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## **Allocations Policy**

**This document is available on the Association's website. Customers will be provided with a copy of this policy on request. We will provide this policy in specific formats as requested, i.e. tape, Braille or another language.**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Implemented:</b>    |  |
| <b>To be Reviewed:</b> |  |

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## **Allocations Policy**

### **1 Introduction**

Lochfield Park Housing Association is a not-for-profit Registered Social Landlord operating in the Lochend area of Easterhouse. The Housing Association has been at the forefront of regeneration in the Lochend area since its inception in 1993. The Association's aim is to contribute to sustaining the local community of Lochend, promote social inclusion and contribute to the regeneration of Easterhouse through the provision of well-managed, high-quality housing and housing services.

### **2 Legislative and Regulatory Framework**

This policy complies with relevant statutory requirements, the Scottish Social Housing Charter and "Social Housing Allocations – A Practice Guide February 2019.

### **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 Regulatory Standards**

The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.

- The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. Its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these objectives.
- The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being and economic effectiveness.
- The governing body bases its decision on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.

#### **5 Objectives**

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 and Diversity Policy
- Make the best use of the housing stock through promoting tenants' rights such as the right to exchange homes
- Working in partnership with other external agencies e.g., support services etc. to promote tenancy sustainment and applicant needs
- 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 of personal information confidentially to meet relevant legal obligations
- Dealing with appeals and complaints fairly in accordance with timescales

- To operate a policy that is easily understood and simple to administer
- To respect at all times the human rights of applicants and, in particular, their right to respect for private and family life
- Assessing if policy objectives are met through our audit and performance management system
- Reviewing the policy every three years or sooner if required

In order to achieve these objectives, comprehensive staff training will take place to ensure the policy is implemented effectively and quality services are delivered.

## **6 Equal Opportunity**

Access to our housing and waiting list is available to everyone aged 16 or over. Accepting an application for housing does not guarantee that an offer of housing will be made. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Lochfield Park Housing Association will ensure that no individual is adversely discriminated against on the grounds of sexual or marriage status, on racial grounds, disability, age, sexual orientation, transgender, language or social origin, faith or religion, or political opinion. This allocations policy is designed to allocate houses on a needs basis but recognises that need outstrips supply. The policy has been equality impact assessed.

## **7 Legislation, the Law & Legal Requirements**

### **7.1 Housing (Scotland) Act**

The allocation of social housing in Scotland is governed by the provisions within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended. The legislation sets out the principles that should guide the practice of social landlords in relation to holding and managing a housing list, the extent to which circumstances and needs should be assessed and the applicant characteristics that should be prioritised in the assessment of housing need. This policy abides by this Act and all other relevant legislation.

## **8 Access to the Housing List**

Any person who is sixteen years old or over may apply to the housing list. This is not, however, an automatic right to receive offers of housing. Section 9 explains how we prioritise applications in line with legal requirements and good practice.

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

In addition, housing applications can be made by referrals from agencies with which the Association has an agreement for example Glasgow City Council Homeless Service (also known as a section 5 homeless referral).

## **9 Reasonable preference groups**

Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended 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:

- Homeless people and those threatened with homelessness and have unmet housing need
- People living in:
  - Unsatisfactory housing conditions and have unmet housing need
  - Tenants of houses held by a social landlord which the social landlord considers to be under-occupied.

For clarity, a person has unmet housing needs where the social landlord considers the persons to have housing needs which are not capable of being met by housing options which are available.

We recognise that people may be in housing need for other reasons than those covered in the law. Section 16 details the range of housing needs that we address.

## **10 Factors not taken into account for access to the Housing List**

In accordance with legislation, certain factors must be ignored by landlords when assessing applicants' access to the housing register. 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
- 'The income of the applicant and their family
- Age of applicants unless under the age of 16
- Any rent arrears/tenancy related debt
  
- Any rent arrears where the amount is not more than one month's rent and or where the applicant has been maintaining an arrangement for paying the arrears for at least three months

Whilst the following factors do not affect an applicant gaining access to the housing register, here are factors that can affect the status of an application. These include:

- Any rent arrears where the amount is more than one month's rent and or where the applicant has not been maintaining an arrangement for paying the arrears for at least three months
- If you have acted anti-socially within the last three years

## 11 Suspension

We may suspend offers to applicants in certain circumstances, for example:

- Significant, outstanding, and unresolved arrears of housing debt
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Provision of False or Misleading Information
- Violence or abuse towards Staff
- Evicted Tenants, abandoned tenancies
- Other Tenancy Breaches
- Applicants have voluntarily suspended themselves
- Where two reasonable offers of housing in accordance with applicant choices have been made and refused.
- We will not unreasonably suspend any applicant, nor will we keep an applicant suspended for any longer than is appropriate. To this end, all suspensions will be monitored on at least a three-monthly basis and all suspended applicants will be given ample opportunities to rectify the circumstances causing their suspension.

We will suspend as follows:

- 11.1 Housing Debt:** Applicants who owe housing debt greater than or equal to one month's rent and where the debt has occurred in the last five years will be suspended unless: 1) The debt reduces below one month and/or 2) A reasonable payment agreement in line with Lochfield Park's assessment/criteria has been in place and adhered to for at least three continuous months or more without being broken.
- 11.2 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):** Applicants who have received a warning for serious ASB or where a live legal notice or ongoing legal action against them for ASB exists, will remain suspended until: 1) The notice/warning expires and is not renewed and 2) Their landlord confirms in writing that they have improved their behaviour sufficiently not to merit further action or legal action. Where an Anti-Social Behaviour Order linked to a tenancy has been awarded against an applicant or family member a suspension of one year will be applied unless the order itself specifies a longer ban.
- 11.3 Provision of false or misleading information:** Where this heading applies and is confirmed through a tenancy reference, or through investigation by Lochfield Park Housing Association, will be suspended for a period of 6

months from the date the reference is received, or the date the applicant is notified of the suspension in writing by the Association.

**11.4 Violence or verbal abuse towards Lochfield Park Housing Association staff:** Where this heading applies applicants will be suspended for a period of one year. We will also contact the Police and seek to prosecute in all cases.

**11.5 Evicted tenants and/or abandoned tenancies:** An applicant who has been evicted from a tenancy or abandoned a tenancy in the last five years will be suspended from the list for a period of one year, or up to the equivalent of five years if less than a year remains of the five-year timescale.

**11.6 Other tenancy breaches:**

Applicants who are current tenants, and where we are notified by the landlord of a significant breach of their tenancy agreement, a live legal notice, or an ongoing legal action against them for any other breach of tenancy, will be suspended and remain suspended until:

- 1) The notice expires and is not renewed, and/or
- 2) Their landlord confirms in writing that they have improved their behaviour sufficiently not to merit further action (current tenants)

**11.7 Refusal of two reasonable offers of housing:**

The number of reasonable offers of housing an applicant can receive before their application is suspended from receiving further offers of housing has been limited to two. If an applicant refuses two reasonable offers, which have been made in accordance with their application choices, their application will be suspended for a period of 6 months. On the refusal of an offer of housing the applicant should be contacted to review their preferences in terms of area choice and house type, to ensure they are up to date

When we suspend an application, we will write and explain the reasons for the suspension and the length of the suspension. We will also write to the applicant when we have removed the suspension.

**12 Removal of applications**

There are only four ways in which an application can be removed from the Association's housing list:

- Where an applicant has died
- Where an applicant has requested removal from the list. If this request is made verbally and not in writing, the organisation will then confirm the request by letter.
- Where an applicant fails to respond to the review of the housing list or clear request for information. Applicants will be clearly informed

of the implications of not responding and following removal will be informed of this in writing. In these cases, applications will be reinstated once the applicant has provided the information required within 3 months

- Where an applicant has changed address

## **13 Dealing with Housing Applications**

This section explains the stages of the allocation process. Our staff procedures cover all these stages in more detail, to ensure that policy objectives are met.

### **13.1 Admission to the Housing List**

In order to be admitted to the housing list, applicants must complete a housing application form.

Application forms can be completed online or be obtained by contacting the office:

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

Our target for assessing completed application forms (this includes receiving relevant proofs) and informing the applicant of the outcome is 7 working days from receipt. Applicants are sent written confirmation of their housing application details, including their award of points.

Applications with insufficient information may be subject to delay. This means that housing applications cannot be processed until the relevant information is received. Or, alternatively, housing 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 housing application details.

We also provide support services if required including an interpretation service for people who do not speak English and a hearing loop in our office for the hearing impaired. This is in line with our policy commitment to make services accessible to applicants.

## **13.2 Tenancies**

We offer applicants who qualify for housing Scottish Secure Tenancies (SST), in line with our legal obligations. In a limited number of situations, we may offer applicants a short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST). This has limited security of tenure. Examples of when a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy might be granted are if:

- An applicant has been evicted for antisocial behaviour within the last five years; or
- A tenant (or a member of their family) is subject to an antisocial behaviour order.
- The accommodation is let on a temporary basis for certain reasons
- Where a successor requires to remain in an adapted or unsuitable tenancy or similar whilst alternative housing is secured

## **13.3 Joint Tenancies**

All tenants may apply to have a joint tenancy with someone who is staying with them or intending to stay with them. Applications should be made in writing to the Association. The person the tenant wishes to add as joint tenant must have lived at the property as their only or principal home for the 12 months prior to the tenant applying for them to become a joint tenant. The Association must also have been notified that the person wishing to apply for a joint tenancy has been living in the house. The 12-month period does not start unless the Association has been told that the person has been living there as their only or principal home. An existing joint tenant can terminate their interest in the tenancy by providing the Association and the other joint tenants with 4 weeks written notice. The Association must consent to an application for a joint tenancy unless there are reasonable grounds for refusing.

Possible grounds for refusal would be:

- Where agreeing to the joint tenancy would lead to the household being overcrowded.
- Where the proposed joint tenant would not be granted a tenancy under the Allocations Policy for reasons such as anti-social behaviour or housing related debt;
- Where the existing tenant had rent arrears and no suitable arrangement was in place for repayment

## **13.4 Tenants' rights**

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

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

### **13.5 Information and processing applications**

We process personal information provided on the housing application form in line with legal requirements. We will make enquiries to confirm information provided in the housing application. Express consent is granted by the applicant by signing the declaration on the application form to allow exchange of information with other agencies where appropriate and for their application to form part of any future tenancy record. All information is exchanged in line with the Association's Fair Processing Notice.

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 an offer. This is good practice to ensure that information is recorded accurately so that offers are appropriate. For instance, we may telephone applicants to confirm details are as recorded on their application form.

We may also carry out home visits or set up meetings via video call 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 or recklessly, we are entitled to take legal action to evict the applicant and recover the tenancy.

Applicants are responsible for advising us of any changes to their housing circumstances.

### **13.6 Verifying applicant's circumstances**

To ensure that we are correctly assessing the housing needs of applicants, we require applicants to provide information to verify their circumstances. All applications will be initially assessed, and further verification/corroboration will be sought thereafter. The table on the next page outlines some of the proof we may ask for. Please note the table is not definitive or exhaustive and we may ask for other relevant information or documentation in order to satisfy our needs assessment. Examples of the verification required include:

| <b>Information Required at Time of Application</b>                       |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Proof of Identity for applicant/joint applicant x1                       | Photographic ID (where possible)   |  |
| Proof of identity/Current Address for applicant/joint applicant x 2      | Bank/Building Society statement<br>Utility Bill<br>Missive of let<br>DWP benefit confirmation letter<br>Council Tax Annual Statement<br>Or similar |  |
| Homeless or threatened with homelessness                                 | Confirmation of unintentional homelessness from local authority  | At point of Application/as and when circumstances change |
| Asked to leave secure accommodation                                      | Copy of valid notice to quit/letter from landlord; certificate of discharge; employers notice letter   | At point of Application/as and when circumstances change |
| In need of rehousing as health affected by current housing circumstances | Medical Assessment Form plus any supporting documentation  | At point of Application/as and when circumstances change |
| Property Below Tolerable Standard  | Certificate from Environmental Health / Confirmation from Rented Social Landlord/Council   | At point of Application/as and when circumstances change |
| <b>Information Required at Time of Allocation</b>                        |  |  |
| Proof of identity/Current Address x 1                                    | Bank/Building Society statement<br>Utility Bill<br>Missive of let<br>DWP benefit confirmation letter<br>Council Tax Annual Statement<br>Or similar | For all persons detailed on application form             |

### **13.7 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.

### **13.8 Immigration Status**

If a housing applicant is a person who is "subject to immigration control" then they may not be entitled to receive an offer of housing.

Refugees and migrants are in general not excluded from housing allocation and homelessness assistance; however, the rules vary depending on the type of immigration status concerned.

Accordingly, we will assess each application against the current applicable legislation and guidance.

### **13.9 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.

### **13.10 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.

If an applicant refuses two reasonable offers that reflect their stated choices their housing application may be suspended for a period of six months.

## 14 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 property for which applicants may be considered

| <b><u>Household Size</u></b>                                     | <b><u>Accommodation Size</u></b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Single person</b>   | 1 bedroom House/Flat or 2-bedroom Flat   |
| <b>Couple</b>  | 1 bedroom House/Flat or 2-bedroom Flat   |
| <b>Single parent or couple with one child over 13 years old</b>  | 2-bedroom property   |
| <b>Single parent or couple with one child under 13 years old</b> | 2-bedroom property   |
| <b>Expectant Mother</b>  | 2-bedroom property   |
| <b>Single parent or couple with two or more children</b>         | <p>The following age/sharing criteria dictates the number of bedrooms awarded for children (C):</p> <p>All (C) aged 13 and over = own room<br/>           Two (C) under 13 of same sex = share a room<br/>           Two (C) under 10 = share a room<br/>           Two (C) 10 – 13 of different sex = own room</p> <p>No more than two children can share a room irrespective of age.</p> <p>Each couple or adult single person will be entitled to their own room. For marital or relationship breakdowns both persons will be counted as a single adult for bedroom calculation purposes.</p> |
| <b>Access Arrangements</b>                                       | In accordance with Household Size above (proof of at least 3 days/nights residence required for extra rooms) Only one set of overcrowding points will be awarded   |

Please note you will be placed on the waiting list for the size of property you require based on your household composition. However, you may be able to obtain a property of a different size. See below for more information.

## **14.1 Overcrowding rules**

Demand for larger houses often exceeds supply. In exceptional circumstances the Association may consider applicants for smaller houses than specified in the table above.

The Association does not let properties to applicants if this would create statutory overcrowding.

In the case of households that are living apart in separate houses but want to live together, overcrowding points will not be awarded where sufficient room exists in one of the homes whereby the two applicants moving in together would alleviate any overcrowding in the other home.

Overcrowding points only take into consideration the applicants family members who are moving with them as a family unit. No account of other persons residing but not moving will be considered for overcrowding points, i.e., the number of bedrooms required, and any overcrowding points awarded is for the applicant's circumstances only.

## **14.2 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

Applicants will only be awarded under-occupation points only if under-occupation is reduced. Under-occupation points, in keeping with the 2014 Housing (Scotland) Act, are only available to social housing tenants and not owner occupiers or private rented tenants.

## **15 Reviewing applications**

We review applications on an annual basis through a rolling monthly review programme. The date of review is based on date of registration. 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, the application will be removed from the list.

## **16 Our Allocation System**

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

## **16.1 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). Those applicants in Group 1 are recognised as having the highest housing need.

Points are weighted towards the priority housing needs as outlined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. This ensures that those with the most housing need obtain the most points and therefore receive the greatest number of offers.

If applicants share the same points within the same group, applications will be prioritised based on their time in housing need.

## **16.2 Annual Letting Plan**

The Association produces an Annual Lettings Plan. This sets out how many houses we expect to relet during the course of the year and includes targets for lets to each of the main types of applicants. The purpose of the Lettings Plan targets is:

- To ensure that we address our legal obligations and policy objectives in a fair and open way.
- To provide people with different types of needs and circumstances access to our houses, making the best use of our housing stock and creating a sustainable community.

The annual letting plan is closely monitored and reported to the Management Committee on a regular basis.

## **16.3 Our groups and placing applications**

We have established a total of 3 groups each with its own subgroup. These groups cover the main needs covered in housing law and good practice guidance. These groups are listed in order of priority:

- Group 1: Homeless - Section 5 Homeless referrals and Nominations only
- Group 1a: Applicants with confirmation of unintentional homelessness from a Local Authority
- Group 2: Medical Needs
- Group 2a: Medical Needs - Internal Applicants only
- Group 3: General Needs
- Group 3a: General Needs – Internal Applicants only

## **Group 1: Homelessness – Section 5 Homeless referrals and Nominations**

The Association recognises our statutory responsibility in assisting Glasgow City Council in the resolution of homelessness.

All applicants who the Association has accepted as a Section 5 homeless referral will be placed in Group 1 with allocations made in the order of receipt of referral.

Only accepted section 5 homeless referrals are placed within this group.

### **Group 1a: Applicants with Confirmation of Homelessness from a Local Authority**

Where an applicant stating that they are homeless can provide a recent letter from their local authority (dated within the last 6 months), points will be awarded in recognition of this status. Confirmation of homelessness will be required at the point of any offer made.

Applicants placed in this group will receive statutory homeless points only and will not be assessed under any other housing need.

Applicants currently housed in Temporary Furnished homeless accommodation will be awarded an additional 25 points.

|                    |
|--------------------|
| Points awarded: 75 |
|--------------------|

## **Group 2: 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 questionnaire which will enable a decision to be made on the suitability for rehousing. Evidence from an external third party e.g., Occupational Therapist; Consultant or Health Visitor is required.

**If multiple people in one household have medical conditions, only one set of medical points will be awarded to the person with the greatest need.**

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

**Priority A:** Where an applicant's current accommodation is potentially life threatening and/or causing severe aggravation to their medical condition and where re-housing is urgent. This refers to applicants who are house-bound, applicants in hospital awaiting an offer of accommodation before

discharge or instances where there is severe difficulty accessing the accommodation.

**Priority B:** Where an applicant's current accommodation is causing serious aggravation to an applicant's 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 aspect of the house is causing difficulty for the applicant or a member of the applicant's household either physically or mentally and it is clear that a move would alleviate these circumstances.

| Medical Grade | Points Awarded |
|---------------|----------------|
| A             | 100            |
| B             | 50             |
| C             | 25             |

Supporting medical evidence is required for medical points to be awarded in any of the above categories.

Where a move will not alleviate or address a medical problem, an applicant will receive no medical points.

### **Group 2a: Medical Needs - Internal Applicants only**

Applicants who are already Lochfield Park tenants will be placed in this group and assessed using the medical criteria as detailed above.

### **Group 3: General Needs**

We will give reasonable preference when letting houses to households that are overcrowded, people with large families, persons living in sub-standard accommodation or applicants. Associated points are awarded. A household is defined in this policy as any person(s) wanting to live separately, for example, a family member no longer wanting to reside with their parents. We also award points for defined general housing needs in this group such as sharing amenities, care and support of/from relatives, education or employment, insecure tenancies, persons experiencing harassment or domestic violence and exceptional circumstances. Points are weighted and can be combined to ensure those in the most overall housing need are given a preference. The exceptions to this are exceptional circumstances and homeless points which are one off award involving no other defined housing need. The sections below outline the different points awarded to the general list and how applicants can qualify for these points:

#### **Harassment**

This covers applicants who need to be rehoused because of harassment.

Examples of harassment includes, but is not limited to

- Racial harassment
- Religious or sectarian harassment
- Homophobic harassment
- Bi-phobic harassment
- Transphobic harassment
- Harassment of disabled people, including those with a learning disability

Points awarded: 50 points

### **Domestic Abuse**

This covers applicants who need to be rehoused because they are experiencing domestic violence.

Points awarded: 50 points

### **Below 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.

This must be verified by a letter from Environmental Health, or a home visit carried out by Association staff.

Points awarded: 50

### **No Fixed Address**

Applicants with no fixed address are in this group.

For clarity, this would cover those applicants whose applications are registered c/o a Government agency such as the Job Centre or Social Work Departments.

Points awarded: 30

### **Demolition/Major Repair (considered on a case-by-case basis)**

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 a case-by-case basis, requests by local landlords to assist with their clearance programmes.

Points awarded: 25

### **Overcrowding (per room lacking)**

Lochfield Park 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 14. 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.

Parents with shared contact with their children will be awarded one additional bedroom regardless of how many children the applicant has access to.

If it is deemed by Association staff that the applicant has deliberately created a situation of overcrowding to improve their position on the housing list, overcrowding points will be withdrawn.

Points awarded: 10 (for each extra room based on our occupancy standard)

### **Separated Partners Living Together**

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

Points awarded: 10

### **Under Occupation (per surplus bedroom)**

Reducing under-occupation helps us to make best use of housing. Applicants may wish to move to smaller houses as their present home is too large. Applicants 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 applicants who are tenants of a **Registered Social Landlord** will qualify for under occupation points. No points will be awarded to owner occupiers or those in the private rented sector.

Points awarded: 10 (for each room under-occupied based on our occupancy standard)

## **Sharing 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.

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

Points awarded: 5

## **Private Sector Tenant**

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: 5

## **Private Sector Tenant Served Notice to Quit**

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. This also applies to applicants who have to leave their accommodation because leave to remain has been granted.

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 the accommodation. In processing applications, we carry out checks as required to confirm details.

Points awarded: 10

## **Living in accommodation linked with job – due to end within 6 months 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: 10

## **Leaving Armed Forces**

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.

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| Points awarded: 10 |
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## **Care, Support, Education, Employment**

### **Care/Support**

Points will be awarded to those applicants who need support of, or who have to support a relative living within Lochfield Parks tenancy and reside more than 5 miles from the Associations area of activity.

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

- The dependency of one person on the other and 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.

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.

### **Education/Employment**

Points will be awarded to those applicants who wish to reside in the area for employment or education reasons. (Proof of employment, or acceptance letters for higher education must be provided for points to be awarded)

**Only one award of points in this category will be made per application.**

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| Points awarded: 10 |
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## **No Housing Need**

Application Forms received that have no housing need or do not fall into any of the above categories will also be placed in this group. It is unlikely that these applicants will ever be in a position to be offered a house and this will be communicated to them at the point of acknowledging their application.

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| Points awarded: 0 |
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### **Needs not covered by policy**

We apply this section of the policy only in **exceptional** 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 awarded are 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.

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| Points awarded: 75 |
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### **Group 3a – General Needs Internal Applicants Only**

Applicants who are already Lochfield Park tenants will be placed in this group and assessed using the General Needs points awards as detailed above.

## **17 Appeals**

If an applicant is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way in which their application has been dealt with an appeal can be lodged within 14 days with the Housing Manager. If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the response to their appeal, they will have further recourse through the Association's Complaints Procedure. Ultimately, the complaint can be referred to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. this will be managed in accordance with the Scottish Public Sector complaints policy.

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

## **18 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) Acts 1987, 2001, 2010 and 2014.

Secondly, an applicant may access personal information as determined by rights of access under the General Data Protection Act 2018 and any subsequent amendments and GDPR 2018.

We provide this information on request within 28 days. A small charge may be applicable in these matters

## **19 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. This involves establishing 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.

## **20 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

We monitor training through our training plans and annual staff appraisals that link training to strategic objectives and personal development needs.

## **21 Auditing and monitoring performance**

### **21.1 Auditing performance**

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

## **21.2 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 performance monitoring in the following areas:

- The number of new applications, including 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 of houses for let
- Appeals and complaints

Information on allocation trends is presented to the Associations Committee on a regular basis.

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

## **22 Tenant participation and policy review**

### **22.1 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 changes.

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.

### **22.2 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.