



Title	Allocations Policy
Purpose	<p>The Association aims to provide good quality, accessible and affordable housing to those seeking accommodation in the Maryhill and Ruchill areas. It seeks to meet diverse needs, and enable independent living, in inclusive communities where people love to live, work and play.</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and standards that we aim to follow, and our approach to making best use of the available stock by allocating the right size and type of property to those most in need.</p> <p>The Association will comply with relevant legislation and adopt the principles and practices detailed in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.</p>
Scope	<p>The Policy & Performance Committee has delegated responsibility for approving, reviewing and monitoring the outcomes of the policy.</p> <p>The Director of Housing Services holds the lead responsibility for this policy with responsibility for implementation delegated to the Head of Housing.</p> <p>This policy applies to all Board and Committee members, members of staff whether employees of MHA, freelance , casual, or temporary agency staff, irrespective of grade, position or length of service who are responsible for the management and/or monitoring of rent arrears within the Association.</p>
Definitions	<p>For the purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the policy will apply to housing applicants or existing tenants seeking a transfer to another one of the Associations' properties.</p> <p>The policy applies to the management of property owned by the Association and subject to a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) or a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST).</p>
Policy Statement	<p>The Association provides housing suitable for allocation to people with a range of housing needs, including housing for older people. We operate in the Maryhill and Ruchill areas.</p> <p>Any person over the age of 16 can make an application for housing and is entitled to be admitted to the list. All applications for housing must be made via the common housing register, the Glasgow Housing Register</p>

(www.glasgowhousingregister.org).

We aim to offer open and equal access to our housing and to allocate property based on housing need or housing and support needs where applicable. We aim to promote equal opportunities and welcome applications from all people regardless of sex or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, nationality or social origin, religious or political beliefs. We are committed to embracing and valuing diversity amongst the communities in which we work.

To support this and to meet the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter we will carry out pre-tenancy interviews with applicants to provide them with advice and assistance on the range of housing options available to them.

We aim to be fair, consistent, efficient and open in allocating properties to applicants, thus minimising periods where a property is empty. A points system is used as a way of objectively assessing housing need, recognising the needs of applicants and the changing needs of tenants. It aims to reflect our philosophy of offering housing to those in the greatest need whilst creating balanced and stable communities.

We aim to achieve this by enabling applicants to choose where they live, whilst offering housing that is well-matched to their needs and preferences. We will develop procedures which support this, aiming for a minimum of refusals of offers of housing.

We aim to provide good quality information and advice about taking a tenancy so that applicants can make an informed choice and participate in an accessible and straightforward allocations process.

We seek to work with other agencies to enable access to our housing, using formal and informal partnerships where appropriate. This may involve nominations agreements, participating in the common housing register, referral arrangements, management agreements and leases.

We will consult with tenants, applicants and key stakeholders on any changes we propose to make to our Allocations Policy taking into account guidance published by the Scottish Government and the Local Housing Strategy.

We aim to maintain a transparent audit trail of how and why an allocation was made. Our procedures will build in checks and balances to minimise the possibility of inconsistency or discrimination. Through annual reports of performance and activities, and involving stakeholders in periodic reviews of the policy, we aim to be accountable to applicants, tenants and partner agencies.

Staff will respect the confidentiality of personal information at all times. We will only discuss details of an application with third parties with the applicant's prior written consent. We aim to take up tenancy references, with current and previous landlords where possible.

	<p>We aim to encourage applications through widely available information, in a range of formats, key minority languages and through our work with local organisations. We will ask applicants to provide gender, disability and ethnic origin information to help us with monitoring the effectiveness of the policy in achieving its aims.</p> <p>Appendix A to the policy details how the principles set out above will be applied.</p> <p>Appendix B to the policy details the points system used to prioritise applicants for housing.</p> <p>Appendix C to the policy details the local allocations policy in relation to difficult to let properties</p> <p>Legal and Good Practice Requirements:</p> <p>This policy is compliant with the following legislation and good practice guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, 2010 & 2014; • Housing (Scotland) Act 1998 (shared ownership); • Human Rights Act 1998; • Equality Act 2010; • Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003; • Scottish Social Housing Charter; • Management of Offenders et (Scotland) Act 2005 (Multi Public Protection Arrangements – MAPPA).
Approval	Board – January 2020
Policy Owner	<p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Responsible Director: Director of Operations</p>
Review	<p>January 2023</p> <p>The policy may also be reviewed in light of legislation, good practice, or internal structural and process change.</p>

Allocations Policy: Appendix A

Applying the Principles of the Policy in Practice

This document outlines the Association's approach to letting its properties in line with legal and good practice requirements with the aim of allocating its homes to those in the greatest need.

Assessment of Housing Needs:

The housing needs of each application will be assessed in accordance with a points system, detailed in Appendix B.

In line with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, the Association seeks to give priority to applicants in one or more of the following categories:

- Homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- Currently living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- Social housing tenants who are under-occupying their home.

The Association will use the points system to ensure that priority is also given to those applicants who fall into the following categories of need:

- Overcrowding;
- Social and Economic;
- Disability, Health and Support.

Overcrowding and Under Occupation

The occupancy standard set out below is used to determine the number of bedrooms required by the applicant and to determine where overcrowding and under-occupations points should be awarded:

- One living room for sole applicant;
- One double bedroom for applicant (and shared by partner);
- One double bedroom for every two children of the same sex;
- One double bedroom for every two children of different sexes under the age of 8;
- One single bedroom for children of different sexes over the age of 8;
- One single bedroom for children of the same sex over the age of 16;
- One single bedroom for any remaining member of the household.

Points will be awarded for each bedroom unavailable in the applicants' current accommodation.

Where a social housing tenant has accommodation in their present home which is not utilised in terms of the above standard then under occupation points will be awarded for each bedroom not required.

Applicants who are pregnant and who will in the future require an additional bedroom following the birth of the baby will be awarded points for the additional bedroom

required. However, any offers of accommodation to take account of the additional bedroom will not normally be made until after the baby is born.

Tolerable Standard

The Association will give priority to applicants living in unsatisfactory housing conditions. If the property falls below the tolerable standard as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the 2001 Act, additional priority will be awarded. Examples include if the property is damp, has no hot or cold running water, no internal WC or is structurally unstable.

Abandonment

When an allocation is made, the tenant must take entry to the house, occupy and furnish it and use it solely as their only or principal home. Where we have reason to believe a tenancy has been abandoned, we will follow our Abandonment procedure to regain possession of the house. The house will then be re-let in line with our Allocations Policy and Procedures.

Harassment

The Association acknowledges that harassment can take many forms and can occur because of an individual's race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, gender reassignment and a number of health conditions.

Where a housing applicant states that they are experiencing harassment and they appear to be at risk, the Association will, in the case of transfers, take prompt action to safeguard the tenant in their current tenancy. In the case of housing list applicants, the Association will provide advice to housing list applicants to ensure their safety as far as possible and sign-post to the appropriate agencies.

The Association will take reasonable steps to obtain information to verify the allegations and this can be in the form of police reports, reports from the landlord and/or relevant agencies.

Section 5 referrals:

The Association is committed to supporting those households who are assessed as statutorily homeless and will continue to work in partnership with Glasgow City Council and will agree annually the quota of Section 5 cases to be re-housed through the North West Local Lettings Community (or equivalent arrangement).

Transfer Applicants

Tenants of the Association are eligible to apply for a transfer with the Association and to be added to the housing list. Transfer applicants will be required to have held their current tenancy for at least one year before they can be considered for any offers of accommodation. If there has been a change in circumstances for the tenant this qualifying period will not apply. All transfer applicants will be subject to the same

suspension requirements as per housing applicants. In addition, transfer applicants must ensure that their property is maintained to a satisfactory standard to be eligible for an offer of accommodation.

Priority may be given to transfer applicants wishing to move within their own development because of a medical need, or those experiencing under-occupation or overcrowding.

Management Transfers/Special Lets

The Head of Housing/Director of Operations will have discretion to make an offer of housing to a tenant if such a move will enable the Association to deal with an urgent anti-social behaviour (ASB), harassment or specific incident not covered by the policy. Similarly, the Association will consider reciprocal nominations from other housing associations in instances where the re-housing of their tenant is considered to be urgent. Where a decision is made to accept the nomination this must be approved by the Head of Housing/Director of Operations.

Home ownership:

To ensure the best use of its stock, the Association will take home ownership into account when assessing housing applications received from home owners. In assessing any application from a home owner, the Association will not exclude an applicant where the property is:

- Uninhabitable;
- Unsuitable for the needs of the applicant , e.g. an un-adapted property where the applicant is unable to gain access to their home;
- Unsafe for the applicant who may be subject to abuse or harm if they remain in their current home.

The Association may consider granting a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) to homeowners who cannot occupy their home on a short-term basis, for example, to allow for urgent repairs.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Applications will be accepted from refugees and asylum seekers provided that they are over the age of 16. The applicant will be advised that an offer of accommodation cannot be made until they are given refugee status/leave to remain.

Adapted and amenity housing:

Ambulant disabled, adapted or amenity housing will normally be allocated to applicants with specific needs who will benefit from the features of the property available.

Ground floor accommodation will normally be offered to applicants who have a medical condition or disability requiring this type of accommodation.

Minimum Letting Standard

We will let all of our properties in good order and in line with our Letting Standard.

We will provide a copy of our Letting Standard when we make an offer of housing so that the applicant is aware of the standard of accommodation that they can expect from the Association.

Joint Tenancies and Relationship Breakdowns

The Association will consider an application from more than one person where the applicants have stated that they wish to live together as joint tenants and will normally create a joint tenancy unless there is good reason not to do so, e.g. if a person is subject to immigration control.

Where a relationship has broken down, priority will be given to the partner vacating the property and an offer of a 1 or 2 bedroom apartment property will be made. It is expected that the partner who remains in the property must demonstrate a need for the size and type of property.

Tenancy References

The Association will seek references from current or previous landlords and will ask applicants to sign a mandate giving permission for the Association to request a reference.

Where adverse references are received and will result in the suspension of the application the applicant will be informed in writing.

Supporting Evidence

Applicants may be asked to provide additional information to support their application for housing, e.g. a medical letter. Home visits may be carried out by the Association to verify an applicant's circumstances prior to an offer of accommodation being made.

Cancellation and Suspension of Applications

Applications will be cancelled where:

- The applicant has died;
- The applicant has withdrawn their application;
- The applicant has failed to renew their application as part of the waiting list review process;
- The applicant has been satisfactorily re-housed.

The Association will consider suspending an application where:

- The applicant has tenancy-related debts relating to a current or previous tenancy and the level of the debt is in excess of one months' rent and an arrangement to clear the debt has not been maintained for a period of at least

- 3 months;
- False or misleading information has been provided to gain a tenancy with the Association;
- The applicant has engaged in anti-social behaviour (ASB);
- The applicant or a member of their household has a conviction for using their home for criminal activities in the locality of their home;
- The applicant or members of their household or visitors to their property have been involved in ASB in or near their home in the last three years;
- The applicant has previously been evicted;
- The applicant has previously abandoned a tenancy;
- There is a breach of tenancy conditions, e.g. unsatisfactory condition of property, garden, common, vandalism, control of pets etc.;
- The applicant has refused 3 reasonable offers of housing.

Where the suspension is in relation to ASB, harassment, criminal activity or providing false or misleading information, the application will be suspended for a period of 12 months. If the applicant has been involved in further criminal behaviour or acts of ASB it may be necessary to extend the period of suspension. In other circumstances an initial suspension of 3 months will be applied but may be extended if the area of concern has not been addressed by the applicant.

Change of Circumstances

Applicants will be encouraged to notify the Association of any change in their circumstances so that their application may be reassessed accordingly.

Support Needs

Where it is identified that an applicant would benefit from support to sustain their tenancy, the Association will refer applicants to Social Work and/or appropriate support agencies and may delay any offers of accommodation until a clear support plan is in place.

Keeping Pets

Permission must be obtained from the Association before keeping a pet. Dogs are not permitted to be kept in the Association's multi-storey properties.

Tenancy Agreements

The Association will normally issue a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) to all new/transferring tenants. If a new/transferring tenant has been involved in ASB the Association may consider issuing a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST).

From 1 May 2019, the Housing (Scotland) Act will allow the Association to issue a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) to new tenants in cases where there is evidence that the applicant, a member of their household or a visitor has been involved in ASB in or near their home within the last three years. In addition, the Association

will consider issuing a SSST where an applicant has been evicted for ASB or subject to an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) within the last three years. The applicant will have a right of appeal against the issuing of a SSST as a result of ASB.

A SSST will be issued where there is a let required on a short term basis, e.g. if a homeowner needs to move out whilst works are being carried out in their home.

Payment of the Rent

Applicants will normally be expected to pay one months' rent in advance when signing up for their new property. Where the new tenant is reliant on benefits, or on an income comparative to benefit levels, they will normally be asked to pay the equivalent of one weeks' rent in advance.

Lettings quotas:

To support balanced and stable communities the following quotas for allocations targets will be applied for the year ending 31 March 2019 and will be reviewed on an annual basis:

Source	Target
Section 5 referrals	30%
Housing List	35%
Transfer Need	25%
Transfer Aspirational	10%

Mutual Exchanges

The Association is keen that tenants explore all options for moving and will therefore encourage them to consider mutual exchanges as a way of securing alternative accommodation. Mutual exchanges will not normally be permitted during the first 12 months of the tenancy. Permission to exchange will normally be granted providing certain conditions are satisfied including:

- Both landlords agree to the exchange;
- The exchange partner satisfies the eligibility criteria for the size and type of housing they are moving into;
- Both tenants have no outstanding arrears and there have been no other breaches of tenancy in the past 2 years;
- The tenant has maintained the home to a satisfactory standard;
- The Association suffers no significant financial loss as a result of the exchange;
- The property concerned is an adapted property and the incoming tenant did not require the adaptations in the property.

Assignations, Subletting, Joint Tenancies and Succession

Where an application is made by a tenant to assign, sub-let or succeed a tenancy or become a joint tenant the individual concerned must have been living in the home concerned as their main residence for a period of at least 12 months prior to the application.

The 12 month qualifying period only begins when the Association has been formally notified that the individual concerned has moved into the property. The Association may refuse requests for an assignation where the individual would not be given priority under the Allocations Policy or where granting the assignation would lead to under-occupation.

The 12 month qualifying period will not be applied until 1 November 2019 and in the meantime there is no qualifying period for applying to either assign, sub-let or apply for a joint tenancy of your home. In respect of succession where there is an unmarried partner, the home must have been their principal home for at least 6 months before they can qualify to succeed. For family members, the home concerned must have been their principal home at the time of the death of the tenant.

Lodgers

Tenants are required to obtain permission from the Association before taking in a lodger. Permission will not be granted to take in a lodger if it would result in the home becoming overcrowded. Any request to take in a lodger must be submitted in writing setting out who the intended lodger is and the proposed charges that the lodger will pay.

If the tenant is in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Universal Credit the relevant authorities must be advised as the level of entitlement may be reduced. The lodger will not be eligible to succeed the tenancy.

Subletting

Tenants are required to obtain permission from the Association before sub-letting their property. Where permission is granted this will be allowed for no more than one year. The 12 month qualifying period of occupation must be met and the request must be put in writing setting out the details of who will be remaining in the home and the proposed charges including any deposit to be paid. The tenancy will remain in the name of the tenant and the person sub-letting cannot succeed the tenancy. ***The 12 month qualifying period will not apply until 1 November 2019 and until then there will be no qualifying period before a tenant can apply to sub-let their home.***

Local Allocations Policies

It is acknowledged that on some occasions an area or development may require a different approach to letting outside of the general Allocations Policy. Some of these situations are:

- New housing developments;
- An over-concentration of vulnerable households with similar needs;
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB);
- Low demand for an area or certain house types.

In these circumstances the Association will consider an alternative Local Allocations Policy for the particular area or development with approval from the Policy and Performance Committee.

In developing a local lettings plan the Association will set out:

- The objectives of the local lettings plan;
- How the plan will address the issues;
- How long the plan will be in place;
- How local tenants will be involved in the process.

Review of the Housing List

In order to ensure that the information held is up to date and that the applicant is still in need of housing, the Association will carry out an annual review of the housing list. This will be carried out by the Glasgow Housing Register on the Association's behalf.

Failure to respond by the applicant may result in the application being cancelled.

National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders/Multi Agency Public Protection Agencies:

Registered sex offenders are entitled to apply for housing. We recognise the duty of the Association to co-operate in the re-housing of registered sex offenders and through the Information Sharing Protocol we will work collaboratively with statutory bodies on risk assessment and risk management to mitigate any potential risks to the wider community.

Decant accommodation

The Association recognises that there may be occasions where it is necessary to move a tenant temporarily to another home to allow work to be carried out in their property. Tenants may be decanted for the following reasons:

- Planned major work or improvements where the disruption would be too great for the tenant to remain in their home;
- Repair work due to fire, flood or storm damage;
- Work required for health and safety reasons.

Where accommodation is provided by the Association it will be on a 'like for like' basis where possible. Where there is no such accommodation available at the time the Association reserves the right to offer alternative accommodation and this may take

the form of a bed and breakfast or another property outwith the tenant's area of choice. Where the tenant is able to stay with relatives/friends payment of the rent will be suspended for the period of the decant otherwise the tenant remains liable for rent payments for their permanent home during the period of the decant.

The Association will cover the cost of reasonable expenses linked to a decant such as removal costs, subsidence where the tenant is staying in bed and breakfast accommodation and travel costs where the decant accommodation is not located in the Maryhill/Ruchill area.

When the work is complete the tenant must leave the decant accommodation and return to their home.

Granting of tenancies to staff, Board members or their relatives

The offer of a tenancy to an Association Board member, employee or their close relatives is permitted as long as:

- It is in accordance with our Allocations Policy; **and**
- Neither the applicant nor 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.

Appeals

An applicant who feels that their application for housing has been unfairly dealt with has a right of appeal. Any appeals will be dealt with in line the Associations' Complaints Policy.

Appendix B
Points are awarded under the following categories

	No. of points
CATEGORY 1: HOMELESSNESS	
Accepted as statutorily homeless under the terms of the relevant homeless person legislation and referred to the Association with the associated Section 5 documentation.	50
Other homeless, i.e. no fixed place to stay.	20
Unable to continue to live safely in the property because of serious harassment or domestic abuse.	18
In hospital or care setting with no permanent home OR unable to return to former home as not suitable for needs.	18
Living 'care of' family or friends and threatened with homelessness.	18
<p>Due to become homeless within 3 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced sale of property e.g. due to financial difficulties or marital breakdown. • Private tenancy where Notice to Quit has been issued. • Tied accommodation with employment termination date and Notice to Quit (this does not apply if the applicant resigned or was dismissed). • Notice from the Armed Forces that entitlement to occupy service accommodation is due to end. • Closure order, closure for redevelopment or demolition. 	15
[One allocation of points only in this category; if awarded in this category, no points should be awarded in category 2]	
CATEGORY 2: LIMITED PERMANENT HOUSING RIGHTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported temporary housing. • Private short term tenancy/lease. • Single/couple person wishing to establish separate household. • Shared accommodation e.g. HMO, lodger. 	10 6 6 6
CATEGORY 3: OVERCROWDING OR UNDER-OCCUPATION	
<p>Overcrowding For each additional bedroom required for the applicants' household. Children not residing full-time with the applicant are to be included where there is a formal/legal arrangement in place regardless of the number of nights per week the child resides with the applicant. Where children over the age of 8 of the opposite sex are sharing a bedroom.</p>	5 per bedroom 10 per bedroom 10 per bedroom

Where the property is overcrowded by two or more bedrooms.	5 per bedroom
Under-occupation Where the property is under-occupied by one bedroom and the applicant is an RSL tenant.	10 per bedroom
Where the property is under-occupied by two or more bedrooms and the applicant is an RSL tenant.	
CATEGORY 4: UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING CONDITIONS	
Below Tolerable Standard.	12
Additional points may be awarded for the following defects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cooking facilities; No inside WC; No bath or shower; No hot water supply; No central heating; Dampness; Water/rain penetration. 	2 per defect
Sharing facilities with unrelated households.	6
CATEGORY 5: DISABILITY, HEALTH AND SUPPORT	
Disability and health Where the applicant or a member of their household has a disability or health condition and the present property cannot be adapted and re-housing will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> substantially alleviate the situation. significantly improve the situation. 	10 6
Support Where the applicant needs to move to provide support to a family member and lives more than 5 miles away: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> essential support – personal care. desirable support – assistance with day to day tasks. 	4 2
Applicant unable to maintain garden of current property due to disability or health condition and not eligible for assisted garden scheme (applying for property without this responsibility).	4
CATEGORY 6: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS	
Harassment, abuse, domestic violence Serious and persistent. Intermittent, verbal.	10 6
Travel to work, education or amenities Current home is more than 1 hours' travel distance from place of employment by either public transport or car.	4

Transfer Applications.	2
Economic Current housing costs are unaffordable (>1.5 times the average MHA rent for size of property needed) and income is less than the national average.	6
Applicant is on Housing Benefit which is subject to a rent cap and the Association is able to offer a property within the rent cap level.	6
Transfer applicant.	2

Appendix C - Local allocations Policy: Difficult to Let/Under Occupation

Under Occupation

We will consider under occupation of our difficult to let properties under the following circumstances;

Where a property or group of properties meet one of the following criteria

- A small or non-existent waiting list for the property
- Tenancy offers are frequently refused for reasons other than personal reasons
- Higher than normal turnover for a property in an area

These are the criteria for a property to be considered difficult to let in the ARC guidelines.

We will consider under occupation of difficult to let properties where the relevant lists (transfer lists, waiting lists and Section 5 referrals) have been checked for applicants and no applicant requiring the property size has accepted the property.

We will under occupy the properties by no more than one bedroom

We will update our list of difficult to let properties annually based on the above criteria in April each year at the time of our ARC submission and a list of eligible properties will be appended to our procedure notes.

We will also consider under occupying a property which does not appear on our list of difficult to let properties where the above criteria have been met and we are unable to let the property within our normal timescales. The under occupation of any property which is not on our difficult to let list must be agreed by the Head of Housing.

We will record the number of difficult to let properties which are under occupied each year and report this annually to the Operational Team Meeting.

Delivering enhanced void works

Where a property is proving difficult to let, we will consider offering enhanced void works such as redecoration.

This will be agreed by the Housing Managers and the Property Manager on the recommendation of the Housing Officer.

Advertising Properties

Where we have a small or non-existent waiting list for certain types of properties or properties in certain areas, we will consider using different methods of attracting applicants including social media, advertising through local lettings agents or forming partnerships with other agencies.