



## **RUCHAZIE HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

### **ALLOCATION POLICY**

**This document is available in other formats such as audio tape, CD, Braille and in large print. It can also be made available in other languages on request.**

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**Review Date: December 2017**

# ALLOCATION POLICY

## 1 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework as to how Ruchazie Housing Association administers its housing list and prioritises applicants for housing.

## 2 Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy complies with relevant statutory requirements, the Scottish Social Housing Charter and “Social Housing Allocations – A Practice Guide March 2011”.

## 3 Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes

The following charter outcomes and standards are directly relevant to the allocation policy:

### Charter Outcome 1 ‘Equalities’:

*‘every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services’.*

### Charter Outcome 2 ‘Communication’:

*‘tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides’.*

### Charter Outcome 4 ‘Quality of housing’:

*‘tenants’ homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair’.*

### Charter Outcome 7,8 and 9 ‘Housing Options’:

*‘people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them’.*

*‘tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options’.*

*‘people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness’.*

### Charter Outcome 10 ‘Access to Social Housing’:

*'people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects for being housed'.*

Charter Outcome 11 'Tenancy Sustainment':

*'tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations'.*

## **4 Policy Statement**

The main objectives of this policy are:

- Meeting all relevant legal and good practice standards, for example, addressing the specific housing needs of groups set out in housing law
- Avoid discrimination on grounds covered in our equality policy such as discrimination on grounds of age, belief, disability, language, marital status, race, sex, sexual orientation or social origin
- Making best use of the housing stock through promoting tenants' rights such as the right to exchange homes
- Forming partnerships with other housing providers to address housing need
- Establishing new tenancies that are successful and sustainable
- Maximising income by letting empty houses quickly in accordance with timescales
- Maximise opportunities by offering applicants comprehensive advice and information concerning their housing options
- Processing personal information confidentially to meet relevant legal obligations
- Providing comprehensive staff training so that the policy is implemented effectively and quality services are delivered
- Dealing with appeals and complaints fairly in accordance with timescales
- Assessing if policy objectives are met through our audit and performance management system
- Reviewing the policy every three years

## **5 Allocation Law**

We will ensure that the allocation policy satisfies legal provisions. The purpose of this section is to explain legal provisions for housing applicants.

Legal rules on allocations are contained in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended.

These rules cover the following matters:

- Access to the housing register
- Groups that are to be given reasonable preference when letting houses
- Factors that must be disregarded when letting houses
- Information
- Publicity
- Access to personal information

### **5.1 Access to the housing register**

Any person who is sixteen years or more may apply to the housing register. This is not, however, an automatic right to receive offers of housing. Section 6 explains how we prioritise applications in line with law and good practice.

We will provide application forms at our office and online. In line with our equality commitments, this form can be made available in different languages and in alternative formats. We also offer interpreting services and meet relevant costs. On request, we can assist applicants to complete their application form.

In addition, applications can be made by referrals by agencies that have an agreement with Ruchazie Housing Association. Examples being Glasgow City Council Homeless Service (also known as a section 5 referral).

### **5.2 Reasonable preference groups**

The law requires us to give reasonable preference to certain groups when letting houses. The groups to which we must give reasonable preference when letting houses are:

(a) Homeless people and those threatened with homelessness

(b) People living in:

- Housing below the tolerable standard
- Overcrowded houses or large families
- Unsatisfactory housing conditions

We recognise that people may be in housing need for other reasons than those covered in the law. Section 6 details the range of housing needs that we address.

### **5.3 Factors to be ignored**

In accordance with legislation, certain factors must be ignored when letting houses. These factors are:

- Length of time applicants have lived in the area
- Housing debt not owed by applicants, for example, rent arrears owed by a partner
- Housing debt now repaid
- Any non-housing debt such as council tax
- Age of applicants unless it involves housing designed or specifically adapted for people of a specific age, for example, sheltered housing
- Applicants income or property, including income or property owned by other household members
- Any rent arrears where the amount is no more than one months rent or where the applicant has an arrangement for paying the arrears, has been keeping to the arrangement for at least three months and is continuing to make such payments
- An applicant who is staying care of another household, and who is not a permanent member of the household, will not require formal permission to reside but will require to demonstrate that they are registered at the property with the relevant authorities, for example, housing benefit, council tax, employment or benefit agency.

### **5.4 Information**

We make available a summary of this policy. Applicants may also obtain a full copy on request. The summary and full copy are provided free of charge and can be made available in alternative formats.

### **5.5 Publicity**

We must make allocation rules and publish details of how we assess priority. These rules cover all applicants on the housing register, including existing tenants who wish to transfer to alternative accommodation.

Ruchazie Housing Association also has a mutual exchange policy that covers tenants wanting to exchange their homes with other tenants. Scottish secure tenants have a legal right to exchange their homes with other tenants. Landlords can only refuse permission if it is reasonable to do so.

### **5.6 Access to personal information**

Applicants have rights to access personal information in two ways.

Firstly, an applicant is entitled to view information supplied in connection with their application. This right is set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

Secondly, an applicant may access personal information as determined by rights of access under the Data Protection Act 1998.

We provide this information on request within forty working days. A small charge may be applicable in these matters.

## **6 Dealing with Applications**

This section explains the stages and rules concerning the allocation process. Our staff procedures cover all these stages. These procedures contain audit trails to ensure that policy objectives are met.

### **6.1 Admission to the housing register**

In order to be admitted to the housing register, we ask applicants to complete an application form.

This can be obtained by contacting the office :

- In person
- By phone
- By post
- Via website

Our target for assessing completed application forms and informing the applicant of the outcome is 15 working days from receiving them. Applicants are sent written confirmation of their housing application details, including their award of points.

Applicants with insufficient information may be subject to delay. This means that applications cannot be processed until the relevant information is received. Or, alternatively, applications may be processed but not given full points entitlement until the information is received.

Applicants may contact housing staff during office hours to discuss application details.

If required, we also provide support services including interpreters for hearing impaired applicants or people who do not speak English.

Home visits to assist applicants complete their forms can be carried out in special circumstances.

### **6.2 Applying for joint tenancies**

Applicants, including existing tenants, may apply to have a joint tenancy with someone who is staying (or intending to stay) with them.

We encourage joint applicants – of the same or opposite sex – to apply for joint tenancies to ensure the same legal rights.

### **6.3 Tenants' rights**

We explain tenants' rights in detail at the stage when applicants sign their tenancy agreement.

We also provide information on tenant rights at various stages of the application process. For instance, at the point of requesting an application form and when an applicant initially views a property they have been offered.

### **6.4 Information and processing applications**

We process personal information provided on the application form in line with legal provisions. Accordingly, we only share information with other agencies if we have applicants consent, or if permitted by legislation. We may ask for references from any landlord or mortgage lender to confirm housing and tenancy details. We request applicants' consent to do this on the application form.

We check application details before making offers. This is good practice to ensure that information is recorded accurately so that offers are appropriate.

We will carry out home visits to confirm application details. This is of particular importance if no references are available confirming household details. For example, at the home visit, application details may have changed and an offer may no longer be appropriate.

If information held is inaccurate, the application details are amended accordingly. This might result in an offer not being made, or withdrawn.

If an applicant is re-housed based on false information that an applicant has made knowingly, we are entitled to take legal action to recover the tenancy.

Applicants are responsible for advising us of any changes to their housing circumstances. They are advised of this requirement on the application form.

### **6.5 Verifying applicants circumstances**

Examples of the verification required include:

<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Proof required</b>
All applicants	Proof of identity
Residency	Proof of residency – bank statement, driving licence
Homeless or threatened with homeless	Assessment undertaken by Glasgow City Council

Asked to leave current accommodation	Copy of valid Notice to Quit
In need of rehousing as health affected by current housing circumstances	Health and housing assessment undertaken
Access arrangements	Letter from child's other parent or lawyer
Household member temporarily living away from home	Letter from this individual confirming they wish to be considered as part of the household
Experiencing harassment	Corroborating evidence eg police, social work etc
Pregnancy	MAT V1 form or similar

## 6.6 Suspensions

Applicants are entitled to be registered on the housing list if they are sixteen years or over.

However there are circumstances in which applicants on the Housing List can be suspended from receiving offers of housing for a period of time. Applicants can be suspended for the following reasons:

We can suspend applicants for unpaid rent or other money relating to current or previous tenancies. For instance:

- Unpaid rent and factoring charges
- Outstanding rechargeable repairs. For example, if a tenant has lost their keys and we have changed the locks
- The cost of cleaning a house if you leave furniture or rubbish behind when you move out
- Legal costs if we have taken an applicant to court

If an applicant owes money, however, we will only suspend if:

- More than one month's rent is owed and there is no mutually agreed arrangement to repay it; or
- The applicant owes more than a month's rent, a mutually agreed arrangement is in place to pay it, but has not been kept for three months

We can also suspend applicants due to anti-social behaviour. For instance:

- The applicant has been given a final warning for anti-social behaviour in the last six months
- The applicant has been given a "Notice of Proceedings" for antisocial behaviour in the last six months



- The applicant or someone that lives with them has been given an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) or an interim ASBO (the ASBO must be removed by the Sheriff Court before we can end a suspension)
- The applicant has a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy because of anti-social behaviour
- The applicant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months
- The applicant has been violent or aggressive towards staff of the Association or its representatives including committee members and contractors.

We can also suspend applications due to breaches of their tenancy agreement. For instance:

- Where the responsibilities of an applicant, who is a current tenant, in relation to their legal and/or contractual duties regarding their tenancy, are clearly not being adhered to for example poor condition of tenants home with evidence of vandalism and abuse above fair wear and tear or taking their turn of cleaning or keeping their garden tidy, or common areas such as landing and stairs.
- The applicant has been given a “Notice of Proceedings” for breaking the rules of the tenancy agreement in the last six months (for example, a failure to maintain a garden to an acceptable standard)
- The applicant has been evicted for a breach of a tenancy in the last twelve months.

We can also suspend an application where a false declaration has been proven to be made by the applicant.

When we suspend an application, we will write and explain why, how long the suspension is for and what needs to be done to remove the suspension. Details will also be given confirming their right of appeal and information on the Association’s complaints procedure will also be included. We will also write to the applicant when we have removed the suspension.

## **6.7 People from Abroad**

People subject to immigration control must declare this on the application form. Eligibility for housing will require to be assessed in terms of Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and asylum and immigration legislation. People may remain on the housing list, but will be asked to provide evidence of their immigration status before we can confirm if they are eligible for an offer of housing.

## **6.8 Applicant Choice**

Our allocation system ensures that applicant choice is taken into account. We aim to maximise applicant choice.

An applicant's choice of housing may be affected by legal orders and relevant guidance that we are required to follow. For instance, matrimonial interdicts and exclusion orders.

## 6.9 Offers

We make offers based on the applicant's housing needs and preferences after confirming details on their application form. This is good practice as it aims to reduce inappropriate offers.

Reasonable offers are those that reflect an applicant's stated choice. For example, we will not offer applicants house types that they have expressly stated they will not consider.

Nonetheless, we provide advice and information on realistic preferences, as demand generally exceeds supply.

## 6.10 Tenancies

We provide applicants who accept an offer of housing a Scottish secure tenancy in accordance with our legal obligations. In a limited number of instances, we may offer applicants a short Scottish secure tenancy. This has limited security of tenure.

Examples of grounds for a short Scottish secure tenancy agreement include:

- An applicant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour within the last three years
- A tenant (or a member of their family) is subject to an anti-social behaviour order
- The applicant owns a property that is not currently meeting their needs and requires housing on a temporary basis to enable their needs to be met pending making alternative arrangements.

## 6.11 House size

This section explains the house size for which applicants may be considered. It also outlines rules to address overcrowding and under-occupation.

Table 1: The size of house for which applicants will be considered

Household size	1 apartment	2 apt	3 apt	4 apt	5 apt
Single person	√	√	√		
Couple	√	√	√		
Parent(s) with 1 child			√		
Parent(s) with two children under 16			√		

years of same gender					
Parents(s) with 1 girl and boy both under 10 years			√		
Parent(s) with 2 children where 1 is over 15 years of same gender				√	
Parent(s) with 1 girl and 1 boy where oldest is 10 years or over				√	

## 6.12 Overcrowding rules

Demand for larger houses often exceeds supply. On occasion, this makes it necessary to consider applicants for smaller houses than specified in the table above. It may also be necessary to consider applicants for smaller properties due to the changes introduced in April 2012 under The Welfare Reform Act (“bedroom tax”).

We do not let houses to families if this would create statutory overcrowding, as this would constitute an offence.

## 6.13 Under-occupation

If required, we may also allow under-occupation of larger accommodation.

For example, this may be necessary if:

- An applicant can show a need for such accommodation due to medical needs

Internal applicants affected by under-occupation will be prioritised for offers of housing. This is to ensure, as set out within The Housing Scotland Act, that we make best use of stock.

## 6.14 Gypsy Travellers

Applications from gypsy travellers, or other applicants living in a caravan, are placed in the appropriate group based on their present housing conditions and are awarded points based on their actual housing conditions.

Applications from gypsy travellers who have nowhere to pitch their caravan would be referred to Glasgow City Council’s homeless service.

## **6.15 Reviewing applications**

We review applications on at least an annual basis. This is important to maintain accurate information about applicants so that appropriate offers are made.

If no response is received after a standard review and reminder letters, we remove applicants from the housing list.

## **6.16 Removal of applications**

There are other occasions when we will remove applications from the register. We will remove an application from the housing register if an applicant:

- Is housed by another landlord and confirms they wish their housing application cancelled
- Specifically requests that we remove their application
- Fails to respond to offers of accommodation within a reasonable timescale
- Fails to respond to a periodic review within a reasonable timescale
- Is deceased

## **7 Our Allocation System**

This section explains the type of allocation system we have adopted to ensure that we meet our policy objectives effectively.

### **7.1 Group plus points system**

The group plus points system establishes a number of groups with individual applications placed into an appropriate group. Applicants in the group are then awarded points for any housing needs that they have.

The only exception to this are people who are placed in group 1 (Homeless) and 8 (Aspirational.)

For those placed in group 8 this is because people in the group have no housing 'need' element in that their current home meets their housing needs, therefore we do not award 'housing points' for aspirational applications. Instead, we add the person to the group, and when a suitable property becomes available for offer to an applicant from the aspirational housing group, it is offered to the person who has the longest length of tenancy and has been on the list for that type of property the longest.

Order will be as follows –

1. Date on list
2. Length of tenancy

If applicants share the same points within the same group, applications will be prioritised based on their time in housing need. Accordingly, if two applicants have the same points, the applicant who has been in housing need the longest will be given priority.

## **7.2 Advantages of a group plus points system**

We feel the key advantages are it:

- Addresses housing needs specified in law (the reasonable preference groups), as well as other housing needs
- Facilitates monitoring of allocation practice, in particular how effectively we are meeting our legal responsibilities
- Ensures accurate identification of housing needs and allows us to respond quickly to changing patterns of need
- Provides for a wide range of housing needs to be tackled thereby promoting our objective of creating sustainable communities

## **7.3 Our groups and placing applications**

We have established a total of 8 groups. These groups cover the main needs covered in housing law and good practice guidance. These groups are listed in order of priority.

Our groups are as follows:

- Group 1 Homeless
- Group 2 Urgent Needs
- Group 3 Overcrowded (or large families)
- Group 4 Unsatisfactory housing
- Group 5 Transfers/Under-occupation
- Group 6 General needs
- Group 7 Support
- Group 8 Aspirational

Group 3 and 5 have sub groups.

We place applications into a group using the following method. Applicants are placed in the highest priority group reflecting their housing need.

If an applicant has an urgent housing need, their application is placed in the urgent needs group (Group 2). This applies even if the applicant has other housing needs.

If an applicant is living in overcrowding conditions and not in Group 2, their application is placed in the overcrowded group (Group 3). In this group we have two separate sub-groups: overcrowding for waiting list applicants and transfer applicants.

If an applicant is not in Group 2 or 3 and is living in unsatisfactory housing, their application is placed in the unsatisfactory housing group (Group 4).

If an applicant is one of our tenants, and not in any of the above groups, their application is placed in the transfer group (Group 5).

All other applicants are placed in the general needs group (Group 6), support group (Group 7) or aspiration group (Group 8)

As Ruchazie Housing Association historically experiences low turnover of stock a 3 year letting plan informed by housing need and demand will establish indicative percentage figures of anticipated lets from each group.

#### **7.4 Group 1: Homelessness**

We recognise our statutory responsibility in the prevention and resolution of homelessness.

All applicants who are determined by Glasgow City Council as statutory homeless will be placed in group 1.

Confirmation of homeless status will be obtained at the time of offer. Should confirmation not be available we may withdraw the offer.

#### **7.5 Group 2: Urgent needs**

The needs covered under this group are:

- Houses subject to demolition on regeneration
- Victims of harassment or domestic abuse
- People re-housed through care initiatives

##### **(a) Houses subject to demolition or regeneration**

Applicants whose houses are subject to demolition or regeneration due to action taken by their own landlord and who require permanent re-housing are regarded as being in serious need.

We will consider on case by case basis requests by local landlords to assist their clearance programmes.

Points awarded: 250
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##### **(b) People subjected to domestic abuse, harassment**

This covers applicants who need to be rehoused as a consequence of harassment or domestic abuse.

Types of abuse and harassment we consider include:

- Domestic abuse
- Racial harassment
- Religious or sectarian harassment
- Homophobic harassment
- Transphobic harassment
- Harassment of disable people, including those with a learning disability

Points awarded: 150 points
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**(c) People re-housed through care and support initiatives**

This covers applicants who need to be housed as part of community care initiatives. Applicants are referred through Social Work or other support agencies.

Examples of such groups are:

- Young people “looked after” and accommodated by Glasgow City Council
- Residents of hospitals and other institutions who are returning to the community
- Residents in supported accommodation now ready to move to other accommodation

Points awarded: 100
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**(d) Needs not covered by policy**

We apply this section of the policy only in **extreme** circumstances if our present policy does not address the housing need in question. If this applies, we will award points only after each case has been fully investigated and evidence gathered.

In order to ensure accountability, each case must be approved by a senior member of staff. The points award is withdrawn if the particular need is resolved before an offer is made. These cases will be monitored closely and, if unique circumstances occur, this will be recognised within the policy review.

Points awarded: 300
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**7.6 Group 3: Overcrowding (or large families)**

We will give reasonable preference to households that are overcrowded, or people with large families.

When awarding points to applicants in this group, we use the below occupancy standard, Table 2. This standard is used to calculate if overcrowding (or under-occupation) exists.

Table 2: Occupancy standard

<b>Household size</b>	<b>Bedrooms required</b>
Single person	Bedsit/one
Couple	One
Same sex members who are under 16	One
Two children mixed sex under 10	One
Any other person	One

Table 2 shows that, as soon as one child reaches 10 years of age, overcrowding points are awarded if the child does not have a separate bedroom.

We do not let houses to applicants if this creates statutory overcrowding. The size of houses that we let to applicants is based on our policy standard (See section 5.11, Table 1).

In the case of medical needs, extra room space may be required. This will be subject to confirmation and evidence provided by the applicant.

Overcrowding assessments include people who normally live in the house but who are temporarily absent. This could include family members working away from home for a short period or students.

In this group we have two separate sub-groups: overcrowding for waiting list applicants and transfer applicants.

Points awarded: 50 (for each extra room based on our occupancy standard)
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## **7.7 Group 4: Unsatisfactory Housing**

We must give reasonable preference when letting houses to applicants:

- Living in housing below tolerable standard
- Living in other unsatisfactory housing that we refer to as accessibility or medical needs

Unsatisfactory housing is used in this policy to refer to housing needs relating to accessibility and medical needs.

### **(a) Housing below the tolerable standard**

Housing falls below the tolerable standard if it does not meet the relevant legal standard. A house is below the tolerable standard if it fails to meet any one of the elements within the tolerable standard.



For example, a house must be substantially free from rising or penetrating damp and must have a sink that has a supply of both hot and cold water.

Points awarded: 200
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### **(b) Accessibility or medical needs**

Where the applicant or a member of their household suffers from any medical condition where rehousing would alleviate the medical problem, points may be awarded in recognition of this situation. The applicant will be required to complete a medical assessment form which will enable a decision to be made on the suitability for rehousing.

There are three gradings placed on an application for medical priority and these are described below:

**Priority A:** Where an applicants' current accommodation is potentially life threatening or causing severe aggravation to his/her medical condition and where re-housing is extremely urgent. This refers to housebound cases, applicants in hospital awaiting an offer of accommodation before discharge or cases where there is severe difficulty accessing the accommodation.

**Priority B:** Where an applicants' current accommodation is causing serious aggravation to an applicants' medical condition. This refers to cases where there is difficulty getting to and from the accommodation or the internal layout is unsuitable.

**Priority C:** Where an applicants' current accommodation is causing a significant degree of discomfort to the applicants' medical condition.

<b>Medical Grade</b>	<b>Points Awarded</b>
A	100
B	75
C	50

In the case of joint applicants who both have medical needs, two sets of points may be awarded.

***An applicant where a move will not alleviate or address a medical problem, will receive no medical points.***

## **7.8 Group 5: Transfers/Under-occupation**

Tenants who do not have housing needs recognised within the first four groups have their applications placed in Group 5. A separate transfer list is important to meet policy objectives for the following reasons:

- It promotes households to move to other accommodation, in turn releasing stock for other applicants

- It addresses the preferences of existing tenants and this is important as preferences are a form of housing need. For example, tenants with no housing need points.
- In meeting the needs of tenants it is important to establish communities that are popular and sustainable

#### **(a) Under-occupation**

Reducing under-occupation helps us to make best use of our housing stock. Tenants may wish to move to smaller houses as their present home is too large.

Tenants can apply to move to accommodation that reduces present under-occupation levels even if the house remains under-occupied. Such applicants would be awarded under-occupation points only if under-occupation is reduced.

Only tenants will qualify for under occupation points. No points will be awarded to owner occupiers.

Internal applicants will be prioritised.

Points awarded: 25 (for each room under-occupied based on our occupancy standard)

#### **(b) Releasing housing for let to other applicants**

If two tenants want to live together and re-housing both households releases both their houses for let we award a fixed amount of points.

Points awarded: 50

Tenants with no housing need may be placed within this group.

In this group we have two separate sub-groups: under-occupation for waiting list applicants and transfer applicants.

### **7.9 Group 6: General Needs**

General needs include areas such as insecurity of accommodation and households who want to move into the social rented sector.

Applicants with zero points would be placed in this group. The only exception would be for those applicants who qualify to be placed within the aspirational group (Group 8).

#### **(a) Insecurity of accommodation**

Applicants from people living in insecure accommodation will be awarded points in this group.

Insecurity of accommodation covers a range of situations, including applicants who live in:

- Private sector accommodation
- Private sector accommodation with limited security
- Tied accommodation
- Armed forces personnel
- People of no fixed abode

**(i) Private sector accommodation**

Applicants who reside in privately rented accommodation will be awarded housing need points to reflect lesser security of tenure compared to that offered by social landlords and the realisation that affordability is a legitimate housing need.

Points awarded: 20
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**(ii) Private sector accommodation with limited security**

This covers private rented sector accommodation that is ending due to actions by the landlord or agency to seek recovery of repossession. For instance, this might apply in cases where the landlord is terminating either an assured or a short assured tenancy through the correct legal procedures.

Insecurity of tenure points may also be awarded to owners whose home is threatened because of mortgage default. This may happen if owners cannot afford to maintain mortgage payments and lenders have taken court action to recover the property for sale. Points are awarded once the owner has a date to leave accommodation. In processing applications, we carry out checks as required to confirm details.

Points awarded: 75
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**(iii) Tied accommodation**

This applies to applicants living in accommodation as part of their employment duties. We award points under this category when the accommodation is ending due to termination of employment. Points are awarded six months before the person leaves employment.

Points awarded: 75
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**(iv) Armed forces personnel**

This applies to Armed Forces personnel who occupy service accommodation and want to be re-housed in our community. We encourage applicants to apply as soon as possible before discharge. Applicants are required to

provide a copy of their certificate of discharge. Points are awarded six months before the person leaves the services.

Points awarded: 75

### **(b) Relationship Breakdown**

This applied to partners in a relationship breakdown who now want to live separately. As applicants for housing, they now form a separate household.

Applicants who sublet part of their home or take in lodgers do not qualify for these points.

Points awarded: 20

### **(c) Shared amenities**

We also award points to applicants who are living with other households if they share key amenities. The amenities for which points are awarded are kitchen, bathroom or toilet. Applicants need to only be sharing one of these amenities to qualify for the points.

<b>Household type</b>	<b>Points awarded</b>
Single person and couples	20
Families	30

### **(d) No fixed address**

Applicants with no fixed address are in this group

Points awarded: 30

Applicants with no recognised housing need( and who do not qualify to be placed within the aspirational group) may also be placed in this group.

## **7.10 Group 7: Care and Support**

Where a person requires support from a friend or relative and the applicant is either the carer or the person requiring support points will be awarded.

Because of the individual nature of this type of application, each application will be assessed on it's merits. A number of factors will be taken into account:

- The current distance between the two individuals involved and whether there are other carers.
- The dependency of one person on the other any associated health/emotional problems
- The type and frequency of care being provided

- The recommendations of health/social work professionals in relation to care and support

Once the information has been gathered an assessment will be made.

<b>Support Grade</b>	<b>Points awarded</b>
A	20
B	10

Further evidence may be requested before points are awarded. There requires to be a fully justifiable reason for the support need, for example, child-minding in order to allow someone to retain employment.

### **7.11 Group 8: Aspirational**

The aspirational group is for tenants who have been living continuously within their tenancy for a period of 5 years and wish to move to another property in the area where they currently stay. It could be that you live in a flat, and would like to move to a house.

As there is no housing 'need' element (in that your current home meets your housing needs), we do not award 'housing points' for aspirational applications. Instead, we add the person to the group, and when a suitable property becomes available for offer to someone from the aspirational housing group, it is offered to the person who has been on the list the longest and has the longest length of tenancy .

You cannot qualify to be in any other group as well as the aspirational group; if you require a bigger house, or a smaller house, or another property because of a medical condition, then you have an element of 'housing need' and will be placed within another group. The aspirational group is for applicants who have no housing need as described within the policy.

## **8 Appeals**

If an applicant is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way in which their application has been dealt with this will be managed in accordance with the Scottish Public Sector complaints policy.

A copy of this complaint policy is available on request and can be provided in alternative formats.

## **9 Positive Action**

We support the development of equality initiatives through all of our housing activities, including allocation practice.

An important part of this process involves developing positive action initiatives to address discrimination against particular groups such as disabled people or people from minority ethnic groups.

The following are examples of positive action concerning allocation practice that we have implemented:

- Publication of the allocation policy in other formats and different languages, on request
- Ensuring our allocation documentation is produced in plain language
- Promoting awareness of the allocation policy to a diverse range of groups
- Providing interpreting services, on request
- Consulting with national bodies, as required, to promote good practice.

## **10 Training**

Training is an important element in ensuring that the allocation policy is implemented effectively. We, therefore, provide ongoing training for staff. This includes training on:

- Allocation law and practice
- Allocation policy and procedures
- Information technology systems
- Other relevant legislation such as equality law

## **11 Auditing and monitoring performance**

### **11.1 Auditing performance**

We ensure that proper mechanisms are in place to allow individual allocations to be audited.

### **11.2 Monitoring performance**

Monitoring the implementation of the allocation policy is an important part of quality assurance. It is also essential to ensure that allocation practices are subject to continuous improvement.

We ensure we monitor performance in the following areas:

- The number of new applications, included whether or not they are processed within targets
- Applications reviewed and deleted as part of the review process

- The groups in which applications are placed
- Household type and equality information
- Offers houses let
- Appeals and complaints

Information on allocation trends is presented to the Housing Management Sub Committee on a regular basis.

General allocation performance is published for all tenants and service users.

## **12 Tenant participation and policy review**

### **12.1 General**

We review the allocation policy every three years, or as required. For instance, a review of the allocation policy may be necessary to address legal challenges.

We discuss changes to policy with tenants, applicants and other service users through our tenant participation strategy.

We use our performance indicators to discuss improvements to service delivery.

### **12.2 Methods of review**

We use a range of methods as detailed in our tenant participation strategy when reviewing the policy.

We also carry out regular surveys of service users to gather their views concerning allocation services.