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West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative will provide this policy on request at no cost, in larger print, in Braille, in audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages. Please contact the office.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator No. 203
Registered Charity No. SCO38737, VAT Registration No. 180223636
Registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014

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Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative is a community owned and controlled fully mutual Housing Co-operative based in Cambuslang on the outskirts of Glasgow. It is a Registered Social Landlord, set up in April 1989, to improve the living conditions for residents in the area. It operates on a “not-for-profit” basis and is run by an elected Management Committee consisting of tenants. The Management Committee employ a staff team to manage the Co-operative on a day-to-day basis.

The Co-operative currently owns and manages 704 properties. 543 flats were transferred from Glasgow District Council to community ownership and since then 1 property has been acquired under the Mortgage to Rent scheme, 100 properties were built in 2009 and a further 60 properties built in 2022. The current stock breakdown is as follows:

| Apartment size | Property type | Number |
|----------------|---------------|--------|
| 2 apt | Multi-storey | 13 |
| | Cottage flat | 24 |
| | Low rise | 15 |
| 3 apt | Multi-storey | 406 |
| | Low rise | 79 |
| | Terraced | 46 |
| | Semi Detached | 12 |
| 4 apt | Low rise | 42 |
| | Semi Detached | 40 |
| | Multi-storey | 13 |
| | Terraced | 4 |
| | Bungalow | 1 |
| 5 apt | Semi Detached | 4 |
| | Terraced | 4 |
| | Detached | 1 |

1.1.2 The Co-operative has on average 70 properties for relet each year and the majority of these are 2 bedroom multi-storey flats.

1.2 Equality and Diversity

We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for all people in our work. In implementing this Policy, we will provide a fair and equal service to all people, irrespective of factors such as gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes.

1.3 Policy Principles

1.3.1 This document outlines the Co-operative's Allocation Policy which is one of the key documents we produce. In line with legal and good practice requirements the underlying principles are for it to be:

- Responsive – the policy will enable the Co-operative to respond to a wide range of needs and circumstances. The underlying principle is to allocate properties to those with the greatest level of housing need.
- Consistent – applicants in similar circumstances will be considered in a similar manner
- Open and Transparent – we will make the policy document available to potential applicants and provide clear information at all stages of the allocations process. We will ensure that all allocations are carefully checked and clear audit trails are maintained which will show we have followed the policy and procedures correctly.
- Confidential – all information provided for the purposes of the rehousing will be treated as strictly confidential and under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It will only be passed onto or discussed with another person or organisation only with the applicant's permission or where the Co-operative is legally required to do so.
- Accessible – we will ensure the policy is made available in a variety of formats

1.4 Policy Aims

The aims and objectives of the policy are to:

- Ensure it complies with relevant legislation and good practice
- Ensure the Co-operative addresses a range of housing needs and to allocate our properties on the basis of need, giving those in greatest need the highest priority.
- Ensure that allocations are carried out effectively and efficiently to minimise the time taken to allocate empty properties and so keeping any rent loss to a minimum.
- Ensure there is open access to our housing list
- Ensure we make best use of our stock including matching applications with particular needs with properties that have been adapted to meet their needs
- Monitor and review our allocations data. Information will be presented

to the Housing Sub Committee on a 2 monthly cycle, annually to all tenants through the Annual Report and Annual Report on the Charter

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

1.5 Legislation and Guidance

1.5.1 We will comply with all relevant legislation, standards and targets.

1.5.2 Our Allocations Policy complies with legislation, guidance and good practice including:

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, 2001, 2010 & 2014
- The Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003
- Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulation
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005 (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements – MAPPA)
- Scottish Social Housing Charter 2017
- Regulatory Framework (Scottish Housing Regulator)

1.4.3 This policy has been developed in line with the Scottish Government paper “Social Housing Allocations: A Practice Guide”

1.6 Consultation

1.6.1 In line with Section 54 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and with the Co-operative’s tenant participation strategy, this policy was developed in consultation with tenants, other residents and applicants on the housing list. The consultation period lasted from 1 December 2023 to 15 January 2024. A consultative draft policy was published on the Co-operative’s website along with a questionnaire which was based on the key sections of the policy. The draft policy was also circulated to all tenants and housing list applicants as well as local stakeholders. The consultation was also highlighted in the Co-operative’s newsletter.

1.6.2 Co-operative attempted to address all issues raised by those consulted, although this clearly had to be done within the context of the law.

1.7 Basis for selection – points system

1.7.1 The Co-operative operates a points system for assessing applications for housing as it is the most embracing, objective and accountable method and helps to exclude inconsistency and discrimination. The points system is used to compare the housing needs of all applicants so that accommodation is offered to those in the greatest need.

1.7.2 All applications are treated in exactly the same manner under the system: the same needs assessment being applied to all. The number of points awarded to an application is based on the points system, as outlined in section 3.

1.8 Homeless persons and Homeless referrals

1.8.1 The Co-operative is committed to playing a part in helping to address the housing needs of homeless persons through partnership working with South Lanarkshire Council and have a joint working arrangement in place that sets out roles and responsibilities.

1.8.2 Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a duty on all Registered Social Landlords to house homeless applicants referred to them by the local authority, unless there is good reason not to and it is the Co-operative's policy that all applicants referred under Section 5 will be made an offer of accommodation, providing that a suitable property is available.

1.9 Reasonable Preference

1.9.1 In line with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, the Co-operative seeks to give priority (the legal term being "reasonable preference") to applicants in one or more of the following categories:

- i. homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness and who have unmet housing needs (as per the definition of "homeless persons" in Part II of the 1987 Act (as amended))
- ii. people who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and who have unmet housing needs
- iii. Registered Social Landlord tenants who are under-occupying

1.9.2 The term “reasonable preference” is not easy to define and, like many legal terms, has a meaning which can ultimately be decided upon only by the courts. “Social Housing Allocations in Scotland: A practice guide” has provided guidelines, and these have been used in formulating this policy.

1.9.3 The Co-operative will give reasonable preference to the reasonable preference groups prior to the 2014 Act. These include:

- Living in a property which does not meet tolerable standard.
- Overcrowding

The Co-operative will also give reasonable preference to the following categories as they reflect the needs of our area:

- Domestic abuse
- Other harassment or abuse including antisocial behaviour
- Insecure accommodation (other than statutory homeless)
- Needing an adapted or accessible home
- Social, community or family support

1.9.4 The Co-operative will use the points system to help ensure that reasonable preference is given to the applicant in the above categories however, it should be noted that not all categories attract equal priority. Points will be awarded based on the applicant’s current situation. In addition, we will use compliance with Section 5 of the 2001 Act to help enhance the degree of preference to homeless applicants.

1.10 Letting Quotas

1.10.1 In order to maintain a balance between the various categories of lets, the Co-operative operates a quota system. Target percentages within the different categories are as undernoted:

| Category | Target % |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Housing List | 30% |
| Internal Transfers | 20% |
| Nominations/Section 5 Lets | 50% |

1.10.2 The percentages outlined in the quotas are not absolute figures which must be attained. Rather, they are indicative percentages to help ensure that there is

some balance within the lets made. If there is an imbalance towards the end of a year, for example, this does not mean that all subsequent lets will be made in order to “catch up”.

1.10.3 Housing Officers will make selections throughout the year on a rotational basis (as outlined in the allocations procedures) to help ensure that the target percentages are broadly achieved on an ongoing basis.

1.10.4 The Nominations/Section 5 category is as stated in the joint working arrangement noted in section 1.8.

1.11 Allocations to Committee members/Staff or family members

1.11.1 The Co-operative accepts that Committee members, staff member or members of their family may wish to seek alternative housing with the Co-operative. They are entitled to be accepted onto the transfer or housing list and may be made an offer of housing using the same rules as other applicants.

1.11.2 Our application form will ask applicants if they are a Committee member, staff member or related to either a Committee member or staff member. If the applicant is a staff member or related to a staff member then the staff member will have no involvement in assessing the application or making any offers.

1.11.3 All offers of tenancy will be made in line with the Entitlements and Benefits Policy which states:

Our people as tenants and service users

The offer of a tenancy or lease in one of our or any of our subsidiaries' properties to one of our people or to someone closely connected to them.

This is permitted as long as it is in accordance with our published allocations policy and;

- Neither the applicant or anyone connected to the applicant is involved in any way or in any part of the allocation process and
- The offer is approved by the Governing Body in advance and

- The tenancy is recorded as an interest in the appropriate register within five days of the tenancy commencing

1.12 Tenancy Agreement

1.12.1 The vast majority of lets will be made on the basis of a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST).

1.12.2 In certain very limited circumstances, however, the Co-operative may decide to let on the basis of a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST). The circumstances are:

- where the tenant/joint tenant has been evicted for antisocial behaviour in the past three years
- if the tenant or member of the household is subject to an antisocial behaviour order
- accommodation let on a temporary basis to someone in receipt of housing support services

1.12.3 The short SST will be let for a period of twelve months and it may be extended for a further 6 months. We will, however, aim to convert any short SST to a full SST at the end of the initial 12 months period.

1.13 Membership

1.13.1 All applicants who are offered and subsequently accept an offer of accommodation must become a member of the Co-operative as a condition of their tenancy.

1.13.2 Joint applicants must both become members.

Section 2 - Applications and applying for housing

2.1 Access to Housing

2.1.1 Anyone who is 16 years or above has the right to apply for housing and to be added to our housing list or, if they are an existing tenant, to our transfer list.

2.1.2 Applicants must provide us with all the information and any supporting evidence that we need to assess their housing situation.

2.1.3 All applicants will be advised of the likelihood of being housed by the Co-operative once their points total has been assessed. This may be of particular importance to

- applicants whose application has attracted few or no points as, unless there is a change in their circumstances, it may be unlikely that the Co-operative will be able to make them an offer.
- applications who are looking for a stock type which has limited availability

2.1.4 Joint applications will be taken where applicants wish to live together as joint tenants. We will not reasonably refuse a request for a joint application or joint tenancy.

2.2. Internal transfers

2.2.1 Internal transfers occur where a current tenant wishes to move to another one of the Co-operative's properties. As with Housing List lets, allocations are made principally on the basis of housing need. All applicants wishing to be considered for an internal transfer must therefore complete an application form, following which a number of points will be awarded.

2.2.2 All current tenants have the right to apply and be admitted to the Transfer List. However, given the relatively low turnover of stock, it is not possible to guarantee that any offers will be made, and applicants will be made aware of this.

2.2.3 Transfer applicants should also note that the suspensions criteria will be applied to their applications in line with section 5.3 of this policy.

2.2.4 Tenants who are transferring within the Co-operative's stock will be given up to 14 days to occupy their new property and return the keys for their previous property to the office or Concierge Station as agreed. Should the

tenant require any longer than 14 days, rent, calculated at a daily rate, will be charged for each additional day until the keys are handed in.

2.3. Information and Advice

2.3.1 The Co-operative appreciates that allocations systems are complex and detailed and can be difficult for people to understand. Therefore we are committed to provide easy to understand information and advice to applicants or those considering in applying.

2.3.2 The following documents will be made available to all prospective applicants:

- A full allocation policy
- A summarised allocation policy
- An application form
- Details of our stock and turnover to help applicants make a realistic choice about their options
- Details of where to get help from independent information and advice providers.

2.3.3 We encourage all applicants to attend an appointment with a member of staff to complete their application. This will help ensure they get the appropriate advice and that their situation is assessed accurately. In the event they are unable to attend an appointment, an application form will be provided.

2.3.4 Once an application is made and assessed we will update the applicant of the outcome. This will include details of their unique reference number, the level of points awarded and the property types they are being considered for. All applicants can expect the letter confirming the outcome of their application within 5 working days.

2.3.5 Applications where further information is needed to complete an assessment will have their application loaded on a “nil award” while awaiting the required information. A request for the required information will be sent to the applicant with a clear timescale for providing the information and details of how it will affect their application if they do not provide it.

2.3.6 Where an applicant wishes to be considered for wellbeing and housing need points, the assessment of this need will be completed after the basic application has been assessed and an initial points award letter sent. This is to ensure the application is added to our housing or transfer list promptly as these awards can take longer to assess. A letter confirming receipt of the application for wellbeing points will be sent on receipt of the application and an updated award letter will be sent once the assessment is carried out.

2.4. Factors that will not be taken into account

The factors that must not be taken into account when allocating properties are set out in section 20(2) of the 1987 Act (as amended by section 10(3) of the 2001 Act):

The Co-operative will not take into account the following:

- The length of time that an applicant has lived in this area
- Any outstanding liabilities, such as rent, for a tenancy where the applicant was not a tenant
- Any rent or other liabilities for a former tenancy that are no longer outstanding
- Any rent or other liabilities that are not more than 1/12th of the annual amount payable
- Any outstanding liabilities (including council tax arrears) of the applicant or anyone who will live with the applicant which do not relate to the tenancy of the house
- The age of the applicant, provided the applicant is 16 or over, except in the allocation of house which have been designed or adapted for occupation by persons of a particular age group or for those who are, or are in receipt of housing support services for persons of a particular age.
- Income – we will not take into account the income of the applicant or their family

2.5 Provision of Accurate Information

2.5.1 Applicants are expected to give a full and true disclosure of all information with regards to their application and in order to help confirm their circumstances all applicants will be asked to provide 2 pieces of official mail, from different sources, linking them to their application address. They will also need to provide 1 piece of photographic evidence. This mail could take the form of a driving license, passport, utility bill, bank statement, benefit letter or screen shot of online account etc. Photographic evidence also showing an address can be used for both purposes.

2.5.2 If an applicant is found to have provided false information regarding their circumstances, prior to an allocation they will be contacted immediately and their application corrected. They may also be asked to provide further confirmation of their circumstances.

2.5.3 If a tenant is found to have been granted a tenancy due to false information on their application form, the Co-operative will consider taking

action to recover the property and the tenant will be contacted to discuss the situation. A full report of the circumstances and recommendation will be made by the Head of Housing Services to the Director.

2.6. Equal rating of applicants

In line with recommended practice, the allocation system prioritises housing need over time on the list. However, should two applicants have the same points total at the top of the list, the offer will be made to the applicant with the earlier date of application.

2.7. Heritable property

2.7.1 The Co-operative will consider property ownership as part of assessing an applicant's housing needs and their circumstances. This applies to the ownership of heritable property owned by the applicant or a person who normally resides with the applicant.

2.7.2 Heritable property includes land as well as anything built on the land and it can be property currently owned in the UK or abroad.

2.7.3 In the following circumstances heritable property will not be taken into account:

- Where the property has not been let but the owner cannot secure entry to the property e.g. where it is not safe to enter due to structural faults
- Where it is probable that occupying the property will lead to abuse from someone either living in the property or from someone who previously resided with the applicant whether it was at this property or elsewhere
- Where occupation of the property may endanger the health of the occupants and there are no reasonable steps that can be taken by the applicant to prevent the danger

2.8 Offers

2.8.1 There is no limit to the number of offers that can be made to an applicant. However, should one offer be refused the property types will be reviewed in conjunction with the applicant.

2.8.2 Where notice has been given of a tenancy ending and where no major works are anticipated to bring the property up to a lettable standard, a selection will be made on the property before the end of tenancy date. This will allow viewings to begin as soon as possible and will help reduce lost rents

through empty houses.

2.8.2 Where possible pre-allocation selections will be made verbally to confirm if the applicant is interested in the offer. All full offers of tenancy will be made in writing. When an applicant is being made an offer of housing, the offer letter will detail the property details, rent charge and the timescale for responding.

2.9 Appeals

2.9.1 The Co-operative has a clear procedure for dealing with appeals arising from decisions made in the allocations process.

2.9.2 If any applicant is unhappy regarding their application or the treatment they have received then appeals should be made by:

1. Raising it with the Director.
2. If not resolved then the applicant can raise it with (or request personal attendance at) the Performance, Assurance and Risk (PAR) sub-committee.
3. Raising it with the full Management Committee.

Section 3 - Occupancy Standards and Points Categories

3.1 Occupancy standard and property size

3.1.1 The standard below is used to determine the number of bedrooms that an applicant and their household require. No more than 2 people, regardless of age, are expected to share a bedroom.

A separate bedroom is required by:

- A single person aged 16 years or more
- A couple
- Two children of the opposite sex unless one is aged 8 or above
- Two children of the same sex unless there is an 8 year age gap

3.1.2 Applicants will be queued for the size of property that meets their needs as noted on the above table. However due to the limited number of 5 apartment properties applicants will also be queued for a 4 apartment property if they wish.

3.1.3 The Co-operative's appreciates the further difficulties caused for families where more than 2 people have to share a bedroom and in this instance a further 10 points will be awarded for each additional person. The maximum award is 20 points.

3.1.4 If applicants have overnight access to children they can be queued for a property size that provides one bedroom more than they would be required for permanent household members. The option to queue for a property one size more than is needed by the permanent household is at the discretion of the applicant.

3.1.5 There may be circumstances where an applicant is queued for a property with an additional bedroom due to *Wellbeing points assessment* (i.e. an additional room is needed for medical treatment at home or because of a family member is unable to share a bedroom due to a medical condition).

3.2 Points categories

3.2.1 Overcrowding points will be awarded if the applicant is currently occupying a property that is too small for their household as per the occupancy standard in section 3.1.

An unborn child will be considered as part of the household where the birth will result in overcrowding in terms of the above criteria. Pregnancy must be

confirmed in writing from a medical source.

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Per Bedroom short | 90 points |
|-------------------|-----------|

3.2.2 Access To Children: Where an applicant is overcrowded as a result of regular overnight access to children, access points will be awarded as a one-off award. Written proof must be submitted by the applicant that access has been arranged either legally or through an 'in principle' agreement between the two parents. Where such proof cannot be provided or where access arrangements are in dispute between the two parents, access points in respect of children will not be awarded.

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| Access | 40 points |
|--------|-----------|

3.2.3 Under-occupation points will be awarded to all applicants who have a Scottish Secure Tenancy using the same criteria for minimum requirements as with overcrowding: an award of 70 points per bedroom surplus will be awarded for under-occupation. Where the application is for same size accommodation, points for overcrowding or under-occupation will not be awarded, regardless of household composition.

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Per Bedroom Surplus | 70 points |
|---------------------|-----------|

3.2.4 Insecurity of Tenure points will be awarded to applicants who do not have security at their current accommodation. These points will be awarded if the applicants does NOT have:

- a Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement,
- an Assured Tenancy Agreement
- a Private Residential Tenancy
- Ownership of their own home

These points will also be awarded where the applicant's accommodation is at risk and the applicant is not responsible for the situation. In this instance the points would be awarded 12 weeks before the date that the current accommodation needs to be vacated:

- Notice to Quit (non-conduct grounds) has been served
- Tied accommodation is ending as a result of redundancy or retirement
- Repossession notice has been served on an owner occupied home
- Moving on from supported accommodation
- Leaving the armed forces

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Insecurity of Tenure | 60 points |
|----------------------|-----------|

3.2.5 Below Tolerable Standard points will be awarded where the applicant is currently living in a property that is of extremely poor condition or is lacking standard amenities. We will require confirmation of the above before points are awarded. This can involve asking the applicant to provide satisfactory evidence from the Local Authority’s Building Control Department, the Environmental Health Department or their Landlord.

A property is below tolerable standard if it:

- is not structurally stable
- has rising or penetrating damp
- has no satisfactory provision for natural or artificial light, ventilation and heating
- has no adequate supply of both hot and cold water to the bathroom and kitchen
- has no toilet available for the sole use of the occupants
- has no effective system for drainage

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Below Tolerable Standard | 125 points |
|--------------------------|------------|

3.2.6 Move nearer work points will be awarded where there is disruption to lifestyle caused by travelling long distances to the workplace and as such recognises this as an area of housing need.

To alleviate this problem, the Co-operative will award 15 points where an applicant is in employment or about to take up employment and either of the following applies:

- The distance from current residence to work is reduced by moving to West Whitlawburn; or
- Access to transport required for travelling to work is improved by moving to West Whitlawburn.

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Move Nearer work | 15 points |
|------------------|-----------|

Section 4 – Wellbeing and Housing Need Points and Adapted Properties

4.1. Wellbeing and Housing Need Assessments

4.1.1 Wellbeing and Housing Need covers two points' award categories – medical and social point's awards. Both will be awarded on a graded basis and will be applied where an applicant or a member of their application requires rehousing due to the unsuitability of their current accommodation. This could either be as a result of a medical condition or because they are experiencing other difficulties usually associated with social factors other than the property itself.

4.1.2. Wellbeing points will only be awarded where re-housing would alleviate or improve the medical condition, the household's quality of life or the other social factors.

4.1.3 Applicants will be issued with a pro-forma for self-completion. Supporting evidence will at times be required in order to confirm the situation and rehousing needs. Each application will be assessed on its own merits where an applicant or member of the household is affected.

4.1.4 Wellbeing points will be assessed internally by the Co-operative and will be countersigned by two members of staff to ensure all awards are fair and consistent. Recommendations for awards will be based on a comprehensive assessment of the applicant's needs which will take into account:

- The severity of the condition
- The degree of incapacity
- The impact on the household
- The extent that rehousing will benefit the person/household
- Any restrictions on the type of property as a result of the assessment

4.1.5 Any restrictions in property type or adaptations needed will be confirmed in the points award letter. Information will also be given about the likelihood of being housed by the Co-operative given the assessment.

4.1.6 All Wellbeing awards will be reviewed on an annual basis and before any offer is made to ensure the award is still appropriate.

Applicants will only be allocated housing suitable to their needs (e.g. someone who had medical points because of an inability to manage stairs would not be offered a house where they would have to climb stairs (internal and external stairs will be treated in a similar manner)) and someone who is fleeing violence

would not be rehoused in close proximity to the offender.

Medical points:

No distinction is made between medical conditions that are physical in nature and those which relate to mental health. What is important is the severity of the condition and whether re-housing will help it. The presence of a medical condition in itself will not attract points. Where the health need or disability is expected to be short-term, wellbeing points would not be awarded:

- a) Where more than 1 person within an application has a medical condition an assessment of the combined medical needs will be carried out. This will result in one points award.
- b) Where an applicant requires an adapted property but they are in very short supply (e.g. 4 apt MSF with shower adaptation) we would consider the applicant for a property that did not entirely meet their need but would improve their situation and alleviate other needs (e.g. overcrowding).

Social points:

Social points will be awarded to give reasonable preference to other applicants who are experiencing housing and social difficulties because they are living in unsatisfactory housing situations. These situations are usually associated with social factors other than the property itself.

Examples include, but are not restricted to:

- domestic abuse
- other harassment or abuse
- a need for social, community or family support
- looked after and accommodated young people
- kinship carers, fostering or adoption
- leaving the armed forces
- leaving prison

In order to address the unusual circumstances in which social point assessments often involve, this policy is designed with flexibility in mind, which allows each application for social points to be assessed on its own merits, taking all factors into account. Points will be awarded on a graded basis, up to a maximum of 200 points, depending on the severity of the case.

Supporting evidence may be requested in order to aid the accuracy of the

assessment and confirm circumstances, however, this may not be necessary in all cases.

4.2. Wellbeing and Housing Need points categories

4.2.1 There are 3 categories of medical awards:

| | |
|--------|------------|
| High | 200 points |
| Medium | 150 points |
| Low | 100 points |

Sample of Points Levels

High (200) - where an applicant is unable to live independently and access the property due to medical condition and is, in effect, housebound in the current property due to location/stairs (e.g. needs a wheelchair adapted property).

Medium (150) – where an applicant is unable to access property due to internal/external stairs and is unable to bathe independently due to facilities (e.g. needs a property with less stairs and shower adaptation).

Low (100) - where an applicant is unable to share a bedroom due to a medical condition.

4.2.2 There are 4 categories of social points awards. It is not expected that exceptional circumstances will apply on a regular basis and such cases will be subject to committee reporting.

| Category | Definition | No. of Points |
|----------|------------------|---------------|
| A | Extremely severe | 160 – 200 |
| B | Severe | 100 – 150 |
| C | Less severe | 50 – 90 |
| D | Relatively Minor | 20 – 40 |

Sample of Points Levels

Category A - Serious harassment, actual violence or threats of violence, marital /relationship breakdown involving domestic violence, etc., exceptional circumstances, where no other element of housing need exists.

Category B - Where social conditions cause severe problems to the applicant or family members to a lesser degree than extremely severe (i.e. looked after and accommodated young people).

Category C - Circumstances leading to less severe problems move nearer local support where medical need exists, marital/relationship breakdown, severe neighbour problems where the applicant is not causing the problem, kinship care, fostering or adoption.

Category D - Relatively minor problems e.g. move nearer child care facilities, move nearer social, community or family support where no medical need exists.

4.3. Allocation of Adapted Properties

4.3.1 The Co-operative recognises that some people will need an adapted or accessible property and will ensure those properties are offered to those that need the adaptation in the first instance.

4.3.2 If there is no demand for an adapted property on our lists we will contact other housing providers in our area to enquire if they have demand on their lists. In the event that no provider has demand for the adapted property an offer will be made to the applicant with the highest need on our lists.

4.3.3 Where the health need or disability is expected to be short term the applicant would not be considered for an adapted property.

Section 5 - Managing the Lists

5.1. Tenancy References

5.1.1 The Co-operative will seek references from applicant's current and former landlords. References will only be sought in line with General Data Protection Regulation.

5.1.2 We appreciate that private landlords do not always keep tenancy information. If a request is sought from a private landlord and they do not have the appropriate information or they do not respond to the request the applicant will not be penalised.

5.2. Change in Circumstances

5.2.1 Applicants whose circumstances change from their first application must advise the Co-operative of these changes. All changes to an application will be confirmed in writing.

5.2.2 All applications will be checked at the time of allocation and should any changes affect the points level by reducing it, the offer will not proceed unless the new total results in the case remaining at the top of the list.

5.2.3 All applicants will be reviewed on an annual basis and re-assessed as appropriate. Notwithstanding this, any changes advised by the applicant will be processed as they are advised and a new points total calculated.

5.3. Suspensions

5.3.1 The Co-operative will not exclude any applicant aged 16 or over from applying for housing and being assessed using the needs-based points system. However in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to suspend an application. We will only suspend an application where we have robust evidence to support the decision.

5.3.2 An application that is suspended will not receive any offers of housing until certain circumstances have changed, conditions have been met or a given period of time has passed. The application will remain on our list while suspended unless the applicant asks to be removed from the list.

5.3.3 Suspensions will not use the same evidence more than once to impose a suspension when it relates to the same application. E.g. If a suspension is imposed because an applicant abandoned a previous tenancy we will not

suspend again using this reason once the initial suspension has come to an end. However we may impose a further suspension for a different reason.

5.3.4 The Co-operative would expect the number of suspensions to be very low and, in all cases, applicants will be advised of the following:

- The suspension is section 20B (i.e. that it is a statutory suspension)
- The reasons for the suspension
- The implications of the suspension
- The timescale of the suspension including the start and end date
- Any conditions that need to be met to have the suspension removed
- Where to find independent housing and legal advice
- The right to appeal including their right to appeal to the Sheriff Court because they are suspended under section 20B

5.3.5 The same suspension criteria will apply to applicants for internal transfers.

5.3.6 All suspensions will be for a maximum of 36 months. Where there is discretion regarding the timescale the suspension time will be agreed by a Housing Officer and the Head of Housing Services taking into account each individual set of circumstances.

5.3.7 The table below sets out the reasons and circumstances where we will suspend an application and the appropriate timescale.

Suspension Reason

Anti-Social Behaviour

Acts committed by either the applicant or a member of their household.

This includes but is not restricted to:

- Pursuing a course of antisocial conduct such as causing alarm, distress, and nuisance, harassment, towards neighbours, staff, or others. It includes behaving in a violent and aggressive manner.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Order

Criteria and Timescales

Timescale – up to 36 months

Depending on the nature and severity of the behaviour. A course of antisocial behaviour must involve conduct on a least 2 occasions.

Where the applicant has made an application and a pattern of antisocial behaviour is established or being investigated. The application will be suspended.

- Criminal activities relating to a tenancy e.g. drug dealing, prostitution etc.
- Eviction decree for antisocial behaviour
- Extensive damage to current or previous property.

If an applicant has been made an offer and antisocial behaviour is being investigated the offer will be held pending the investigation

If the investigation confirms the antisocial behaviour the offer will be withdrawn and the application suspended.

When assessing the length of the suspension we will take into account:

- the nature, frequency and length of the conduct,
- the extent to which the conduct arises because of acts or omissions of other people rather than the tenant,
- the effect the conduct is having on other people
- the nature of the offence
- whether the behaviour that led to the conviction has had an impact on the those living in or around the property
- any other action taken or could be taken, by the landlord to resolve the situation

In situations where suspending the application may not have a positive outcome we will consider an alternative solution of offering a SSST with support. This decision

will be made on a case by case basis.

Rent Arrears and Tenancy Debts

Debt due by the applicant for either a current or former tenancy (e.g. rechargeable repairs).

The suspension will still be applied if the debt has been written off by the landlord.

The application will not be suspended in the following circumstances:

- the debt does not relate to the tenancy of a house
- the debt has been repaid
- the rent arrears are less than one twelfth of the annual rent (one month's rent)
- a repayment plan is in place and payments for at least a three- month period

Neglecting a Property

A suspension will be applied where the applicant is a current tenant of a council or Registered Social Landlord and has breached their tenancy agreement due to the following:

- Unsatisfactory condition of the property, garden area, willful damage or vandalism.
- Alterations/improvements have been carried out to the property without approval from the landlord.

Timescale – up to 36 months

In the event that an applicant was evicted because of rent arrears/tenancy debts the suspension will be 36 months.

Other suspensions due to rent arrears/tenancy debts will be reviewed after a period of 6 months.

The suspension will be lifted in the event the applicant:

- debt has been repaid in full
- an arrangement to pay off the debt has been kept for a period of 3 months
- the debt has been reduced to less than one twelfth of the annual rent charge

Timescale – up to 36 months

The suspension will be lifted once the applicant's landlord has confirmed they are satisfied that the property has been brought up to an acceptable standard and that any rechargeable repairs in relation to this work have been repaid.

Making a false statement in an application

A suspension will be applied where the applicant has knowingly given false information to gain an advantage over others on any one of the housing lists.

Timescale – up to 36 months

We will look at the circumstances of each case individually and will not suspend the application if the false information does not affect the outcome of the priority assessment.

5.3.8 All suspensions will be reviewed every 6 months to ensure that they are still appropriate and that they are lifted when the time period set has elapsed. We will also monitor the following:

- Number of applications suspended and the reason
- Number of suspension reviews requested by applicants and the outcomes
- Number of appeals and the outcomes
- Number of subsequent requests for reviews of suspensions

5.4. Deferrals

5.4.1 We appreciate in certain circumstances that an applicant may wish to remain on the list but not be made offers. Common reasons for this are health, family and financial circumstances.

5.4.2 If an applicant advises us that they wish to remain on the list but do not want to receive offers, the application will be “deferred”. The application will remain on our list, with their given priority, while deferred.

5.4.3 The deferral will be in place for an agreed period of time. The length of time the application will be deferred will be agreed with the applicant and will depend on their circumstances. While deferred they will be bypassed for offers.

5.4.4 All deferrals will be kept under review to ensure the applications are not deferred indefinitely. Once the applicant asks for the deferral to be lifted, we will review the application to ensure the priority award is still correct and we will consider the applications for offers immediately

5.5 Review of the Lists

5.5.1 The Co-operative will review all applications annually. This will be done on a monthly basis around the anniversary of the application date. This will help to ensure we have up to date information from applicants and will help reduce offers of housing that the applicant may not qualify for or be interested in.

5.5.2 A reminder letter will be sent to all applicants who fail to respond to the initial contact with a response deadline of 4 weeks.

5.5.3 Applicants who fail to respond to the reminder letter will be sent a reminder letter with a second response deadline of 2 weeks.

5.5.4 Applicants who fail to respond to the reminder letter will have their application cancelled and removed from the list. A letter will be sent to confirm the removal.

5.6 Cancelling and Reinstating Applications

5.6.1 The Co-operative will only remove an application from our lists in certain circumstances. These are:

- The applicant asks us to cancel the application
- The death of an applicant
- The applicant repeatedly fails to respond to correspondence e.g. Requests for information, an offer of housing or a review
- The applicant is on the transfer list and is no longer a Co-operative tenant

5.6.2 In the event that an application is removed and an applicant contacts again within a 6 month period, the application will be reinstated with the original date of application and no new application form is required. If the applicant contacts after a 6 month period, a new application is required.

5.7 Timing of Offers

5.7.1 Where notice has been given of a termination of tenancy and no major works are anticipated to bring the property up to a lettable standard, a selection will be made on the property before the end of tenancy date. This will allow viewings to begin as soon as the outgoing tenants leaves and will help reduce lost rents through empty houses.

Section 6 – Delegated Authority (Exceptional Circumstances)

6.1 Process approval and reporting

6.1.1 It is recognised that in exceptional circumstances cases may arise where the points system may not adequately deal with a situation and a separate referral to a partner organisation is not suitable. In such cases, the Head of Housing Services, with the Director's approval, may consider a direct housing allocation, out-with the standard allocations process, taking into account the applicant's exceptional need or the urgency of the situation. In such instances, a report focusing on the circumstances (rather than the allocation) will be retrospectively made to the Management Committee and if appropriate an amendment to the Allocations Policy will be considered.

Section 7 – Reporting and Monitoring and Policy Review

7.1. Measuring the outcomes of the Policy

7.1.1 In order to review the policy effectively, the Management Committee must be able to assess how well the ways in which the policy has been operated accords with the policy aims.

7.1.2 Committee reports will confirm the following:

- Priority is being given to applicants in housing need
- the policy and accompanying practice is contributing positively to the prevention and resolution of homelessness
- the policy is giving priority under the Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions reasonable preference group
- the policy makes best use of properties that become available and in particular makes best use of wheelchair accessible and adapted stock
- the policy enables people with changing needs to find accommodation which better suits their current needs

7.2. Policy Review

7.2.1 The Co-operative will review this policy in 2026 and every three years thereafter. In the case of changes to legislation or significant changes to best practice, the review period may be reduced.

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

| | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------|
| Name of Policy to be assessed | Allocations Policy | New policy or revision of existing? | Revision of existing |
| Person(s) responsible for assessment | Allocations Policy Working Party RH / TB / KAE / KN / KMCL / AA / HA / SM / NC | | |
| Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy. | To allocate our housing stock to those persons and households displaying the highest levels of housing need. | | |
| Who is intended to benefit from the policy? (EG applicants, tenants, staff, contractors) | Housing applicants and tenants | | |
| What outcomes are wanted from this policy? (EG the measurable changes or benefits to members/ tenants / staff) | All applicants and tenants have an equal right and opportunity to access the housing list and that there is no direct or indirect discrimination against any applicant. | | |
| Which groups could be affected by the policy? (note all that apply) | | | |
| Race | X | Gender | X |
| Sexual orientation | X | Gender reassignment | X |
| Age | X | Religion or belief | X |
| Marital status | X | Disability | X |
| Pregnant and Maternity | X | | |
| If the policy is not relevant to any of the equality groups listed above, state why and end the process here. | | | |
| N/A | | | |

Have those affected by the policy / decision been involved?

Consultation with applicants and tenants on the proposed allocations policy will be conducted.

Describe the likely positive or negative impact(s) that the policy could have on the groups identified above.

Positive Impact(s)

Increase opportunities to access housing. Ensure effective communications systems are in place. People in housing need have opportunities to access the housing list

Negative Impact(s)

Having inadequate measures could lead to barriers to accessing housing by people in housing need.

What actions are required to address the impacts arising from this assessment? (This might include: additional data, putting monitoring in place, making adjustments, taking specific action to mitigate any potentially negative impacts)

Information provision in alternative formats and languages as required. Provision of interpreters as required. Ensure staff have appropriate training. Collect data on each of the protected characteristics for both monitoring, and reporting to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Signed:



redacted for security

Job Title: Head of Housing Services

Date: 26 February 2024