Sex Discrimination Act 1975

We will not discriminate unlawfully on the basis of gender in the provision of housing or services.

3.11 Disability Discrimination Act 1995

We will not provide less favourable housing services to tenants or

housing applicants who have a disability.

3.12 The European Convention on Human Rights

We will show respect for the private and family lives of applicants, and their homes and correspondence.

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

We will respect the rights of non-entitled spouses and partners who have had occupancy rights granted to:

- (i) Remain in the family home.
- (ii) Return to the family home if excluded from it, to enter and occupy the family home.
- (iii) Pay rent and require a landlord to carry out their duty to maintain the home.
- (iv) Give or withhold consent for any transaction which would affect his/her occupancy rights - e.g. a termination of tenancy.
- (v) Defence against repossession if the tenant fails to do so

3.14 The Data Protection Act 1998

We will make applicants aware that their application will be recorded on our computerised records and ask for their written consent to process their personal data. Applicants must give their written consent – we cannot accept an application without this. However we recognise that applicants may be concerned about inappropriate use of personal data and so we will

- Describe the content of the personal data held through entry on the public register.
- Use the described data only for the registered purposes.
- Not disclose the data to persons other than those described in the register.
- Maintain the accuracy of the data.
- On request, disclose to individuals any personal data held on them.
- To keep data only for as long as necessary for that purpose.

4.0 Eligibility and Access

4.1 Our housing register is open at all times

4.2 Those who want to be housed must fill in our Housing Registration Form. Anyone can get a form by calling at the office, by phoning, by writing or sending an e-mail. Applicants must also answer the questions we ask fully and honestly, and provide any supporting information that we ask for to confirm their housing circumstances.

4.3 When we receive a Housing Registration Form, we will assess the applicant's housing needs in accordance with the priority system we have set out at Section 12. Everyone who applies and is aged over 16 will be admitted to our housing register. But we may suspend some registrations so that they may not apply for housing. Section 8.0 below gives more information on why we may suspend registrations,

for how long they may be suspended and how applicants may have suspensions removed.

5.0 Availability of Information to housing applicants.

5.1 We are committed to equal opportunity of access for everyone to apply for housing. We will publish information about our housing stock and housing services, and make this widely available in the communities we serve, for example through

- ✓ our office,
- ✓ Offices of advice, information and support agencies. We will keep them informed about our activities and services.
- ✓ Council Offices
- ✓ Offices of other housing providers

5.2 When we issue a Housing Registration Form, we will supply a Guide to our Housing Service and our Allocations Policy and Procedures, including information about

- How we will deal with applications, and targets for replying to applications
- What applicants can expect after they register
- The information applicants are expected to provide to help us deal with their application
- Information about prospects of obtaining a tenancy.
- Alternative sources of obtaining accommodation and advice e.g. the Council,, other Associations, Care and Repair services, Occupational therapy and home adaptation options, Citizens Advice Bureau , Shelter etc, with brief details of what services these agencies offer.
- General information about our housing stock so applicants can choose the areas where they would prefer to live
- Information about our housing management service.

5.3 We want the information we provide to be clear and simple to understand and so

- We will always try to use plain language.
- If an applicant needs information to be translated into another language, we will provide translated, written material and we will arrange for an interpreter to be present when necessary, for example at interviews. This includes sign language interpreters
- We will provide material in formats such as large print, Braille, audio tape or computer disk, on request.
- We will provide these additional services at no cost to the applicant.

5.4 If an applicant needs help to fill in the Registration Form, or needs any advice or assistance we will be happy to provide this.

5.5 We will publicise the results of our allocations in the local press on a

quarterly basis. We will also display this information in our office, local Council housing offices and on our website

We will publish the following details:

- Address of the property
- Number of applicants applying for a specific property
- Whether or not the successful applicant fulfilled best use criteria
- Whether the applicant used a priority pass
- The Registration date of the successful applicant

Subject always to maintaining the confidentiality of applicants.

6.0 Nominations and partnerships with other agencies

6.1 Ochil View has operational agreements with our partner local authorities, Clackmannanshire and Fife.

6.2 Fife Council

Ochil View has an Access to Housing Agreement with Fife Council. Under the terms of this agreement we will let 30% of properties to homeless applicants. This shall be subject to annual review with the aim of achieving an annual increase in the percentage of homeless applicants housed. We do not hold a housing register for Fife. We are members of the Fife Housing Register and allocate all our available properties to housing applicants selected from the FHR and prioritised using the FHR Common Assessment of Need.

6.3 Where it is, for any reason, not possible to let available properties in Fife to applicants from the FHR, we may advertise available property and select applicants according to our Choice Based Lettings criteria

6.4 Ochil View has a Nomination Agreement and Section 5 Protocol agreement with Clackmannanshire Council.

6.5 Housing with Support

The Association will work with both voluntary organisations and local authorities to provide supported accommodation. These arrangements can take the form of

- Management Agreements
- Lease Agreements
- Nomination Agreements

Properties included within Section 6.5 will not be let through Homehunt.

7.0 Internal Transfers

If a tenant of OVHA wants to move to another OVHA property we will issue a Housing Registration form. We will provide transfer applicants with the same information, and we will use the same priority system to assess a need to move home, as described in Section 12 below. As for other applicants, we will admit all transfer applicants to our housing register. But we will suspend some transfer registrations so that they may not apply for housing. This section and Section 8 give more

information on why we may suspend some transfer applicants on our housing register, for how long, and how applicants may have the suspension removed. Ochil View Housing Association tenants who wish to transfer to a property in Fife must apply through the Fife Housing Register.

7.1 When an Ochil View tenant is added to our housing register, we will inspect the condition of their home, including the private garden area, (if there is one) and tell them in writing about any repairs that are their responsibility, as described in the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement and Tenant's Handbook. The applicant must complete these repairs before they may apply for properties. If the applicant has an outstanding rechargeable repair account we will suspend the registration until the tenant has made continuous payments under an agreement with us for at least 3 months, and is continuing to make payments as agreed at the time of offer.

7.2 If the transfer applicant has current tenancy arrears, of more than one months rent, we will suspend the registration and the applicant must enter into an agreement to clear the arrears within three months. The applicant will not be allowed to apply for properties until they have cleared their arrears in full.

7.3 Right to buy

Ochil View tenants who apply to buy their home under the right to buy will have their registration suspended until the sale is completed or their application to buy is withdrawn.

8.0 Admission to our housing register and suspensions

8.1 We will admit everyone aged over 16 years who applies for housing to our housing register. But that does not mean that everyone who is admitted to the register will be able to apply for available properties. Sometimes, we may suspend a registration. If we do, we will tell the applicant why and what they can do about it. We will tell applicant's about their rights to appeal the decision we have made

8.2 Any priority awarded will be dependant upon their housing and housing related social need as defined by our priority system,

8.3 To register with Homehunt, applicants must complete a registration form. Forms can be obtained in person at our office, by phone, on our website and the Homehunt website or from other organisations such as Clackmannanshire Council. An applicant can apply in person at our office, register, and apply for a property on the same day. Our registration process is kept as simple as possible and collects only information essential to our allocation process and equalities monitoring.

8.4 At the point of registration, applicants are asked to tell us if they are

homeless, overcrowded, have health problems or are living in accommodation suffering from disrepair. This information is recorded and followed up to encourage applicants to apply for priority. Applications are placed on the housing register and issued with a unique registration number on the day we receive the registration form.

8.5 Applicants can begin applying for advertised properties immediately, except in the following circumstances

8.6 No right to remain in the UK

Applications will be suspended if the applicant does not have the right to reside in the UK;

8.7 Current or former Rent arrears and no arrangement in place

Having rent arrears will **not** cause applicants (including transfer applicants) to be suspended from receiving offers on our list if

- The applicant was not the tenant of the house or
- They had rent arrears on a current or former tenancy, but they have now paid these in full or
- The amount of arrears owed on a current or former tenancy is less than one month's rent charge or
- The applicant has made an agreement to pay the arrears with their landlord, and have kept it for at least 3 months, and are still making payments

8.8 Anti-Social Behaviour

We believe that anti-social behaviour can be a serious problem and that it damages the stable and sustainable communities we want to help to create. Therefore, if an applicant, or anyone who would be a member of the applicant's household in an Ochil View Tenancy has

- Been responsible for using a former home for illegal purposes which are, or were, likely to endanger or cause nuisance or harassment to neighbours (e.g. fire raising, drug dealing, prostitution,) or
- Been responsible for causing noise, nuisance or harassment in the vicinity of the property or
- Been responsible for causing racial or other harassment or
- Allowed other household members or friends to cause nuisance and harassment in the vicinity of the property or
- Caused extensive damage to the property
- Behaved in a threatening or violent way towards the landlord's staff or tenants

and there is documentary evidence to confirm this from a reliable and official source, such as a Police or Landlord report, a history of criminal conviction, relating to a current or previous tenancy or eviction from a former home, or an ASBO, the applicant will be advised that their registration has been suspended and that they should contact us when an appropriate support package is in place or when there are valid

reasons for supporting a view that their behaviour or actions have changed. All applicants can appeal decisions through the Appeals procedure.

If an applicant can show that an appropriate support package is in place or that there are valid reasons to believe that their behaviour and actions have changed and the anti-social behaviour is unlikely to recur, we will remove the suspension. However, if they are offered a tenancy within 3 years of an eviction for anti-social behaviour, or if any person who will be part of their household has been the subject of an ASBO at any time, we will offer a tenancy on Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Terms.

- 8.9** If the applicant requires support to maintain a tenancy and the support needed is not available at the time of registration. The suspension will be removed when support is in place
- 8.10** Applicants whose housing need will not emerge until a later date (e.g. where the applicant is in hospital or prison and not due to be released) the registration will be placed on the housing register but will remain on hold until the applicant contacts us to confirm that they are in a position to accept a tenancy
- 8.11** Where the applicant is a Registered Offender, the registration will be suspended until risk assessment and management arrangements have been carried out through Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements with local authorities.
- 8.12** In all cases where a registration is suspended, the suspension will remain only for as long as it takes to obtain full information or rectify the situation.
- 8.13** We may ask for supporting documentation of relevant personal circumstances at any time during the registration/allocation process. We may also make relevant enquires to confirm information given by the applicant.
- 8.14** We will make it clear to applicants who own their own home that it is a legal requirement that they must occupy a tenancy as their only or principal home. We reserve the right to ask applicants for a signed assurance that they are taking active steps to sell the property.
- 8.15** Applicants' will be asked to tell us about any change in their circumstances. In some instances (e.g. if they move to a secure tenancy or buy a property) they will be asked to submit a new application. Their priority will be adjusted according to their change in circumstances

9.0 Mutual Exchanges

We recognise that mutual exchanges provide an means to meet

tenant's housing aspirations and choices, particularly in an environment of excessive demand for affordable rented housing and where high levels of homelessness result in few vacant homes being available for aspirational moves.

- We will promote awareness of tenant's rights to exchange through our Tenant's Handbook, and other publicity material.
- We will promote means for tenants to access exchange partners through our arrangements for tenants to display their exchange details in Clackmannanshire and Fife Council's Notice Boards.
- In the future, we plan to make other services available, including an exchanges availability section on our website.

We do not subscribe to services that require membership or payment

- 9.1** Ochil View tenants may exchange tenancies with another tenant of Ochil View, or of another RSL, for example, a Council or Housing Association tenant. If a tenant wants to move by exchanging homes, they should write to us, telling us who they want to swap homes with. We also have a form for this purpose. The applicant should also contact their exchange partners' landlord and let them know about their plans.
- 9.2** We will write to an exchange partner's landlord and ask for a reference on the exchange partner's tenancy. We will not give our consent if the exchange partner has current rent arrears, has been (or a member of their household has been) responsible for anti-social behaviour (as described above), or if they have not kept their home (and garden, if they have one) in good order.
- We will not give our consent for the exchange to go ahead if
- The house would be overcrowded (see section 11 for how we work out the number of bedrooms a household needs).
 - The house has been specially designed or adapted for someone with particular needs, and the household moving in does not have a household member with those needs.
 - The house has been designed or designated by us to be occupied by people of a particular age range people, and there is no-one of that age range in the household.
 - Any financial incentive has been given to carry out the exchange.
- 10.0 Our housing stock**
- 10.1** Our housing stock includes property that is designed to meet a range of housing needs:
- 10.2** General needs - Suitable for applicants without any particular housing needs
- 10.3** Amenity Housing: This housing is particularly designed to meet the needs of older people. When we consider which applicant would

make best use of such accommodation, we will firstly consider applicants who are, or who have a permanent household member who is over 55 years of age. If we have available amenity housing and we don't have an applicant who is (or has a permanent household member who is) over 55, we may let it to an applicant who is under 55.

10.4 Housing for wheelchair users. This type of housing is designed to meet the needs of people who use wheelchairs in their home. We will only consider households who have a permanent member who is, or who has a medical condition such they may become a wheelchair user to occupy accommodation designed to this standard.

10.5 Supported Housing
Sometimes, we may make agreements with housing support agencies that specific houses should only be let to people with support needs that the agency will meet. We will only consider applicants with the type of needs the support agency can meet for these houses.

11.0 Assessment of Housing Need

Priority Passes

11.1 Priority is awarded through a system of Priority Passes. All applicants will be encouraged to apply for priority to reflect their housing need. There are three levels of Priority Pass; Gold, Silver and Bronze.

Applicants can apply for as many Priority Passes as they feel they may be entitled to. Priority can be awarded from one or more of the categories listed in Appendix 2. A Priority Pass will only be awarded once in each category and will be the highest level of pass that the applicants' circumstances merit.

Once the applicant has been assessed for all categories of pass they have applied for, their final priority will be determined as follows. If the applicant qualifies for:

- Less than three Bronze passes: They will be awarded a Bronze Priority Pass
- Three or more Bronze passes: They will be awarded a Silver Priority Pass
- Less than three Silver passes: They will be awarded a Silver Priority Pass
- Three or more Silver Passes: They will be awarded a Gold Priority Pass
- Gold is the highest level of Pass that can be awarded

11.2 Limitation of Passes

We are committed to offering applicants as much choice as possible, however, in some circumstances awarding priority will result in restrictions on the type of property or area for which the applicant will receive priority. We may limit Priority Passes to a specific area:

If the applicant has applied for priority due to their need to live in a

specified area for social, family support or employment reasons.

- In recognition of the small stock numbers and low turnover in some localities, applicants will have the option of including the nearest adjacent locality.
- Applicants who have received a Priority Pass for reasons other than their need to live in a specified area are encouraged to limit their Priority Pass only to those areas in which they want to live. The advantage to an applicant of limiting their Priority Pass to the areas they want to live in is that they will not lose their pass if they do not apply for suitable properties outside their chosen areas.
- **We** may limit a Priority Pass to a particular type of property, e.g. to ground floor accommodation where a pass has been awarded for health related mobility problems, or to wheelchair accommodation where this is required by the applicant.
- Applicants aged over 55 can limit their Pass to amenity properties.

Unless we have set the limitations, applicants can change the limits on their Priority Pass at any time except where this would increase priority for a currently advertised vacancy. The applicant must normally confirm the change in limitations in writing.

Applicants who have had their pass limited, either by us or through choice, can still apply for properties that fall outside the pass limitations, but their Priority Pass will not be effective

11.3 Suspension of Priority Passes

Where we consider that an applicant has deliberately worsened their housing circumstances, their entitlement to a Priority Pass will be removed and the registration revised accordingly. .

11.4 Withdrawal of Priority Passes

We only award Priority Passes to those in greatest housing need and, once a Pass has been sent to an applicant, we expect that they will use it to apply for all suitable properties.

A suitable property is one that is the size and type the applicant needs in an area covered by their Priority Pass.

- Gold Priority Passes are valid for six months; silver and bronze passes are valid for one year.
- If a suitable property has been advertised within this period of time and the Pass is not used then the pass will be withdrawn
- Once withdrawn, the Priority Pass will not be re-issued for a period of 6 months for Gold passes and 12 months for Silver and Bronze passes. It will be the applicant's responsibility to re-apply for priority at the end of the period for which the pass has been withdrawn.
- An applicant who has had their Priority Pass withdrawn will still be able to apply for properties as a registered applicant

11.5 Statutory Homelessness – including priority and non-priority homelessness

We recognise housing need due to homelessness by the award of a **Gold Priority pass**

- Applicants assessed by a Council as being statutorily homeless are awarded a Gold Priority Pass.
- The majority of our allocations to homeless households are made through Homehunt. We also have a Section 5 protocol in place with Clackmannanshire Council. Allocations made to Section 5 Referrals in Clackmannanshire are outside the terms of the Homehunt system.

We will advise applicants who apply to the Association and who may be homeless to seek advice and information from their local authority.

11.6 Applicants with insecure accommodation

Where applicants may become homeless within 2- 6 months we will award receive a Bronze priority pass Examples of this include applicants who:

- Are living with friends or relatives (not a parental home)
- Are living in a mobile home or caravan
- Have a short term tenancy like a Short Assured Tenancy, Short SST, and an Occupancy Agreement.
- Have received a Notice to Quit, a lodger who has been asked to leave, an owner who has agreed to sell their home
- Has a relationship that has broken down with another occupant of their home
- Has financial difficulties with their rent or mortgage payments
- Is living in a refuge
- Is currently in prison
- Is in tied or forces accommodation and expects to leave within 2-6 months.
- Is in hospital, a residential or nursing home and does not have their own home
- Is in care or an institution.

11.7 Applicants who are seeking permanent, independent accommodation

Where a member of a household wishes to be re-housed and shares one of the basic amenities of the home with another person not being re-housed **or**

Where a person wishes to establish permanent and independent accommodation for example where an applicant is

- In tied or forces accommodation, but has no date by which they must leave
- An adult within their parental home, but wishing to leave
- Sharing their accommodation with other persons who are not members of their household
- A student living as a lodger or in a Hall of Residence.

We will award a Bronze priority pass

11.8 Overcrowding

We recognise housing need due to overcrowding by the award of Silver and Bronze Priority Passes. Applicants lacking one bedroom will be awarded a Bronze priority pass. Applicants lacking two or more bedrooms will be awarded a Silver priority pass.

Children that the applicant has residential access of three nights per week of more or shared custody of will be considered to be part of the applicants household

Two children aged up to and including 8 years of the same sex can share a double sized bedroom.

Each household member over the age of 8, excluding those over 16 sharing with a partner, should have their own bedroom. This includes single parents choosing to occupy a single sized bedroom.

In some cases, a medical condition could mean that a person needs sole use of a bedroom. We will normally ask for proof of this requirement.

An extra bedroom will be allowed if a carer needs to stay with the applicant for at least 3 nights per week. We will normally ask for proof of this requirement.

If an applicant has residential access to child/children for 3 nights per week or more the applicant will be allocated one extra bedroom to accommodate the child/children. We will normally ask for proof of this requirement. This includes children who a fostered by the applicant
No more than two people should share a bedroom unless the applicant chooses to share a room with a child or children on residential access of less than 3 nights per week.

11.9 Property in poor condition or lacking amenities

Applicants who live in accommodation

- where one or more **Basic Amenity** is lacking
- that is below the Tolerable Standard
- that is below the Tolerable Standard and is in serious disrepair, or has penetrative or rising dampness

will be awarded **one Bronze Pass** for each amenity that is lacking, **one Bronze pass** for each building element that is in disrepair, and **one Bronze pass** for the presence of dampness

Basic Amenities are:

- Fixed bath or shower
- A wash-hand basin
- A kitchen sink
- An internal wc
- A hot and cold water supply at 3 points(bath/shower, whb, wc(cold only))

Where the lack of amenities may be seen, for example at a home visit, this will be confirmed by a member of Association staff. A failure to

meet the Tolerable Standard, the presence of rising or penetrating dampness or incidences of building elements in serious disrepair must be confirmed by report from a qualified person such as a surveyor, architect or Environmental Health Officer. Where applicants are living in property that may be below the tolerable standard or in serious disrepair, we will advise them to contact the Environmental Health department of their local council to receive advice and assistance. Applicants who live in accommodation that is below the Tolerable standard may be homeless and will be advised to contact the local authority to discuss this further.

11.10 Medical Grounds

Applicants wishing to have medical grounds considered will be required to complete a medical priority application. This is a common form agreed and used by Ochil View, Paragon and Clackmannanshire Council.

The details within the questionnaire will be assessed by an independent medical practitioner who will prioritise the applicant's medical need

We recognise housing need due to health problems by the award of Gold and Silver Priority Passes.

- We will consider awarding priority for re-housing on health grounds only where a move will result in a significant improvement in the applicants' health or make their health problem much easier to cope with.
In assessing applications on health grounds we will always consider whether or not the applicant's current accommodation could be adapted to meet their housing needs.
- We will not normally award priority on health grounds for depression, anxiety or stress unless the applicant is receiving treatment, other than medication, from a health professional such as a psychiatrist or other consultant.

Health assessments will be carried out by the Community Health Advisor on the basis of information provided in the medical Priority Pass application form.

Minor ailments or conditions that will not be improved by re-housing will not attract priority on health grounds. We may place restrictions on the type of property to be offered to an applicant who has been awarded priority on health grounds. For example, someone awarded priority due to difficulties managing stairs in their current accommodation will normally only be able to apply for properties on the ground floor

11.11 Need to live in a Community

We recognise housing need due to the need to be in a particular community by the award of **Bronze Priority Passes**.

Priority may be awarded where an applicant needs to move to:

- Take up or keep a job. Priority will normally only be awarded where the applicant is the main earner and the job is more than one hour's travel from his/her current home
- Be nearer amenities or services. We will consider the reasons why the applicant finds it difficult to access amenities or services, including availability of public transport
- Maintain contact with children.
- Give or receive support. We will consider the nature and frequency of the support provided or received This includes informal support from family, friends and relatives.

11.12 Separated Households

Where a household is separated due to a lack of suitable accommodation and who otherwise would normally live together points will be awarded a **Bronze priority pass**

11.13 Under Occupancy

We will assess under occupancy using the same means of assessment as Overcrowding. Tenants of Ochil View who are under occupying their homes will be awarded a Silver Priority pass and in our consideration of best use of an available property, will be able to move to properties up to one bedroom bigger than they need to encourage Ochil View tenants to move and free up larger accommodation.

11.14 Transfer from a flat to a house

Points will be awarded to all applicants who have been tenants of a flatted property for a continuous 5-year period wishing to move to a main door house.

- Bronze Priority Pass

12.0 Operation of the Housing List

When we have been notified of a tenancy termination we will decide whether the property is to be allocated in line with this policy or if it is to be removed from the normal allocation process in exceptional circumstances

12.1 Available properties will be advertised weekly in the local newspaper, local Council housing offices, our website, the Homehunt website, libraries, Citizen's Advice Bureau, as well as our office

12.2 We will assess properties individually and decide what constitutes "Best Use".

12.3 Adverts will include the number of bedrooms. A household makes "Best Use" of a property if it requires all of the bedrooms, (with the exception of Ochil View Tenants who are moving to smaller accommodation, who will be able to apply for property one bedroom bigger than this)

12.4 We may take into consideration the mix of family sizes within the building or immediate area to maintain a balanced and sustainable community

12.5 An advert for amenity accommodation will specify that applicants must be (or have a permanent household member who is) over 55 years

12.6 An advert for a property with significant adaptations will specify that we will give priority to applicants whose medical needs mean that they need the adaptations regardless of whether or not they need all of the

bedrooms

- 12.7** We will specify the best use criteria and a closing date for applications in the advert.
- 12.8** If a transfer applicant and another applicant have the same level of Priority Pass, the transfer applicant will be allocated the property, regardless of the date of registration.
- 12.9** We will maintain a database of support providers and others such as Social Workers and Occupational Therapists who may be helping clients to seek re-housing and will send weekly lists of available properties to them by email
- 12.10** Registered applicants may apply for as many advertised properties as they wish at any one time. They will be able to note their interest by telephone, letter, on the Homehunt website, or in person at our office. When a registered applicant applies for more than one advertised property they will be asked to state which property they want to be considered for first, second etc.
- 12.11** Applicants cannot apply for Priority Passes in respect of properties that are currently advertised, unless the pass is for priority homelessness
- 12.12** Limitations to any pass will not be changed if this would increase the priority for a currently advertised property.
- 12.13** No applications will be accepted after the advertised closing date and time

12.14 Allocating a Property

For each housing offer we make, we will keep an audit trail that shows why the decision was made to offer the property to the specific applicant. If the selected applicant does not have the highest priority for housing, the audit trail will record the reason why any higher priority applicant was bypassed. This may include, for example, any decisions made in order to help develop or maintain a stable or sustainable community, or to match an adapted property with an applicant or household that requires that adaptation.

Each member of staff within Housing Services will have a degree of delegated authority, as follows:

Decision		Assessment by	Authority
Priority Pass assessment or revision		Assistant Housing Officer	ASHM/HSM
Selection for offer		Housing Officer	ASHM/HSM
Suspension from register		Assistant Housing Officer	ASHM/HSM

12.15 How Properties are Allocated

We will allocate advertised properties after the closing date for applications using our selection criteria as follows:

Best use The applicants who will make best use of the property by using all of the bedrooms or features of the property (such as adaptations) and who meet any age limitations.

Priority Pass Level Where there is more than one applicant who would make best use of an advertised property, applicants are then placed in order according to the level of Priority Pass that they hold

Date of Registration The date of registration is the date we issued the registration form. We consider the date of registration only if there are two or more applicants with the same level of Priority Pass or there are no applicants with a Priority Pass. The property is allocated to the applicant with the earliest date of registration unless one of the applicants is a transfer applicant, in which case the property will be allocated to the transfer applicant

Same Date of Registration If two or more applicants with equal priority applied on the same day, we will allocate the property to the applicant with the lower registration number, unless one of the applicants is a transfer applicant

12.16 Acceptances/Refusals

Wherever possible we will contact the successful applicant by telephone on the closing date for applications.

12.17 Any offer we make will be conditional upon the applicants housing circumstances being confirmed, the applicant providing proof of residency and, if appropriate, previous tenancy references being received.

12.18 We will enclose a summary of our Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement with the conditional offer letter

12.19 If the applicant does not contact us within three working days, and they have not previously indicated that they would not be available e.g. on holiday or in hospital, then the offer will be withdrawn.

12.20 If the applicant has a Priority Pass then, unless they are staying in temporary homeless accommodation, we will arrange a home visit. The home visit will be used to check the information provided with the Homehunt registration and Priority Pass application form(s). We will ask the applicant to provide proof of residency at this point and to provide details of their tenancy history so that we can take up references.

12.21 We will not normally visit successful applicants who have not used a priority pass but will give them three working days from the date of the conditional offer to provide proof of residency and their housing history (so that we can take up references) or the offer will be withdrawn.

12.22 If the applicant lives too far away for a home visit, we will telephone them to check the details provided in their application or ask a housing provider in their area to carry out the home visit on our behalf.

12.13 A confirmed offer is sent once required checks such as residency and,

if appropriate, tenancy references are completed. The confirmed offer will suggest dates for the applicant to view the property and to sign their tenancy agreement. The letter will also provide information and advice about rent and Housing Benefit and inform the applicant what will happen if they refuse the offer. Again the applicant must respond within three days or the offer will normally be withdrawn. If we withdraw an offer or if the successful applicant refuses the offer, then we will contact the second qualifying applicant and follow the steps outlined above until the property is successfully allocated.

- 12.14** When we make an offer of housing, we want to relet the vacant property as soon as possible. But we understand that applicants may need some time to make their mind up about accepting our offer. We will give applicants 2 working days after viewing the property to reach a decision. We will help, by providing information about agencies that may help, for example with Benefits or advice. After 2 working days, the applicant must let us know their decision. Any further delay will be considered as a refusal of an offer.
- 12.15** If an applicant refuses an offer, this may result in removal or limitation of a Priority Pass. There are no limits on the number of offers an applicant can receive.
- 12.16** Where a successful applicant has used a Gold Priority Pass awarded for homelessness and refuses an offer, we will notify the local Council's Homeless Department. This may result in an alteration to the applicant's homelessness status, with a resulting amendment in the Priority Pass.

13.0 Local Lettings Initiatives – Sustainability

To create and maintain a stable and sustainable community we will consider

- matching people with appropriate properties
- housing people in appropriate locations
- potential clashes of lifestyle
- over concentration of one particular household type

This will, for example, ensure that too many vulnerable people are not housed together

Where the Association is aware of particular management issues with an area street or close, the Association will take cognisance of such factors when allocating properties, thereby demonstrating its responsibility to existing residents.

This may result in the property not being allocated to the applicant with the highest priority. In such cases the reasons for by-passing an applicant with a higher priority will require to be documented and approved by the Housing Services Manager or Assistant Housing Services Manager

14.0 Letting of homes built to the standards required by wheelchair

users

In order to ensure that the property is allocated to the wheelchair user who would make best use of the property, Ochil View Housing Association will liaise with the Occupational Therapists from the relevant Local Authority.

The Occupational Therapists concerned will provide a report on the individual needs of all applicants. When all reports are received by the Housing Services Manager a further meeting will be convened to decide the applicant who will receive an offer

An offer of accommodation will then be made. If accepted by the applicant he/she will meet with the Housing Services Manager, Project Architect and the Occupational Therapist to identify any specific needs relating to their disability. Any adaptations required will be carried out prior to the tenant taking up occupancy therefore eliminating any inconvenience to the tenant.

15.0 Monitoring and Review

Because applicants actively participate in the allocation process by applying for properties and our software records activity, only those applicants who have not applied for a property for a year will receive a review form.

The review form will be short and only ask the applicant if they want to remain on the register and to report any changes in their circumstances.

If a review form is not returned we will send a reminder letter. If the applicant does not respond to the reminder letter, we will withdraw their registration.

16.0 **Review of Policy**

16.1 Each year, we will review the operation of the Allocations Policy and the achievement of its objectives, and report this to our Management Committee.

We will ask applicants for their views on the Allocations Policy and how it operates, and takes their views into account when we report on the Policy. This may take the form of self-reporting by applicants, or more detailed questionnaires.

Each year, we will publish outcomes information, showing the profile of applicants we have housed and the needs we have met. This information will be anonymous and will not allow individual applicants to be identified.

We will provide, on request to applicants, feedback on the specific outcomes of their specific applications and the profile of successful applications that have been prioritised over their application, within the limits of our Data Protection requirements and confidentiality obligations. We regret that it would be too demanding in terms of resources to give feedback to every applicant on the outcome of every application that they make.

17.0 **Housing registrations from Persons serving in, leaving or planning to leave or who have recently left the Armed Forces, or their relatives**

17.1 The Association recognises its obligation to give housing registrations from forces and recent ex-forces personnel fair and sympathetic consideration, without affording priority over other applicants in similar housing need.

17.2 We do not impose any residential requirements, or give additional priority for local connection.

17.3 We admit all registrants to our housing register at all time, as set out in Section 8, although we may suspend some registrants temporarily from applying for specific properties and receiving offers of tenancy, as set out in Section 8.

17.4 We accept a Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to occupy Service Living Accommodation as a basis of entitlement to a Bronze Priority Pass

17.5 We notify our partner local authorities of registrations made by service personnel

17.6 We will assess the priority for persons who are medically discharged in partnership with the Occupational therapy sections of our two partner local authorities.

17.7 We will consider the housing need of surviving family members of forces members who have been killed in action or dies before the date of discharge in accordance with the arrangements of notice to leave service accommodation and give a Bronze Priority Pass. Where such persons are considered to be homeless or threatened with homelessness by the local authority, we will give a Gold Priority Pass.

18.0 Performance Reporting

18.1 We will monitor suspensions from the housing register and the reasons for these. We will report them each quarter to our Management Committee along with

- Analysis of allocations by area and source of incoming tenant
- Analysis of allocations by need
- Housing register analysis

18.2 Each year the Housing and Development Services Committee will receive the Association's SCORE report, representing an assessment of the profile of new tenants in the previous year.

19.0 Appeals and Complaints

All applicants have the right to appeal against any decision made concerning their registration, the assessment of their housing need, the decision to place an application or Priority Pass on hold, the withdrawal of a Priority Pass or the cancellation of their registration.

Appeals should be made in the first instance to the Housing Services Manager as soon as possible after the appropriate decision was made. If the applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the Housing Manager, they will proceed to stage 2 of our Complaints policy.

If the appeal is against a decision not to make an offer of housing, the property will not be held vacant until the conclusion of the appeals process. In the event that the appeal is successful the applicant will be offered the first available suitable property.

We will tell applicants about their right to appeal or the next stage in the appeals process in all decision letters.

20.0 General Confidentiality

20.1 All Association staff are required, through their Conditions of Employment, to treat personal information that they have access to in the course of their duties as confidential. In addition to this, the Association has in place a general policy on Data protection and confidentiality. We will not pass on information to others without the applicant's written consent.

21.0 Abuse of the Allocation Policy

We believe that our Allocation Policy is a fair way of allocating housing. If an applicant gives incorrect or misleading information on a housing application form or in any document or interview, we will correct our records as soon as we have the correct information, and review the application in the light of the correct information.

If we have been deliberately given incorrect or misleading information, and we have allocated a house as a result, we will begin legal action to end the tenancy if the false or misleading information was material in our decision to allocate a house.

Applicants must inform the Association of any changes in their

circumstances in relation to their application for housing.

Graeme Wilson
Housing Services Manager
16 June 2009

Policy Review and Consultation Process

Presented to Management Team	10 December 2008
Discussion at Involved Resident's Group and Registered Tenant Organisations	14 November 2008
Recommended by Housing and Development Committee	10 June 2009
Approved by Management Committee	25 June 2009

Appendix I

OVERVIEW OF THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Applicant requests a Registration Form, either direct from the Association or via another organisation e.g. Clackmannanshire Council
2. Applicant submits the completed Registration Form to the Association
3. Registration number and Priority Pass application forms and information issued to applicant
4. Applicant can now apply for properties
5. Applicant submits appropriate Priority Pass application forms.
6. Priority Pass and any limitations are issued to applicant
7. Applicant can now apply for properties using their priority pass

Appendix 2
Definition of priority passes

Statutory Homelessness

As confirmed in writing by a Council

Whether in Priority need or not -Gold Priority Pass

Applicants with insecure accommodation

Bronze Priority pass

Overcrowding

Overcrowded by one bedroom – Bronze Pass

Overcrowded by two bedrooms or more – Silver pass

Property in poor condition

For each amenity that is lacking, or each building element in poor condition – Bronze priority pass

Lack of amenities that are visible must be confirmed by inspection.

Poor condition of structural elements must be confirmed by qualified person's report

Medical circumstances

To be awarded by Community Health Advisor

Gold or Silver Priority Pass

Need to live in a Community

For support, training, employment, education or other valid reasons

Bronze priority pass

Separated Households

Bronze priority pass

Under occupation

Available to OVHA tenants only – Silver Priority Pass

Transfer from a tenement Flat to a house

Bronze Priority Pass

Appendix three

OVER VIEW OF THE ALLOCATION PROCESS

Notice of Termination received

Property is removed from normal allocation process e.g. for management transfer or for supported accommodation

Every second property is labelled gold priority pass valid. Anyone registered may apply but priority will be given to priority homeless applicants

Property is advertised (stating priority homeless if applicable)

Applicants apply before closing date

Selection process takes place as follows:

- Best use
Highest overall priority pass
Date of Registration

Home visit takes place to successful applicant to verify circumstances, if priority pass has been used

Offer is issued, where applicants circumstances have been verified (if applicable)

Viewing

Sign up takes place

Appendix 4

SERVICE DELIVERY TARGETS

Applications will be acknowledged, placed on the housing register and issued with a registration number on the **day of receipt**, along with information on applying for priority and details of how to apply for advertised properties.

Applicants who have applied for priority will have an assessment of their needs carried out within 15 working days