

Ardenglen Housing Association can provide this policy on request, in larger print, in Braille, in audio format or in other non-written format, and in a variety of languages, as appropriate.



# Allocations Policy

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Allocations Policy</b>
<b>Policy Author:</b>	<b>Pamela Forrest</b>
<b>Date of Approval:</b>	<b>23/04/2019</b>
<b>Date for Next Scheduled Review:</b>	<b>23/04/2022</b>
<b>Review Body:</b>	<b>Allocations sub-committee</b>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Complete:</b>	<b>In progress</b>
<b>Policy Published on Web:</b>	
<b>Scottish Social Housing Charter Standard</b>	<b>Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11</b>
<b>Scottish Housing Regulator Standard:</b>	
<b>Scottish Housing Regulator Guidance:</b>	

# Allocations Policy

## Contents Page

- SECTION 1 – Introduction, aims & objectives
- SECTION 2 – Legal and statutory requirements
- SECTION 3 – Equal opportunities
- SECTION 4 – Applying to the Association for a house
- SECTION 5 – Ardenglen’s housing list
- SECTION 6 – How we decide your priority for rehousing
- SECTION 7 – Dealing with emergency cases
- SECTION 8 – Applicants with support needs
- SECTION 9 – Community safety
- SECTION 10 – How we let our houses
- SECTION 11 – Lettings promotions
- SECTION 12 – Responding to homelessness
- SECTION 13 – Special lets
- SECTION 14 – Accountable decision-making
- SECTION 15 – Incentives to move
- SECTION 16 – Balancing Individual and community needs
- SECTION 17 – Consultation
- SECTION 18 – Complaints and appeals
- APPENDIX 1 – Points system and allocation of points
- APPENDIX 2 – Suspensions from offers of housing

## **Section 1**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1 Ardenglen is a community based Housing Association operating primarily in the South of Glasgow. At the time of writing we own approximately 959 properties. Of these, 541 are rehabilitated tenemental stock, while the remaining are new build houses, cottage flats and tenements.
- 1.2 The remit of this policy is to explain how we manage access to our housing list, and how we let our houses.
- 1.1 The Association's aim is to provide attractive and affordable rented housing, in safe neighbourhood's that people want to stay in.

### **Objectives**

- 1.2 The objectives of our policy are:
- To comply with all legislation and statutory guidance relating to housing allocations;
  - To monitor performance in relation to access and lettings
  - To make it easy for people to get information about our houses and to apply to us for a house;
  - To provide equal access and opportunities for individuals and for all sections of the community;
  - To let our houses mainly to people with high levels of need, while also providing some opportunities for existing tenants to move within the area to the housing of their choice;
  - To help make our area a sustainable and stable community;
  - To make the best use of our houses, by matching houses of different types and sizes in the first instance to the people who will benefit the most;
  - To support Glasgow City Council and other agencies in addressing homelessness including meeting the needs of other vulnerable people;
  - To be clear and objective when we make decisions;

## **2. Legal and regulatory requirements**

2.1 We will assess housing applications and let our houses in line with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements. We have taken account of some of these obligations throughout this Policy and in our working procedures.

2.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 requires us to:

- Provide open access to our housing list.
- Give reasonable preference, when we are letting houses, to:
  - Homeless persons (and persons threatened with homelessness) with unmet housing needs; and
  - People living in unsatisfactory housing conditions with unmet housing needs
  - Social housing tenants who are under-occupying their home
- Take no account of certain factors (such as applicants' age, income, length of residence in our area) when we are letting houses.
- Consult with applicants, tenants and any registered tenants organisations when we make, alter or review our allocations policy.
- Publish our rules for letting houses and provide a full summary free of charge of our allocations policy to anyone who asks for it.
- Provide Glasgow City Council with access to some of our houses, for people who the Council has assessed as being homeless.

In addition we will;

- Meet with all other relevant law such as law relating to data protection, equal opportunities, family law and relevant freedom of information legislation.

2.3 We may offer a tenancy to past and present employees, board members, and close relatives of these people, but only in line with the Scottish Housing Regulator's guidelines. These guidelines are designed to make sure we consider applications fairly, and that nobody receives special treatment as a result of their connections with us.

2.4 The guidelines are as follows;

- Offers are 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

2.5 The policy also takes account of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Scottish Housing Regulator uses the outcomes and standards in the Charter

to assess the performance of social landlords. The key outcomes that have been considered in the development of this policy are:

- **Outcome 1** – Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognized, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.
- **Outcome 2** – 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.
- **Outcome 3** – Social landlords manage their business so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.
- **Outcome 7** - People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them
- **Outcome 8** - Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.
- **Outcome 9** - People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.
- **Outcome 10** - 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 of being housed.
- **Outcome 11**- Social landlords ensure that 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 the other organisations.

### 3. **Equal Opportunities**

3.1 We promote allocation services that eliminate unlawful and unfair forms of discrimination, as well as promoting a range of equality objectives.

3.2 Examples of these objectives are:

- Completing an equality impact assessment of the allocations policy and all related documentation and practices.

- Publicising our housing to all sections of the community using appropriate formats, for example, using larger print for visually impaired people.
- Make sure our staff understand how factors such as race, disability and sexual orientation can affect individuals' housing needs, and that they respond sensitively to individuals' circumstances
- Monitoring access to the housing list and to our houses for different groups
- Providing people who experience harassment and/or abuse with access to quality information regarding their housing options.

## 4. **Applying to the Association for a House**

### **Who can apply?**

- 4.1 Anyone aged sixteen or over who applies to us will be placed on the Association's housing list.
- 4.2 Asylum seekers are entitled to be admitted to the housing list but they have no right to be given a full or short Scottish secure tenancy.
- 4.3 Mutual exchanges can help people who want to move, but who don't have enough priority to be re-housed under the Allocations Policy.
- 4.4 If you want to exchange your house with another tenant, you do not need to join the housing list to do this.
- Mutual exchanges can help people who want to move, but who don't have enough priority to be re-housed under the Allocations Policy.
  - We have a separate policy on mutual exchanges; please ask for more information if you are interested.

### **How to apply**

- 4.5 To be placed onto our housing list you must complete a housing option and solutions interview (HOSI) which involves a face to face interview and completion of an application form.
- 4.6 If you are unable to attend the office for a HOSI interview we will conduct the interview over the telephone or we may visit you at home. This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled people, as appropriate.
- 4.6.1 The HOSI interview gives you access to our waiting list and will address your housing prospects and about how to address your unmet housing need.

### **Other ways to get a house**

4.7 You can also be considered for housing from Ardenglen if you are:

- Referred to us by Glasgow City Council as homeless
- Referred to us by another agency that we have a re-housing agreement with.

## 5. **Ardenglen's Housing List**

### **Putting your application on the Housing List**

5.1 Following your HOSI interview staff will provide you with a personal action plan detailing any housing options that were discussed for you to consider and take forward for action.

5.2 Information taken in your HOSI interview will allow us to assess:

- Whether your present housing meets your needs
- What type of house you need
- Whether you have any particular needs such as a ground floor or adapted house

5.3 An application will be loaded onto our waiting list and we will write to you, normally within 10 days, to tell you how we have assessed your application.

5.4 Our letter will tell you how many points we have given your application and how we have worked these out.

5.5 We will provide our most up to date information on turnover of properties in the last year.

5.6 Our letter will also tell you what your position on the waiting list is. It is important to note that your position on the list may change as applicants in greater need apply.

### **Applications suspended from offers**

5.7 Offers may be suspended if you meet any of the circumstances described within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended).

5.8 A suspension means you are on the housing list, but you will not be considered for offers for a specified length of time, or until we receive more information, or until your circumstances change.

5.9 The main reasons for putting a housing application on hold may include:

### **Reasons for suspension**

- You owe us, or another landlord, a tenancy related debt which is more than one month's rent, and you have not kept to a repayment arrangement for a 3 month period
- You or a member of your household have behaved in an anti-social manner
- You have given false information on your application form
- Failing to adhere to tenancy conditions or neglecting a property
- Recovery of possession by court order
- Abandonment of a previous property
- Refusal of previous offers
- You refuse housing support after a risk assessment shows that support is required to maintain a tenancy
- Risk management arrangements not satisfactory to the Association for applicants who are registered sex offenders

5.10 The Association aims to keep suspensions to a minimum and will assess each case individually. We will always tell you if we have suspended you from offers:

- what the reasons are
- what needs to happen before the suspension can be lifted
- rights of appeal

5.11 Full information about suspended housing applications is provided at the end of the Allocations Policy (see Appendix 2).

### **Annual Waiting List Review**

5.12 We will contact you on a yearly basis to find out whether or not you wish to remain on our housing list for rehousing and whether any of your circumstances have changed. Any changes could affect your chances of being re-housed.

5.13 We will attempt to contact you on 2 separate occasions. The variety of contact will include text, phone, letter and email.

5.14 If you fail to response to our contact attempts a cancellation letter will be sent giving you a final opportunity to respond and remain on our housing list

### **Cancelling your housing application**

5.15 We will remove your application from our housing list in the following circumstances:



- If you ask us to do this
- If you have been adequately re-housed
- If mail we send to you is returned undeliverable
- If you do not respond to our annual review
- If we attempt to contact you on more than 3 occasions and you fail to respond

5.16 If we cancel your application, you can contact us to re-apply at any time. A housing options solutions interview (HOSI) may be required if your circumstances have changed. Your date of application will be the date that you have re-applied to our housing list.

### **Data protection law**

5.17 In line with specific data protection law, we only keep personal information for specific periods.

5.18 We will keep cancelled applicants details on our system for 12 months after the cancellation date to allow for applicants to contact us during the 12 month period to have their application re-instated.

5.19 After the 12 month period we will remove the applicants details from our records

## **6. Housing Priority**

6.1 The Association decides which applicants have priority for re-housing, based on legal requirements and their housing needs.

6.2 We place applicants into different “lettings categories”, shown in the box below. We then decide who has the most priority for re-housing in each category, based on their needs and their areas of choice;

<b>Lettings Category</b>	<b>Who this category covers</b>	<b>How we decide who has priority for re-housing</b>
<b>Housing list</b>	People who are not already Ardenglen tenants who apply to us for a house	Ardenglen points system
<b>Internal transfer (needs-based)</b>	People who are already Ardenglen tenants who apply for a move to another house, for example because their current home is no longer suitable	Ardenglen points system
<b>Internal</b>	People who are already	Date order of application

Lettings Category	Who this category covers	How we decide who has priority for re-housing
<b>transfer (aspirational move)</b>	Ardenglen tenants, who want to move to another house.  We let a small proportion of our houses in this way, because it helps make Ardenglen a more stable community	(zero points applicants only)
<b>Homeless referrals</b>	People who Glasgow City Council passes to us as homeless and eligible for permanent re-housing under the law	Referral agreement with the Council (we have a legal duty to re-house people passed to us by the Council)
<b>Other referrals</b>	People passed to us for re-housing under agreements with other landlords or agencies. This usually covers people who need housing and support.	Any referral arrangements we make with other agencies
<b>Emergency cases</b>	People who need re-housing as a matter of emergency, for example because their life or safety are at risk, or because their present home has been affected by fire, flooding etc	On an individual basis

### **Eligibility for aspirational moves**

- 6.3 We recognise that people don't always get their preferred type of house when they first become an Ardenglen tenant. For example, we know that some tenants living in tenements would ideally choose to live in a house with its own entrance or garden.
- 6.4 If you are already an Ardenglen tenant and have no housing need but aspire to live in a different house type you can apply for an aspirational move.
- 6.5 Aspirational lets are decided on the date of application rather than housing need.
- 6.6 We only let a small number of houses a year in this way but we believe that aspirational moves make our area a stable place to live and keep already happy residents living in our area here for the long term.

### **Relationship breakdown**

- 6.7 If you live with somebody and your relationship has broken down, you can join the housing list. We will provide advice and help on your rights. If you

have made a joint application with a former partner, we will give each partner separate points according to their new housing circumstances.

### **Annual Letting plan**

6.8 We operate a target system of 40 percent to Glasgow City Council for homeless applicants, 35 percent to waiting list , 20 percent to internal transfers and 5 percent for other referrals or emergency cases

6.9 The target in the Annual Lettings Plan will be a guideline rather than fixed quotas. For example:

- If the City Council refers more homeless households to us for re-housing than expected, we will provide accommodation even if this would mean exceeding the target set for lets to homeless households.

6.10 We will not let our houses on a strict rotation basis (for example every fifth house to an internal transfer applicant).

- Instead, we will look at the potential each individual vacancy has to address our overall policy objectives.
- This means that meeting the Lettings Plan targets will be measured for all lets over the course of the year, so the targets will not be used in a mechanistic way to decide which category individual houses will be let to.

6.11 We will publicise our lettings plans to local agencies and people on our housing list.

### **The Association's points system**

6.12 The Association uses a points system to work out the needs of applicants. The points system is shown in full at the end of this Policy; you can also read a summary in our "Allocating our houses" leaflet.

6.13 These are the main types of housing needs for which you can get points:

- You are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- You do not have secure accommodation
- You are living with family or friends and need a permanent home of your own
- Your present accommodation is in poor condition, or does not have basic facilities
- Your present accommodation is overcrowded, or it is too big for your needs
- Your present home is unsuitable due to inaccessibility reasons
- You cannot continue to live in your present home because of domestic

abuse or serious harassment

- You need to move for personal reasons. For example, if you need to give care and support to a family member, or to receive care and support yourself; or if you want to live closer to work or to a college or training course.

### **What size and type of house can you be considered for?**

- 6.14 We put your application on the housing list according to the type and size of the house that you need. This helps make sure that each house is let to a household that will make the best use of the house.
- 6.15 We normally carry out home visits before your name comes to the top of the housing list.
- 6.16 Our policy is that no more than two people should have to share a bedroom. We then work out the number of rooms you need as follows, based on who will be living permanently in your household.

Your household should have access to a living room plus:

- One bedroom for couples/partners (of the same or opposite sex)
- One bedroom for single adults/parents;
- One bedroom for the only child in a household;
- One bedroom for a person over 14 years old
- Or if your household has more than one child:
  - One bedroom for two children of different sexes after the older child reaches 10 years old
  - One bedroom for children of same sex, after the older child reaches 14 (unless there is a 10 years age gap in which case a bedroom each)

These are the normal rules we use. In some cases, your needs or your preferences may be different. For example, you may have older teenagers of the same sex who are happy to share a bedroom. Or you may have younger children who cannot share a bedroom for health-related reasons.

If you prefer to be considered for a different size of house than usual, you should let us know. We will take account of your preferences wherever possible.

- 6.17 **We use the same guidelines to work out if you are overcrowded in your present accommodation.**

- If your accommodation has a box room or a bed recess, we will not normally count this as a bedroom unless there is a window and there is enough space to fit and use a bed, a small wardrobe and a chest of drawers.
- If your present accommodation is large enough for your own needs but too small because you have access to children who do not live with you permanently, you can receive overcrowding points for one bedroom only.
- If you are still living with a former partner and there is only one bedroom available for both of you, you can receive overcrowding points.

**6.18 We will be flexible in applying the guidelines about whether you are overcrowded and the size of house you can be considered for, if your circumstances show that there are good reasons for doing this.**

For example, we will consider you for a house with one extra bedroom if:

- You need this for a medical reason (we may also take account of this in working out overcrowding points, depending on your household's circumstances)
- You need a ground floor house for medical reasons, and we can only meet your needs by offering you a house with an extra room
- Someone living in your household is pregnant
- You are a disabled person and/or need support, and need an extra room for an overnight carer
- You have an arrangement giving you access to children (including grandchildren) who do not live with you permanently.
- You provide foster care, or you have been approved to provide foster care or to adopt children in the near future

Please note that we will normally allow a maximum of one extra bedroom if you have access to children or want to provide foster care, regardless of the number of children involved, and their ages and sexes.

If you want to be considered for a larger house than normal for any of these reasons, we will usually ask you to provide information in support of this part of your application.

**6.19 We will not normally offer a house if it is too small for your household.**

- We will only consider doing this if you are already overcrowded and the house on offer would improve your situation.
- If you are re-housed in this way, you can stay on the housing list for a bigger house. Your points will be changed, based on your new living situation.

**Medical priority**

6.20 If you need to be re-housed for medical reasons:

- We may ask for independent confirmation of your condition and your rehousing requirements, for example by asking your permission to contact your GP or consultant.
- We will only offer you housing that is compatible with your needs, for example ground floor accommodation with no stairs.
- We may work in partnership with you and relevant agencies to consider reasonable adjustments that may allow the existing home to become accessible.

## 7. Dealing with emergency cases

7.1 Our points system gives priority to people who are the victims of serious harassment or domestic abuse, who need to be re-housed as a matter of emergency. But as a relatively small landlord, we may not always be able to provide immediate help in such cases.

### **Serious harassment**

7.2 Serious harassment can take different forms including violence, threats of violence, unprovoked assault and/or hate crimes (such as racial harassment, harassment against people with mental health problems, disabled people, gay, lesbian or transgender people or people with HIV).

7.3 We will work closely with the Police and other agencies to take action against any of our tenants who are the perpetrators of such harassment. We will also support victims if they wish to be re-housed. We will adopt a position of belief and award re-housing points if an applicant tells us that they have suffered serious harassment and need to be re-housed because they feel their life or safety is at risk, or if it is having a serious adverse effect on their ability to cope with living in their present situation. If further investigations show that the level of points awarded is unjustified, we will review the assessment

7.4 If the applicant has not already made a homeless application or contacted the police or a victim support agency, we will provide advice and assistance about how they can do this.

### **Domestic abuse**

7.5 The Association will use its best efforts to assist in the re-housing of people experiencing domestic abuse. We will do this whether the abuse is physical, sexual or emotional; and whether the victim is male or female.

7.6 We will adopt a position of belief if somebody tells us they are experiencing abuse. We recognise that safety is paramount and will always respect the confidentiality of information to preserve victims' safety. Where appropriate,

and with the victim's agreement, we will request assistance from the Council's homelessness team or other suitable agencies like Women's Aid to provide emergency accommodation.

### **Owner Occupiers**

- 7.7 The Association accepts applications from owner occupiers. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 requires us to give owners priority points in the following circumstances;
- In cases where the property has not been let, but the owner cannot secure entry to the property. This could for example be where it is not safe to enter the property due to severe structural faults or where there are squatters living in the property;
  - Where it is probable that occupying the property will lead to abuse from someone currently living in the property;
  - Where it is probable that occupying the property will lead to abuse from someone who previously resided with the applicant whether in that property or elsewhere; and
  - 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 that danger.
- 7.8 In addition we will give owners priority points for overcrowding their property or wishing to move to give or receive support.
- 7.9 We may offer owner occupiers whose housing needs are temporary a short Scottish secure tenancy. For example this might be needed during structural work to their home.
- 7.10 Owners will be expected to sell their property once a permanent tenancy has been offered.

## **8. Applicants with Support Needs**

- 8.1 The Association will enter into referral arrangements with other agencies to provide re-housing for people seeking to live more independently within the community. The Board will approve which agencies we work with for this purpose, with individual re-housing decisions then delegated to the Operations Manager.
- 8.2 This includes working with organisations that provide advice and support in respect of accessible housing for disabled people
- 8.3 In addition, people who need support can apply to us direct. If an applicant needs support in order to sustain a tenancy, but there are no support arrangements in place, we will seek wherever possible to contact appropriate support agencies, with the applicant's consent.

8.4 If no support arrangements can be agreed, or an applicant does not wish to receive support, we will assess whether it is reasonable in all of the circumstances to make an offer of housing. Our assessment will have regard to:

- The applicant's current circumstances
- The future sustainability of the tenancy
- Any risks to the applicant or to others if a tenancy was granted without support.

8.5 If we decide that it would not be appropriate to give a tenancy without support being in place, we will tell the applicant the reasons for our decision, and advise them of their right to appeal against the decision.

## 9. **Community safety**

9.1 People who are registered sex offenders must inform the Association of this fact when they apply for housing.

9.2 This information will be processed in the strictest of confidence.

9.3 The Association will only consider re-housing sex offenders when agreed protocols with the local authority are in place, and these allow us to be satisfied that risks to community safety will be properly identified and managed.

## 10. **How we let our houses**

### **Deciding who will receive an offer**

10.1 **Being on the housing list does not mean that we will always be able to make you an offer.**

- Receiving an offer depends on your housing need, who else is waiting to be re-housed at the same time as you, and how many houses become available.
- So you will not necessarily move up the housing list just because of how long you have been waiting.

10.2 When a property becomes available, we will let it in line with this Policy. There are three main steps involved when we let a house.

### **Step 1: Which category of applicant will be offered the house?**

10.3 We will decide which category of applicant the house will be offered to.



10.4 In making this decision, we will take account of our Annual Lettings Plan quota and how to make the best use of our housing

**Step 2: Which applicant in the chosen category will be offered the house?**

10.5 We will normally select the applicant with the highest priority, taking account of who is waiting for that size and type of house.

- If a house has been specially designed or adapted for a person with mobility problems, we will consider applicants with medical priority ahead of any other applicants.
- If a house is being let to a homeless person referred by the Council, we will base our decision on the criteria specified in the referral.
- If a house is being let to the housing list or to an internal transfer applicant, we will normally offer the house to the applicant with the most points. If two or more people have the same number of points, we will normally offer the house to the applicant who has been on the list the longest.
- If a house is being let to the aspirational transfer applicant, we will offer the house to the person who has been waiting the longest.

10.6 **Step 3: Making an offer of housing**

10.7 Before making an offer of housing, we aim to carry out a home visit or interview for all applicants close to the top of each category on the housing list. This should mean that we have up to date information, before we reach the stage of making a firm offer of a house.

10.8 The purpose of a home visit is to make sure that your housing needs and living circumstances are still the same as when you sent in your application. You can also tell us at the home visit whether there are any areas you don't want to be considered for, when we are making offers in the future.

10.9 The checks we carry out at home visit stage will depend on your circumstances. But we will always need to check information about:

- Proof of residency at the address you are applying from
- The household composition and living circumstances of the people included in the housing application

10.10 If relevant, we will also ask for a tenancy report from any previous landlords.

10.11 Your points may be changed following a home visit, either upwards or downwards. If we find that you have given us false information, we may write to you telling you that your application has been suspended and that you will not be considered for an offer for a fixed period of time.

10.12 Once we have made a decision about who to let a property to, we will:

- Give you a written offer of the house
- Arrange for you to view the house
- Give you two days to decide whether or not you wish to accept the offer
- Meet with you to explain and sign your tenancy agreement or, if you turn the offer down, offer the house to the next applicant

10.13 To maximise your rights, our general policy is to provide a Scottish Secure Tenancy when we offer you a house. We may offer you a different type of tenancy (a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy) in the circumstances set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. If we do this, we will explain fully the reasons for this, and what this means.

## 11. Lettings Promotions

11.1 While most of our properties are popular, there are lower levels of demand for some of them.

11.2 If we know from past experience that a house is likely to prove less popular, we may carry out a special promotion to ensure that the house is let to somebody in housing need as soon as possible.

11.3 We may also use special promotions in other circumstances. For example, if we know that a property is suitable for applicants with particular needs.

11.4 Special promotions will normally involve:

- Sending details of the vacancy to everyone waiting for that size of house
- Inviting applicants to register an interest in being considered for the property
- Holding viewings
- Allocating the house to the interested applicant who has the highest level of need under the points system

11.5 For harder to let properties, we may relax our usual rules on house sizes and allow the house to be “under occupied” by an applicant who is willing to accept it.

11.6 If a house is proving difficult to let, we may also contact other agencies for referrals of suitable candidates.

## 12. Responding to Homelessness

12.1 We have agreed referral procedures with Glasgow City Council, to help the Council meet its legal obligations towards homeless people. We have a legal duty to provide permanent accommodation, where the Council refers

people to us for this purpose. In responding to referrals, we will offer accommodation that meets the specified needs as soon as a suitable property becomes available.

12.2 We will make sure that homeless applicants are treated fairly in relation to the quality of offers they receive and that the prospects of new tenancies being sustained are maximised. We will do this by:

- Working with the Council and the applicant, to clearly identify the applicant's re-housing needs (including any medical, support or social needs)
- Matching our offer, as far as possible, to the applicant's needs and preferences
- Monitoring the re-housing outcomes for individual households and for homeless households as a whole, to ensure that they are receiving fair access to all of our house types and stock areas.

12.3 People who are homeless or threatened with immediate homelessness may also approach the Association direct. In these cases, we will provide advice and assistance, by referring the applicant to the Council.

### 13. **Special lets**

13.1 In very exceptional circumstances, we may consider allocating a property to respond to a situation that is not provided for in the Allocations Policy. We will only do this if there is an urgent and demonstrable need.

13.2 Decisions will be approved by the Operations Manager and endorsed by the Director of Operations, based on a fully documented case for the proposed decision.

### 14. **Accountable decision-making**

14.1 Our staff will maintain a clear record of how decisions have been made. We will ensure that:

- Points decisions at application stage and lettings decisions at offer stage are checked by a second member of staff.
- The Operations Manager will regularly review lettings decisions for quality assurance and compliance purposes.

### 15. **Incentives to move**

15.1 The Association offers incentives to move to internal transfer applicants.

15.2 This is to make the best use of our housing stock and free up bigger properties for housing list applicants

- 15.3 Incentives are given in the form of decoration vouchers
- 15.4 The calculation of vouchers will be taken from our decoration policy and is dependent on the size of the new property and will be awarded for the full property
- 15.5 Vouchers can be taken in the form of a full property paint pack or cash voucher to the same value which can be spent at the Crown decorating centre.

## 16. **Balancing Individual and community needs**

- 16.1 Our policy allows our staff to apply their professional judgement in a reasonable way, so that wider aims can also be addressed when lettings decisions are being made. For example, our policy aims to have sustainable tenancies and a stable, balanced community.
- 16.2 The following examples are not exhaustive, but illustrate the factors that may be considered in deciding which lettings category to allocate a property to, and which applicant to select:
- Management issues (for example child density, potential clashes of lifestyle between tenants, how to maximise the prospects of a sustainable tenancy for vulnerable people)
  - Whether a property has physical features that make it particularly suitable for one type of applicant (for example, an applicant with a disability or medical needs)
  - Whether the location of a property makes it particularly suitable for an applicant providing or receiving essential support from a family member living nearby
  - The frequency with which a particular type of property becomes available and the likelihood of suitable offers in future for a household with particular needs.
- 16.3 We will ensure that decisions of this nature are made fairly and transparently:
- We will record for audit purposes the reasons for selecting a particular applicant if they were not at the top of the housing list;

## 17. **Consultation**

- 17.1 This policy has been reviewed taking account of the views of tenants, applicants and any other interested parties.
- 17.2 We invited tenants and applicants to participate in a focus group to help us plan our consultation process

- 17.3 We invited tenants and applicants to complete a survey on the various changes we could make to the policy
- 17.4 We held drop in sessions to answer any questions about our survey
- 17.5 We met with our focus group to finalise the content of our draft policy
- 17.6 A full report on our consultation process is available on request and is published on our website

## **Appeals and complaints**

- 17.7 You have the right to appeal:
- If you disagree with the points we give to your application
  - If we suspend you from receiving offers
  - If you think we have not followed our Allocations Policy in dealing with your application.
- 17.8 You can raise your concerns informally with the member of staff you have been dealing with, or you can ask for a formal review of your case by our Senior Housing Officer.
- 17.9 If you are dissatisfied with how we have considered your appeal or about the standard of service you have received, you can make a complaint using Ardenglen's complaints procedure. This is available from our office.
- 17.10 Having used our complaints and appeal procedure, you can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman if you wish to have your complaint considered by an independent body. Details are available from our office or by contacting the Ombudsman direct

# Appendix 1

## Ardenglen's Points System

### Introduction

1. Ardenglen uses a points system for all housing applications, except for:
  - People referred to us by Glasgow City Council as homeless, where the Council has a legal duty to secure permanent re-housing
  - Ardenglen tenants who have registered for an aspirational housing transfer
  - People who are referred to us by other agencies, under re-housing agreements that Ardenglen has with them.
  
2. This part of the Policy shows the points you can be considered for, and how we make decisions about each type of points.
  
3. Please remember that we will always check your points before we make you an offer of housing. So we may take away points if you have given us incorrect information.

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS
<p><b>Please note that every applicant is required to provide proof of identity and proof of residence before an offer of accommodation can be made.</b></p>	
<p><b>Homeless Persons and persons threatened with homelessness and who have unmet housing needs</b></p> <p>Where evidence is provided you can qualify for points at this level</p>	
<p><b>Homeless persons will be signposted to Glasgow City Council for assessment and advice. We re-house homeless applicants from referrals received from Glasgow City Council.</b></p> <p><b>You are threatened with homelessness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– You are the tenant of a private landlord and your landlord has served you with a Notice to Quit and you must leave within the next two months.</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– You live in tied, armed forces, or supported accommodation and have been told you must leave within the next 2 months.</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p><b>You do not have secure accommodation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– You are living in temporary accommodation (such as a hostel, caravan, bed</li> </ul>	<p><b>40</b></p> <p><b>40</b></p> <p><b>20</b></p>

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS
<p>and breakfast or other type of short stay accommodation)</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>- You have secure accommodation but you cannot reasonably continue to live in it. For example, you live with your partner or spouse and the relationship has permanently broken down.</p> <p><b>You are living with another household and need a permanent home of your own</b></p> <p>– You are living “care of” another household (for example, with friends or relatives other than your parents) or you have no fixed abode and are between addresses.</p> <p><b>You are living with family and need a permanent home of your own</b></p> <p>– You are living “care of” an immediate family member (for example, you’re parents or partner’s parents)</p> <p><b>You left secure accommodation immediately prior to your housing application and placed yourself in a worse housing situation that is not secure</b></p> <p>You have left accommodation either in the UK or outside of the UK through choice0</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>12</b></p> <p><b>10</b></p>
<p><b>People who are living in unsatisfactory living conditions and who have unmet housing needs</b></p>	
<p><b>IF YOU LIVE IN UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING CONDITIONS</b></p> <p><b>Applicants living in conditions that have been formally assessed by the local authority as ‘Below Tolerable Standard’ and written evidence is provided to support this.</b></p> <p><b>The definition of tolerable standard can be found on the Glasgow City Council website</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=18226">https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=18226</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is not structurally stable;</li> <li>• is not substantially free from rising or penetrating damp;</li> <li>• does not have satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and for heating;</li> <li>• does not have satisfactory thermal insulation;</li> <li>• does not have an adequate piped supply of wholesome water available within the house;</li> <li>• does not have a sink provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water within the house;</li> <li>• does not have a water closet or waterless closet available for the</li> </ul>	<p><b>30</b></p>

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS
<p>exclusive use of the occupants of the house and suitably located within the house;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not have a fixed bath or shower and a wash-hand basin, each provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water and suitably located within the house;</li> <li>• does not have an effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water;</li> <li>• does not have satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food within the house; and</li> <li>• does not have satisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings.</li> <li>• in the case of a house having a supply of electricity, it must comply with the relevant requirements in relation to the electrical installations for the purposes of that supply; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "the electrical installation" is the electrical wiring and associated components and fittings, but excludes equipment and appliances;</li> <li>○ "the relevant requirements" are that the electrical installation is adequate and safe to use</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>IF YOUR PRESENT ACCOMMODATION IS OVERCROWDED</b></p> <p>You need an extra bedroom or bedrooms (including overnight access to children or a pregnant applicant/householder)</p>	<p><b>10 points per room short</b></p>
<p><b>IF YOU NEED TO BE RE-HOUSED FOR HEALTH/ACCESSIBILITY REASONS</b></p> <p>To receive these points, you must complete the medical questions at the HOSI interview. In all cases where medical points are awarded, we need to be satisfied that your current property does not suit your current needs <b>and</b> that re-housing would make a practical difference in helping to alleviate or manage the condition. You can receive points at ONE of the levels shown below.</p> <p><b>Your property prevents you from getting out or cannot return home from hospital/care home</b></p> <p>For example, you cannot leave your house at all or without physical assistance; getting up and down stairs is impossible to manage; your current house is not or cannot be adapted for your needs; or you cannot return to your present accommodation if you are leaving hospital or a nursing home (applicants will</p>	<p><b>30</b></p>



TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS
<p>be considered for ground floor/adapted accommodation only – supporting documentation regarding housing needs may be required from a medical/health professional)</p> <p><b>Your current property severely restricts your daily activity and a move will help to alleviate this.</b>  For example; getting up and down stairs is difficult to manage; or you require a separate bedroom due to your health. Supporting documentation may be required from a medical or health care professional.)</p>	<b>15</b>
<p><b>If more than one person covered by the application would qualify for medical points as stated above:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An additional 5 points will be awarded to recognise the situation of the household as a whole</li> </ul>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>IF YOU NEED TO BE RE-HOUSED DUE TO HARASSMENT</b>  You can receive points at ONE of the levels shown below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You or members of your family are experiencing very serious problems due to the actions of others that are targeted specifically at you. Your physical safety or your home is at risk and/or your ability to cope with daily life has been seriously affected as a result. (supporting documents may be required e.g. police report, court orders, victim support or other relevant documentation)</li> <li>• You or members of your family are experiencing these types of serious problems. While you may not consider yourself to be in immediate physical danger, your quality of life is being adversely affected by the harassment (supporting documents may be required e.g. police report, victim support, confirmation from current landlord or other relevant documentation)</li> </ul>	<b>40</b>  <b>20</b>
<p>We will use these points to address issues such as criminal harassment, domestic abuse, racial harassment and other types of hate crimes. If you receive harassment points, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide information about making a homeless application to Glasgow City Council since this will generally provide a quicker route to re-housing for people in these types of emergency circumstances.</li> <li>- Keep in touch with you, so that application is kept under regular review.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>YOU NEED TO MOVE TO GIVE OR RECEIVE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT</b>  You or a member of your family needs to move to the area to <b>provide</b> essential family support and your current address is severely restricting you from doing this.</p>	

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS
<p>We will consider the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>You are juggling your own life and your caring responsibilities and the journey between home/work and our area is severely affecting your ability to provide support on a daily basis (e.g. Car mileage over 10 miles, public transport routes over 1 hour, no public transport option and you walk over 3 miles; expense will also be considered)</li></ul> <p>AND;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>You receive carers allowance to care for the person in our area; OR</li><li>Supporting documents from health or support agency detailing the level of support you provide; OR</li><li>Supporting documents for the person that you care for detailing their condition; OR</li><li>Any other individual factors will be considered</li></ul> <p>You or a member of your family needs to move to the area to <b>receive</b> essential support and your current address is severely restricting you from doing this.</p> <p>We will consider the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your journey to receive support is severely restricting your ability to access the support or services you need on a regular basis (car mileage over 10 miles, public transport routes over 1 hour, no public transport option and you walk over 3 miles; expenses will also be considered)</li></ul> <p>AND;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Supporting documents from health or support agency detailing the level of support you receive and length of time you require the support for</li><li>Any other individual factors will be considered</li></ul>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p><b>30</b></p>
<p><b>YOU NEED TO BE RE-HOUSED FOR SOCIAL REASONS OR BECAUSE OF THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD</b> You can receive points for <b>ONE OR MORE</b> of the needs shown below</p> <p>You currently live out with the G45 area and want to move to be closer to a permanent job or volunteering commitment or you are attending a full time college/training course that has longer than 1 year still to complete (evidence required)</p> <p>You currently live out with the G45 area and provide/receive regular support to family members living in our area</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>5</b></p>

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS
You have other needs not described in the Policy that we agree are relevant to your re-housing needs	5
<b>Tenants of Social Landlords where we consider them to be under-occupying the property.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Social housing tenants who have any number of extra bedrooms in their home that is not being used</b></li> </ul>	10 per surplus room
<b>HOME OWNERS</b> Points can be generated in the following circumstances:	
<p><b>YOU LIVE IN UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING CONDITIONS</b> Applicants living in conditions that have been formally assessed by the local authority as 'Below Tolerable Standard' and you do not have the resource to fix the problem</p>	30
<p><b>YOUR PROPERTY IS BEING OCCUPIED ILLEGALLY</b> There are squatters living in the property and legal action has commenced to remove the illegal occupants.</p>	30
<p><b>YOU ARE EXPERIENCING ABUSE</b> Where it is probable that occupying the property will lead to abuse from someone currently living in the property or from someone who previously resided with the applicant whether in that property or elsewhere. (supporting documents may be required e.g. police report, court orders, victim support or other relevant documentation)</p>	40

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS
<p><b>MEDICAL/HEALTH</b> 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 that danger. For example, you cannot leave your house at all or without physical assistance; getting up and down stairs is impossible to manage; your current house is not or cannot be adapted for your needs; or you cannot return to your present accommodation if you are leaving hospital or a nursing home (applicants will be considered for ground floor/adapted accommodation only – (supporting documentation regarding housing needs may be required from a medical/health professional)</p>	<b>30</b>
<p><b>RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN</b> Where the separating partner has no entitlement to the owned property (supporting documents may be required)</p>	<b>20</b>
<p><b>IF YOUR PRESENT ACCOMMODATION IS OVERCROWDED</b> You need an extra bedroom or bedrooms (including overnight access to children or a pregnant applicant/householder</p>	<b>10 points per room short</b>
<p><b>YOU NEED TO MOVE TO GIVE OR RECEIVE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT</b> You or a member of your family needs to move to the area to provide essential family support and your current address is severely restricting you from doing this.</p> <p>We will consider the following criteria :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are juggling your own life and your caring responsibilities and the journey between home/work and our area is severely affecting your ability to provide support on a daily basis (car mileage over 10 miles, public transport routes over 1 hour, no public transport option and you walk over 3 miles; expenses will also be considered)</li> </ul> <p>AND;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You receive carers allowance to care for the person in our area; OR</li> <li>• Supporting documents from health or support agency detailing the level of support you provide; OR</li> <li>• Supporting documents for the person that you care for detailing their condition; OR</li> <li>• Any other individual factors will be considered</li> </ul> <p>You or a member of your family needs to move to the area to receive essential family support and your current address is severely restricting you from doing</p>	<b>30</b>

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS
<p>this.</p> <p>We will consider the following criteria :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your journey to receive support is severely restricting your ability to access the support or services you need on a regular basis (car mileage over 10 miles, public transport routes over 1 hour, no public transport option and you walk over 3 miles; expenses will also be considered)</li> </ul> <p>AND;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting documents from health or support agency detailing the level of support you receive and length of time you require the support for</li> <li>• Any other individual factors will be considered</li> </ul>	<p><b>30</b></p>

## **Appendix 2**

### **Suspending Housing applicants from offers of housing**

#### **Suspension from being eligible to receive offers**

- 1) Ardenglen will only suspend an application where it is reasonable to do so, having considered the individual circumstances of the case.
- 2) We will inform applicants in writing if we suspend their application. We will provide reasons for the suspension, how long it will last for and/or what action the applicant needs to take to end the suspension. Applicants will also receive details of how to appeal against our decision.

#### **Criteria for Suspensions**

##### **Tenancy related debts**

- 3) We may suspend applications if the applicant is responsible for an outstanding tenancy-related debt (e.g. rent, rechargeable repairs, service charges) where the debt is:
  - Less than five years old
  - More than one month's rent, and the tenant has not maintained a repayment arrangement for at least 3 months.
- 4) Tenancy-related debts may relate to an Ardenglen tenancy or to a tenancy with another landlord.
- 5) We will disregard non-technical arrears due to outstanding housing benefit payments in identifying the outstanding debt.
- 6) We will also take account of any special or extenuating circumstances before suspending an applicant due to rent arrears.
- 7) We will normally apply a maximum suspension period of 3 years, and we will review the case frequently.
- 8) If your suspension is lifted because you have maintained a payment arrangement for at least 3 months you are at risk of a further suspension if you do not continue to keep to the payment arrangement on an ongoing basis.

## **Anti Social Behaviour**

- 9) We may suspend applications if an applicant or a member of their household has behaved in an anti-social manner, and the conduct involved is of a serious nature, within the last three years, and is confirmed by an official source such as the Police or a present/previous landlord.
- 10) Examples of anti-social behaviour include the following. These examples are illustrative, they are not an exhaustive list:
  - Serious anti-social behaviour within the last three years. This includes cases where the applicant was not the tenant but was named as the cause of the problem.
  - An Anti-Social Behaviour Order is in place.
  - A current or previous landlord provides a tenancy reference stating that there have been complaints about anti-social behaviour by the applicant or their household.
  - The Police advise us that the applicant or a member of their household have been convicted of drug dealing from a tenancy or of crimes which have affected others in their local area (for example, acts of violence, harassment or threats to neighbours).
  - The applicant has been violent towards an Ardenglen tenant, resident or employee and this has resulted in Police involvement.
- 11) We will take account of the circumstances of each case when making decisions, for example:
  - The nature, frequency and duration of the behaviour involved
  - How long ago the incidents occurred
  - Whether there is a current Notice of Proceedings for anti-social behaviour
  - The effect on others
  - The extent to which the behaviour is affected by persons other than the applicant, including actions by other members of the household.
- 12) We will normally apply a maximum suspension period of 3 years, and we will review the case frequently.
- 13) We will lift the suspension when:
  - A period of twelve months has elapsed without any incidents of unacceptable behaviour; or
  - An ASBO has expired, or a Notice of Proceedings ceases to be in force or is withdrawn by the landlord.

- 14) We may also consider the use of a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy with support, as an alternative to continuing a suspension for the maximum period of 3 years.
- 15) If your suspension is lifted and a new incident of anti social behaviour is confirmed then you may be suspended for a further period up to the maximum of 3 years.

### **Neglecting a tenancy or Failure to Adhere to Tenancy Conditions**

- 16) We reserve the right to suspend applicants who have not adhered to the conditions of their present or previous tenancy in the last three years. In particular, where they or members of their household have caused damage to their current or previous landlord's property or have not maintained it in a lettable condition. We will take special or extenuating circumstances into account if we are considering placing an application on hold for these reasons.
- 17) We will normally apply a maximum suspension period of 3 years, and we will review the case frequently.
- 18) Applicants will be required to make good the breach of tenancy or maintain a payment arrangement for at least a three month period for re-charges that have occurred due to the applicant or household members damage or neglect of a previous tenancy address.
- 19) Applicants whose current property condition is not deemed acceptable by us will be given steps we expect them to take to address the breach of tenancy condition, and then schedule regular reviews with the applicant.

### **Abandonment and eviction**

- 20) Where an applicant has abandoned a property or been evicted, we will normally suspend their application for a maximum period of 3 years, from the date of the abandonment or eviction, unless there are special or extenuating circumstances.

### **Fraudulent or false information**

- 21) If an applicant has deliberately provided fraudulent or false information, we will suspend their application for a maximum period of 3 years. We will lift the suspension after this period and invite the applicant to submit a new application.

### **Refusal of previous offers of housing**



- 22) Where applicants have refused 3 reasonable offers of accommodation in the immediate 12 month period, we will suspend their application for a six month period.
- 23) We aim to give applicants as much choice as possible about where they want to live and will make offers based on the information provided to us.
- 24) On refusal of an offer applicants will be asked to review the areas of choice

### **Housing support**

- 25) We may suspend an application where the Association has carried out a risk assessment and believes that an applicant would not be able to maintain a tenancy without support, and no such support is in place. In all such cases we will seek an independent assessment of the applicant's housing needs. The suspension will be lifted when appropriate support arrangements are put in place.

### **Community Safety**

- 26) As described in the allocation policy, we must accept housing applications from registered sex offenders, but we will not make an offer of re housing until the association is fully satisfied about the risk assessment carried out and the risk management arrangements that will be in place. If we are not satisfied on these matters, we will suspend the housing application and review it if and when fresh information is provided to us

