

# Housing Allocation Policy

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Approved by Committee on 10th May 2011 with an implementation date of September 2012



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## Document Control

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## 1. Purpose Statement

- 1.1 This Policy sets out the Council's policy on the use, allocation and governance of our council Housing Stock and how we determine the relative priority of applicants who wish to be housed by the council.
- 1.2 The Policy will provide clarity to customers and staff on how decisions relating to allocating our housing stock are made, and will ensure that all allocations are administered fairly and consistently
- 1.3 Aberdeen City Council currently owns and manages around 22,041 properties of various sizes and types such as cottages, flats, multi-storey blocks and sheltered complexes. Approximately 2000 of these tenancies were terminated in 2018 and the Council needs to allocate these properties to new tenants efficiently and effectively. There are currently around 6300 applicants wishing to be housed by the Council with around 4388 on our waiting list and a further 1,633 current tenants. The Council processes around 350 new housing applications each month. In most areas of the city there is a mismatch between the demand for council houses and the number of applicants requesting the type and size of council houses available. Given the difference between the supply of and demand for Council houses this Allocation Policy has been developed to take account of the different circumstances and the housing needs or assessed priority of our applicants and to prioritise them according to their needs. We aim to give priority to those in greatest need and to achieve this we have developed a system comprising of four waiting lists and award of points to reflect need. This policy was developed to comply with current legislation, using guidance and best practice from the Scottish Government and the Chartered Institute of Housing and incorporating the outcomes of stakeholder consultation with staff, service users and elected members.

## 2. Application and Scope Statement

- 2.1 Outline who is affected by the policy, and who/what it applies to; Specify the behavior and/or actions impacted by the policy; Specify any exclusions to the policy, for instance -
  - People
  - Parties
  - External and Partner Organisations
  - Actions and activities

The policy affects all applicants for social housing whether they are current tenants of the council, homeless households or those living in the private sector, whether renting or in owner occupation.

## 3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Chief Officer Early Intervention and Community Empowerment is responsible for managing the policy.
- 3.2 Any instances of non-compliance with the policy should be reported to Chief Officer Early Intervention and Community Empowerment.
- 3.3 Feedback on the policy should be communicated to the Chief Officer Early Intervention and Community Empowerment.

## 4. Supporting Procedures & Documentation

- 4.1 Advice on completing the self-assessment online, <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/find-home/apply-council-house/self-assessment-guidance>
- 4.2 How ACC allocate property <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/find-home/apply-council-house/how-does-council-allocate-housing>

## 5. Policy Statement

The following sections provide details on how Aberdeen City Council prioritises applicants for its social housing stock.

## 6. Legal framework

The allocation of social housing in Scotland is governed by the provisions within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and again, by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. The legislation sets out the principles that should guide the practice of social landlords in relation to holding and managing a housing list, the extent to which circumstances and needs should be assessed and the applicant characteristics that should be prioritised in the assessment of housing need. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 changes certain aspects of the law on social housing allocations and tenancy management.

The Right to Buy was abolished for all social housing tenants in Scotland by this Act. The Act also made changes to allocation rules for social landlords, to increase flexibility and allow them to make best use of their stock. The Act also allows landlords to issue Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (Short SSTs) to address anti-social behaviour. The other legislative provisions surrounding the allocation of social housing in Scotland relate to meeting the needs of homeless households set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.

### Applicable legislation

There is a framework of rights-based legislation which also influences the allocation of housing and with which the Councils must comply with. These are,

Human Rights Act 1998;

Data Protection Act 1998;

Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection (Scotland) Act 1981;

Children Scotland Act 1995;

Civil Partnership Act 2004;

Immigration & Asylum Act 1999;

Protection from Harassment Act 1997;

### Equal opportunities

Access to housing is available to everyone aged 16 or more. This does not give applicants a right to receive an offer of housing however, as offers are dependent on the priority given to each individual application. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Council will ensure that no individual is discriminated against on the grounds of sexual or marriage status, on racial grounds, disability, age, sexual orientation, transgender, language or social origin, faith or religion, or political opinion. This allocations policy is designed to allocate houses on a needs basis but recognises that need outstrips supply. The policy has undergone a thorough equality impact assessment.

## 7. Who can apply?

Prospective applicants can only apply online [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/onlinehousingapplication](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/onlinehousingapplication).

Couples, partners and people who are cohabiting will be treated as joint applicants. To be eligible for admission to the Council's lists applicants must be 16 years of age or over. Sole or joint applicants who are subject to immigration control in terms of section 118 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 are not eligible for admission to the Council waiting lists. European Economic Area nationals are only eligible for admission to the lists if they have the right to reside in the UK. Admission onto the Council lists does not mean applicants have the right to be housed by the Council.

### Transfer and Waiting list applicants

- Transfer List applicants are current tenants of Aberdeen City Council or a Registered Social Landlord within Aberdeen.
- Waiting List applicants are those who are not tenants of Aberdeen City Council or a Registered Social Landlord within Aberdeen.

## 8. Reasonable preference

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced new reasonable preference categories. Social landlords must, in relation to all houses held by it for housing purposes, secure that in the selection of its tenants a reasonable preference is given to the persons mentioned in the following section:-

- Persons who are Homeless or threatened with Homelessness
- Persons living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- Tenants of houses which are held by a social landlord and we consider them to be under-occupied as defined in this policy.

Persons who are in the first 2 categories, the applicant must have an unmet housing need

The Council would consider that a person has unmet housing needs if they have a need which is not capable of being met by their current housing circumstances. In practice, the Council will explore housing options with all applicants so that they can make informed decisions regarding their housing preferences.

## 9. Members of the applicant's household

For the purposes of this policy, and reflecting the Housing (Scotland) Acts 1987 and 2001, the following are considered members of an applicant's household - the applicant's;

- a. spouse or civil partner (or a person living with the applicant as husband and wife or in a relationship which has the characteristics of the relationship between husband and wife except that the persons are of the same sex)
- b. parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece.

### For the purposes of (b) above:

- A relationship by marriage or by civil partnership shall be treated as a relationship by blood;
- A relationship of half-blood shall be treated as a relationship by blood;
- The stepchild of a person shall be treated as his/her child;

A child shall be treated as such whether his/her parents are married;

- A child brought up or treated by another person as his or her child is to be treated as that person's child.

Aberdeen City Council, at its discretion, may also consider the following to be members of an applicant's household:

- Live-in carers (confirmation of this arrangement will be required);
- Couples who are in a relationship but do not live together;
- Engaged couples;
- Cousins;
- Permanent foster children who are included on an application if verification has been provided by Children's Services that the applicants are the children's registered/permanent foster carers. (All applications from people who are temporary or prospective foster carers would be considered under delegated powers).
- Friends (but only flatted accommodation would be offered)
- A child or children from a former relationship cannot be treated as permanent members of the applicant's household unless they live with the applicant for at least half of the week. If they live with the applicant for less than half of the week, the applicant will only be eligible for one additional bedroom in flatted accommodation only, irrespective of the number of such children.
- Where the household comprises of a mixture of children who are resident with the applicant for more and less than 50% of the time, if the inclusion of the children who are resident less than 50% of the time increases the size of accommodation required, the application will be restricted to 1 additional bedroom for the children living there for less than 50% of the time irrespective of the number of such children. The application will also be restricted to flatted accommodation only.
- Where the household comprises of a mixture of children who are resident with the applicant for more and less than 50% of the time, if the inclusion of the children who are resident for less than 50% of the time does not increase the size of accommodation required, the application can be considered for all types of accommodation.

Aberdeen City Council will not normally accept as part of the applicant's household for the purposes of the housing application any member of the household (other than a partner):

- Who is a hospital patient and is unlikely in the opinion of medical professionals to be discharged;
- Who indicates in writing that she/he does not want to be regarded as a member of the household;
- Who has applied for separate accommodation in his/her own right;
- Who is an adult and is resident with the applicant less than 50% of the time, except for students and persons in the armed forces.

## 10. Checks carried out on an application

All applicants and anyone included on an application aged 16 years or over are required to provide details of any Council, Housing Association or Housing Co-operative tenancy they have held during the previous five years, or since their 16th birthday if more recent. Any current or former tenancies will be checked to determine whether they were conducted in a satisfactory manner and that there are no outstanding debts related to the tenancy.

### Unsatisfactory tenancy conduct and anti-Social behaviour

Where evidence is obtained of an applicant's history of anti-social behaviour or unsatisfactory conduct of a current or former tenancy, Aberdeen City Council will consider the causes and impact of such behaviour or conduct when considering applicants for the allocation of housing.

Aberdeen City Council can decide that an applicant may not be eligible for social housing if the applicant:-

- Has engaged in anti-social behaviour, including near the house, harassment of others, anti-social behaviour towards members of staff.
- Has a conviction for using their home for immoral or illegal activity or any other offence punishable by imprisonment, committed in the locality of their home, this also applies to someone who has resided with the applicant.
- Previously abandoned or neglected a property and the tenancy was terminated.
- A court has granted an eviction notice against the applicant.
- Rent arrears.
- Making a false statement on an application.

Where evidence indicates concern about the future conduct of any applicant or member of their household the matter will be referred to the Tenancy Support Panel. Until a decision is made by the panel, applications for housing will be suspended. This panel consists of senior officers from Early Intervention and Community Empowerment and will determine any restrictions, conditions or support required relating to any future tenancy to be offered by Aberdeen City Council.

This will include any applicants who have had an eviction order made against them for anti-social behaviour within the last three years, or instances where the applicant or a member of their household is subject to an Antisocial Behaviour Order granted after 30 September 2002.

Consideration will be given to:

- Offering a Scottish Secure Tenancy;
- Offering a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (where statutory grounds exist)
- Rehousing an existing tenant of Aberdeen City Council to accommodation of a similar or smaller size and type, in a letting area of similar or lower demand, where their Scottish Secure Tenancy is proving unsatisfactory and the tenant is prepared to accept a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy and associated housing support;
- Granting tenants who currently have a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy another Short Scottish Secure Tenancy, either of the same property or another property elsewhere;

Applicants have the right to appeal any decision of this panel (see section 28).

If an applicant knowingly gives false information on a housing application, the application will be cancelled from the list. Any tenancy that has been granted based on false information or where the applicant has withheld important information may be subject to legal proceedings for repossession and the tenants may be reported to Police Scotland should any criminal activity be suspected.

## 11. Keeping an application up to date

Applicants are required to advise the Housing Access and Support Team of any change in their circumstances as soon as possible so that their application can be reviewed. A change of address may require a new application form to be completed. In all cases applicants should contact the Housing Advice Team for housing options advice.

## 12. Re-registering an application

Applicants who have not been in contact regarding their housing application may be contacted and asked to confirm their application details and whether they still wish to remain on the housing list. If they do not respond, it is assumed that they no longer wish to be considered for housing and their housing application will be cancelled.

## 13. Determining the number of bedrooms required by a household

Detailed below are the number of bedrooms for which various household types will qualify:-

- One bedroom is required for a single adult;
- One bedroom is required for an applicant and partner;
- One bedroom is required for two single related adults of the same sex, for example, two sisters, two brothers, where there is not 10 years or more difference between their ages;
- One bedroom is required for two elderly people of the same sex who choose to share a bedroom, who would not normally be expected to share a bedroom, for example, a mother and daughter;
- One bedroom is required for up to two children under eight years of age, regardless of the sexes of the children;
- One bedroom is required for up to two members of the householder's family eight years of age or over of the same sex, where there is not 10 years or more difference between their ages;
- One bedroom each is required for a child under eight years of age and a child over eight years of age of different sexes, where they cannot share with any other child of the family;
- One bedroom each is required for the youngest and the next eldest child in the family of the same sex, where there is 10 years or more difference between their ages and they cannot share with any other child of the family;
- One bedroom is required for a member of the family where the Housing Need Assessment Team determines they should have their own bedroom.

### Other factors that are considered when determining the number of bedrooms required:

- The maximum number of people who would be expected to share a bedroom would be two;
- An expected child will be included in the calculation of the number of bedrooms required;
- The age at which children of different sexes qualify to be in separate bedrooms is eight. For example, a child under eight years of age and a child over eight years of age of different sexes would be assessed as requiring separate bedrooms.



**Exceptions to the bedroom requirement rules.**

Applicants who have indicated a preference may be offered accommodation of a different size (larger or smaller) than they would normally qualify for in the following circumstances:

1. When no suitable applicants are identified requiring two-bedroom accommodation, applicants requiring one-bedroom accommodation will be considered. When no suitable applicants are identified requiring three-bedroom accommodation, applicants requiring two-bedroom accommodation will be considered followed by applicants requiring one bedroom.
2. Applicants who are currently in two-bedroom accommodation or smaller and who require four bedrooms may be considered for three-bedroom accommodation if they have stated that option.

**14. Areas of choice****14.1 Letting areas**

This policy allows applicant's unlimited choice from the 63 letting areas in the city; applicants can choose appropriate house types in these areas. Applicants will be considered for housing in accordance with these choices, provided the appropriate size of property is available in their chosen letting areas. Applicants can alter their choices of areas and house types at any time.

**14.2 House types of choice**

Applicants can choose house types from the general needs housing stock. These properties are generally not designed for applicants with specific needs, such as those requiring support or special design features. Properties such as Amenity, Sheltered and Very Sheltered are generally for applicants of pensionable age.

Applicants who choose Amenity, Sheltered or Very Sheltered Housing will be assessed by the Housing Need Assessment Team who will consider housing need and support requirements.

This assessment of need will identify the most appropriate house type for the applicant (i.e. Amenity, Sheltered or Very Sheltered) and that applicant will be placed on the relevant list.

**15. Types of households change****15.1 Homeless people or people threatened with homelessness**

Homeless people or people threatened with homelessness should seek the advice of the Housing Advice Service, Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, Marischal College, Aberdeen. The Service will assess applicants to determine whether they qualify for assistance in accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 Part II as amended. If an applicant is assessed as priority homeless they will be placed on the Urgent Housing list in order of the date of their assessment and given one offer of accommodation anywhere in the city, unless there is an extreme reason why the applicant cannot be considered for certain letting areas. If the offer of accommodation is refused the council has discharged its duty.

**15.2 Applicants applying for temporary accommodation from a designated housing renewal area**

The City Council may designate certain areas as Housing Renewal Areas, in order to improve the dwellings within the area to meet the legal requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006. To enable the upgrading of these dwellings to proceed, the City Council may assist landlords, owner occupiers and Aberdeen City Council tenants as detailed below.

### **15.2.1 Private tenants**

Where private landlords are unable to provide their tenants with alternative accommodation they may apply to the Council for temporary flatted accommodation either in the same area or areas of similar letting demand for the duration of the works.

### **15.2.2 Owner occupiers**

Owner occupiers within a Housing Renewal Area may be provided with temporary flatted accommodation either in the same area or areas of similar letting demand for the duration of works.

### **15.2.3 Aberdeen City Council tenants**

Where Aberdeen City Council tenants have to vacate a dwelling within a Housing Renewal Area they will be provided with temporary accommodation for the duration of the works. Such applicants will be placed on the Urgent Housing list.

For all applicants in this category only temporary accommodation of a similar type and size within the same letting area will be offered if available. If this is not available a suitable alternative will be offered.

## **15.3 Applicants applying for temporary accommodation where a work notice has been served by Aberdeen City Council**

Where a Work Notice has been served by the City Council using powers under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, owners or part owners may be considered for temporary accommodation for the duration of the works. Such applications are placed on the Urgent Housing List. Temporary flatted accommodation of a similar size within the same letting area will be offered if available. If this is not available a suitable alternative will be offered.

## **15.4 Aberdeen City Council Tenants who are being given temporary accommodation while essential repairs or improvements are carried out**

Aberdeen City Council will transfer its own tenants to another property on a temporary basis while essential repairs or improvements are being carried out, where it would be unreasonable to expect the tenants to continue to reside in their tenancy. Such applicants are placed on the Urgent Housing List. If a similar size and type of accommodation within the same letting area is available, it will be offered.

Otherwise accommodation of the same type and size in an area of similar letting demand will be offered.

## **15.5 Application from two households wishing to be housed together**

Where an application is received from two separate households wishing to be housed together in a larger or more suitable house, the application will be assessed as though both households were already living together. Any housing points will be awarded based on the accommodation currently occupied that best meets their housing need.

## **15.6 Home owners**

In certain circumstances Aberdeen City Council will grant a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy for a temporary let to home-owners who cannot live in their own homes. This is to allow the home-owner to make arrangements around the property they own, for example this could be while adaptations are being undertaken or whilst they are trying to sell it.

### 15.7 Armed forces personnel

We will ensure up to 1% of our 2,000 Council new build houses are offered to those leaving the armed forces. With up to a further 0.5% being adapted for those injured in service.

Applications from service personal who are planning to leave the armed forces and who wish to be housed in one of the councils new social housing developments only, will be given priority status and placed on the Urgent List and awarded a medium priority 56 days before they are due to leave the forces. They will be made one reasonable offer of accommodation under this priority. Where a reasonable offer is made and subsequently refused, the priority will be removed.

If applicants wish to add other housing choices such as house types and areas outwith the new build properties then their application for these choices can also be placed on the waiting list and they will be awarded points in accordance with their housing needs under this list's criteria as per Housing Allocation Policy

## 16. Care experienced young people

Young people over the age of 16 who require permanent housing and who were looked after by Aberdeen City Council on their 16th birthday will have their accommodation needs jointly assessed by the services to ensure the appropriate supports are in place and realistic housing choices have been made. The assessment will then be jointly agreed by the respective section Heads of Service. If accepted, applicants are placed on the urgent housing list and awarded priority status for up to two offers of suitable flatted accommodation.

They may indicate in which of the council's housing areas they wish offers to be made. If both offers are refused priority status will be lost.

## 17. Support needs

Applications for rehousing from a single person or a couple will be assessed by the Housing Needs Assessment Team in conjunction with Social Care and Wellbeing and other professionals to determine the best option for the applicant(s).

If the assessment finds that the applicant requires to be rehoused, then the appropriate level of priority will be awarded for housing in the letting area nearest the supportive relative or other letting areas as determined by the Housing Needs Assessment Team. If the applicants' housing is suitable but support is required, the Housing Needs Assessment Team will refer the case to Social Care and Wellbeing who will assess the level of support and who should provide such support.

If it is determined by the Housing Needs Assessment Team in conjunction with Social Care and Wellbeing that a supportive relative is best placed to deliver this support, the supportive relative will be offered appropriate housing in the letting area where the applicant lives when the applicant's application qualifies for an offer.

If the supportive relative's required house size and type is not available in the area in which the applicant's lives, then an adjoining area will be substituted.

If the applicant's supportive relative is not a current tenant of Aberdeen City Council, the case will be referred to the Allocations Team Leader to determine whether the application is acceptable under this policy. The supportive relative will be offered flatted accommodation of an appropriate size in the letting area where the applicant lives when the applicant qualifies for an offer. If flatted accommodation of the appropriate size is not available in that letting area, then an adjoining letting area will be substituted.

## 18. Housing lists

The four main lists are as follows:

- Urgent Housing Need - Priority by Assessment
- Housing with Support (Amenity/Sheltered/Very Sheltered/High Support) - Priority by Assessment
- Transfers - Priority by Points
- Waiting - Priority by Points

Applicants on the Urgent Housing Need list are prioritised by way of an assessment process and ranked in order of the date of their priority award.

The Housing with Support list is also prioritised by an assessment process and applicants are placed in one of the following categories and are further prioritised by the date of their priority award.

- High
- Moderate
- Low

Applicants on the Transfer and Waiting lists are prioritised by awarding points, based on the current housing circumstances. Applicants who have the same number of points will be further prioritised by the date of registration on the list.

## 19. Housing lists and points and offers

Vacancies are allocated between the three mainstream lists. All offers are initially given to the Urgent list with the waiting and transfer list having a quota of 50% of the remaining properties. Quotas are subject to review and can change over time.

### 19.1 Urgent housing need list

Applicants on this list are awarded either Top priority, High priority or Medium priority depending on their circumstances as detailed below. Applicants will be placed on this list if they are:

**Emergency homeless:** Applications from persons who are assessed as emergency homeless through fire, flood or other natural disaster. Such applicants will be awarded a High priority on this list.

**Statutory homeless:** Determined by a Homeless Assessment carried out in accordance with the terms of Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended. Such applicants will be awarded a Medium priority on this list.

**Young people looked after by Aberdeen City Council:** applications which are accepted for priority rehousing from such applicants will be awarded a High priority on this list.

**Next stage housing applicants:** applications which are accepted for priority rehousing from such applicants will be awarded a Medium priority on this list.

**Statutory notice applicants:** Applicants requiring permanent accommodation because of a Closing Order, Demolition Order or a Compulsory Purchase Order are placed on this list. A maximum of two offers of accommodation will be made. Such applicants will be awarded a Medium priority on this list. These statutory notices would be served on the owners of properties by the City Council. Affected tenants/owners would then be interviewed by a member of staff from the Housing and Community Safety to confirm requirements for rehousing. Applicants would be considered for accommodation of the same size and type (as currently occupied) within the same letting area if readily available, otherwise, in a suitable alternative letting area as determined by the Chief Officer Early Intervention and Community Empowerment.

**Committee and discretionary cases:**

- Applicants awarded priority by the Operational Delivery Committee will be awarded a Medium priority on this list.
- Applicants awarded priority through powers delegated to the Chief Officer Early Intervention and Community Empowerment may be awarded a High or a Medium priority on this list depending on their circumstances.
- Applicants who are accepted under the Downsizing Scheme may be awarded Top, High or Medium priority on this list depending on their circumstances as detailed below:-
  1. Applicants accepted under the Downsizing Scheme who are receiving housing benefit and of working age and who are under occupying their current property by 2 bedrooms or more will be awarded a Top priority.
  2. Applicants accepted under the Downsizing Scheme who are receiving housing benefit and of working age and under occupying their current property by 1 bedroom will be awarded a High priority.
  3. Applicants who are accepted for the Downsizing Scheme, who are not subject to the welfare reform, will be awarded a Medium priority.

Extreme Medical Need: Determined after an assessment has been carried out by the Housing Needs Assessment Team. Such applicants will be awarded a Medium priority on this list.

Examples of when this priority may be awarded are given below:-

- The household cannot access their current accommodation due to extreme health issues and it is not practical to adapt their present home to meet their needs and where a move will significantly improve their quality of life, or
- To allow discharge from Hospital where their current accommodation is totally unsuitable due to extreme health issues and it is not practical to adapt their present home to meet their needs and where a move will significantly improve their quality of life, or
- Where the current accommodation coupled with the applicant's extreme health issues make a move imperative to reduce significantly the risk of injury to the applicant, or
- Where the applicants present home makes essential activities of daily living impossible and it is not practical to adapt their home to meet their needs.

Application will normally be placed on the list according to the date their priority was awarded but may be given additional priority in exceptional situations.

## 19.2 Housing with support list - Amenity, Sheltered, Very Sheltered and High Support

### AMENITY HOUSING

Generally available to applicants of a particular age group generally 55+, who have been assessed as having health problems which are adversely affected by their current living circumstances. Amenity can have similar facilities to those in sheltered housing, but is not in a purpose-built complex and does not generally have common areas for tenants to gather, or a senior carer service.

Important Information for Sheltered, Very Sheltered and High Support Applicants The housing support service which is the core service provided in sheltered, very sheltered and high support housing is a chargeable service. The maximum weekly charge is currently £19.70 for sheltered and £29.26 for very sheltered and high support housing, an individual's contribution towards the cost of service provision is calculated following the completion of a financial assessment, which considers the individual's income, including capital. The calculation of an individual's contribution will also consider an individual's allowable expenditure (contribution towards housing costs) and a personal allowance based on their circumstances.

### SHELTERED HOUSING

Sheltered properties have special facilities to make life more comfortable and safer for tenants, including a carer service. They are intended for people of pensionable age who have been assessed as having significant health issues and adverse social circumstances which would be significantly improved by living in this type of housing.

### VERY SHELTERED HOUSING

Very Sheltered housing provides tenants with special facilities over and above those provided by sheltered housing to make life more comfortable and safer for the most vulnerable tenants, these including a carer service and the provision of a midday meal. This type of supported housing is intended for people of pensionable age who have been assessed as having severe health issues and adverse social circumstances which would be significantly improved by living in this type of housing.

### HIGH SUPPORT HOUSING

High Support Housing provides tenants with special facilities over and above those provided by sheltered housing to make life more comfortable and safer for the most vulnerable tenants, these include a carer service and the provision of a midday meal. This type of supported housing is intended for people of any age group who have been assessed as having severe health issues and adverse social circumstances which would be significantly improved by living in this type of housing.

Applicants placed on this list will have been assessed by the Housing Needs Assessment Team and placed in one of the following priority categories for the appropriate house type.

- High
- Medium
- Low

All applicants placed on this list will then be queued in order of the date of their priority award within that category. If an applicant is re-assessed and is awarded a higher or lower priority, then they will be queued on the appropriate list by the date of that new award.

Applicants will be assessed as follows:-

#### High

- Produce an extreme improvement in the individual's quality of life
- Substantially reduce the risk of physical injury
- Where the applicants present home makes essential activities of daily living
- Impossible and it is not practical to adapt their home to meet their needs

#### Medium

- Produce a significant improvement in the individual's quality of life.
- Reduce the risk of physical injury
- Where the applicants present home makes essential activities of daily living very difficult and it is not practical to adapt their home to meet their needs

#### Low

- Produce an improvement in the individual's quality of life.
- Reduce the risk of physical injury
- Where the applicants present home makes essential activities of daily living difficult and it is not practical to adapt their home to meet their needs

### 19.3 Transfer list

Applicants will be placed on this list if they are;

- A tenant of Aberdeen City Council; or
- A tenant of a Registered Social Landlord living in Aberdeen

Applications where joint tenants wish to be rehoused separately are assessed in accordance with the Waiting List criteria. In these circumstances housing need is assessed on the basis that the people requesting to be rehoused are occupying half the number of rooms in the property. Should both joint tenants wish to be rehoused, one of the tenants is assessed under Waiting List criteria and the other under Transfer List criteria. It is the responsibility of the joint tenants to decide who will be considered under which list. Applicants on the Transfer list may be considered for all types of accommodation except for Amenity, Sheltered and Very Sheltered Housing. Applicants are prioritised by the number of points they have been awarded. Applicants who have the same number of points will be further prioritised by the date of registration on the list.



### 19.3.1 Points available under the transfer list

#### Description

##### Under occupation:

For 1 Bedroom surrendered

For 2 Bedrooms surrendered

For 3 Bedrooms surrendered

##### Room deficiency:

For every room by which the applicant's accommodation falls short of the required number of bedrooms.

For every room which is more than 4.45 square metres (48 sq. ft.) and less than 8.00 square metres (86 sq. ft.) in area, if occupied by two people or by a single applicant.

If the room is more than 4.45 square metres (48 sq. ft.) and less than 8.00 square metres (86sq. ft.) in area and is occupied by one person who is not the applicant, then no points are awarded for room deficiency.

Any rooms under 4.45 square metres (48 square feet) in area or without natural lighting will not count as a room and are disregarded under this policy.

Any room used for cooking and washing purposes is disregarded and the largest of the remaining rooms is regarded as a living room except in properties where open plan rooms are a design feature, for example, in studio flats.

##### Mixing of sexes:

Where the existing accommodation requires the sharing of a bedroom by people, who form part of the application aged eight years and over of opposite sexes (other than partners).

##### Size of family

Where bedroom deficiency exists, and the application requires two bedrooms, family points are awarded as follows.

Where the second bedroom would be occupied by one person Where the second bedroom would be occupied by two people.

##### Where bedroom deficiency exists, and the application requires three bedrooms or more, family points are awarded as follows:

Where the final two bedrooms would be occupied by a total of two people;

Where the final two bedrooms would be occupied by a total of three people;

Where the final two bedrooms would be occupied by a total of four people

Points

4 points

7 points

10 points

10 points

5 points

0 points

4 points

0 points

4 points

0 points

4 points

5 points



## 19.4 Waiting list

Applicants will be placed on this list if they are;

- Tenants of other local authorities or of Registered Social Landlords (living outside the Aberdeen area)
- Sub tenants or lodgers
- Households living care of relatives, friends or of no fixed address
- Owner occupiers
- Households living in houses in multiple occupation (for example, hostels)
- Members of H.M. Forces
- Tied tenants who are not either (i) employed by Aberdeen City Council, or
  - i. employed by a Registered Social Landlord with the property being in Aberdeen
- Occupy a property through Shared Ownership

We will assess applicants based on the points categories outlined below. Applicants will be placed on the waiting list in order of the applicant with the highest combined points total (most need). Applicants who have the same number of points will be further prioritised by the date of registration on the list.

Applications from persons who are not either tenants of Aberdeen City Council or tenants of a Registered Social Landlord who live in Aberdeen will be placed on this list.

An applicant living with a partner who is a joint tenant or has occupancy rights to their current property will be pointed as if occupying half their current accommodation if applying for housing on their own.

Applicants occupying a separate home but threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days will be referred to the Homeless Prevention team.

Applicants on this list may be considered for all types of accommodation except for Amenity, Sheltered and Very Sheltered housing.

Applications from single people or a couple will not be awarded room deficiency points under the waiting list where they do not have a secure tenancy.

Applications from a joint tenant of a Local Authority or another Registered Social Landlord who no longer reside at the tenancy address will have their application suspended from the Housing Lists until the joint tenancy has been resolved.

## Points available under the Waiting List

### Description

#### Room deficiency:

For every room by which the applicant's accommodation falls short of the required number of bedrooms.

For every room which is more than 4.45 square metres (48 sq. ft.) and less than 8.00 square metres (86 sq. ft.) in area, if occupied by two people or by a single applicant.

If the room is more than 4.45 square metres (48 sq. ft.) and less than 8.00 square metres (86sq. ft.) in area and is occupied by one person who is not the applicant, then no points are awarded for room deficiency.

Any rooms less than 4.45 square metres (48 square feet) in area or without natural lighting will not count as a room and are disregarded under this policy. Any room used for cooking and washing purposes is disregarded and the largest of the remaining rooms is regarded as a living room except in properties where open plan rooms are a design feature, for example, in studio flats.

**Room deficiency points do not apply to single applicants or couples who do not occupy their own separate home.**

#### Mixing of sexes

Where the existing accommodation requires the sharing of a bedroom by people, who form part of the application aged eight years and over and of opposite sexes (other than partners).

#### Size of family

Where bedroom deficiency exists, and the application requires two bedrooms, family points are awarded as follows.

Where the second bedroom would be occupied by one person Where the second bedroom would be occupied by two people.

Where bedroom deficiency exists, and the application requires three bedrooms or more, family points are awarded as follows: Where the final two bedrooms would be occupied by two people; Where the final two bedrooms would be occupied by three people; Where the final two bedrooms would be occupied by four people

#### Lack of facilities:

In addition, points are awarded where:

- There is no piped hot water supply within the house;
- There is no fixed bath/shower within the house;
- There is a toilet outside the dwelling but within the building;
- The water supply is outside the dwelling but within the building;
- The toilet is outside the building;
- The water supply is outside the building.

#### Non-security of tenure:

Single persons, couples or families living care of, in the parental home or of no fixed abode

#### Caravans:

Applicants who live in a static caravan.

Points

10 points

5 points

0 points

4 points

0 points

4 points

0 points

4 points

6 points

1 points

1 points

2 points

2 points

5 points

4 points

10 points

10 points

## 2. Downsizing Incentive Scheme

### Main-stream housing

Aberdeen City Council operates an incentive scheme aimed to assist Aberdeen City Council tenants who are under occupying their current home to move to smaller more suitable accommodation. Applications will be accepted from tenants who are under-occupying their current property and where a high demand exists for that property. The scheme aims to free-up larger properties which are increasingly in demand by those on the council house waiting list.

The council cannot, and would not wish to force tenants who are under occupying their homes to move against their will.

The Council offers a grant of £1,000 for tenants to move to smaller accommodation within Aberdeen City Council Housing Stock, in an area of similar letting demand to the one in which they currently live.

The general qualifying criteria are:-

The householder must be an Aberdeen City Council tenant living in a property larger than their needs, designated as high-demand and wish to move to a smaller council property;

Applicants with arrears or housing debt are treated in the same manner as all other transfers or the debts will be fully cleared from the downsizing grant (See section 25 of the allocation policy)

The house they are living in must be left in good condition;

To leave the age qualification for children requiring separate rooms as the current policy and not bring this in line with DWP criteria.

The tenant must not have previously been awarded a downsizing grant;

There must be a **sufficiently high demand** for the qualifying tenant's property (as determined by the Allocations Team and the Area Housing Teams).

### Supported housing

Amenity, Sheltered and Very Sheltered housing are options for rehousing applicants where their current home is no longer suitable for their needs.

Only applicants who have been assessed as having priority for Amenity, Sheltered and Very Sheltered housing and who are under-occupying properties of high demand, will be considered as part of the downsizing scheme. Applicants who are not in high demand properties will not be eligible.

If you think you may be eligible to apply under this Scheme, please contact your Housing Officer who will help you complete the Downsizing application form and answer any questions you may have.

Downsizing applicants are awarded two offers of accommodation.

## 21. Other housing options

### Mutual exchange

A mutual exchange is where a tenant of Aberdeen City Council wants to swap houses with another tenant of this Council or a tenant of a Registered Social Landlord or Housing Cooperative or a tenant of another Council. By exchanging homes applicants may be able to find the home that best suits their family's needs without having to wait on the Council housing lists.

Note:

- i. Tenants wishing to exchange must complete mutual exchange forms.
- ii. Flatted accommodation is defined as tenement flats, multi-storey flats, split level flats and maisonettes (i.e. flats with internal stairs).

- Aberdeen City Council's House Exchange website has been designed to bring tenants who live in Aberdeen City and are looking to exchange their homes together. Applicants who are considering moving away from Aberdeen City can also search for tenants who live in other parts of the country.
- Applicants can register on the [houseexchange.org.uk](http://houseexchange.org.uk) website by clicking on the 'register' button which can be found on the left-hand menu. It is easy to register and free for Aberdeen City Council tenants.
- Applicants have a live housing application and have indicated their interest in considering a mutual exchange, they can also request a list of tenants whose properties match their requirements, and who have indicated that they would be interested in exchanging to the type and size of property they currently occupy.
- **Note that an applicant will need to be a Scottish Secure Tenant or Short Scottish Secure Tenant if their mutual exchange request is to be considered.**
- Can also advertise in the local paper or alternatively place an advert in them local supermarket or shops.
- Is possible for more than two households to exchange with each other where, appropriate.

#### **Some exceptions:**

- Will not be approved involving owner/occupiers or tenants of a private sector landlord.
- Wishing to exchange must satisfy themselves that the property to which they wish to exchange meets any medical requirements they may have. However, where the property has been adapted to meet a medical condition, the proposed exchange may be referred to the Housing Needs Assessment Team. If it is considered that the proposed exchange does not make the best use of the adapted property, the exchange may not be permitted.
- Applicants who, for medical reasons, require adaptations to the property to which they wish to exchange, must contact the Housing Needs Assessment Team for approval prior to applying for the mutual exchange. Applicants who, for medical reasons, require adaptations to the property to which they wish to exchange, must contact the Housing Needs Assessment Team for approval prior to applying for the mutual exchange.
- The sizes of the properties proposing to be exchanged must comply with this policy's bedroom requirements as detailed in section 12. However, people wanting to exchange from a three-bedroom property to another three-bedroom property would be allowed even if they require a four-bedroom property.
- May be allowed to exchange to accommodation larger than they require subject to Council approval: We will allow any tenant to exchange to one bedroom more than they require regardless of the type of accommodation.
- Council may refuse an exchange if, for example, unauthorised alterations have been made to the property.

#### **When an applicant finds someone to exchange with, they should**

- Them and make arrangements to visit each others home.
- The other person's house carefully and make sure they are happy with the condition of it. The Council will not be responsible for any decoration needed or for carrying out any repairs which are the tenants' responsibility.

- All parties decide, after viewing, that they wish to proceed with the exchange then they must both complete a Mutual Exchange application form. These can be obtained from local housing offices or by downloading a Mutual Exchange form from the Council website.

**Aberdeen City Council will:**

- Both properties are inspected to see that they are in good condition
- The size of the houses to make sure that there will be no overcrowding issues or excessive under occupation.
- All applicants must have a clear rent account and have no outstanding debt in relation to overpayments of Housing Benefit, Rechargeable Repairs or for a former tenancy.
- To ensure that all tenancies have been conducted in a satisfactory manner and that there are no breaches of the tenancy agreement which may prohibit the exchange.
- By law Aberdeen City Council must give the applicants a decision within twenty-eight days of the applications being received from all the parties. Consenting to the exchange, all parties will be required to sign new tenancy agreements for their new houses.

**Applicants must not move until they have signed their new tenancy agreement.**

- Refuse consent to exchange without reasonable grounds.
- Agree to the exchange unless the house which the applicants want to move to is suitable for the whole household.
- Applicants that, if they do not agree with the Council's refusal, they can appeal in writing to the Allocations Team Leader. The Allocations Team Leader will advise them of the decision on the appeal, within ten working days.
- There has been a change in the circumstances of any applicant prior to tenancy agreements being signed, consider whether consent to exchange should be withdrawn.

Aberdeen City Council's housing is not the only option which may be available to provide for your housing needs. If you would like to find out more, please contact the and ask for 'Housing Options Advice' or click on the link to visit our online Options pages.

## 22. Nominations

Aberdeen City Council has agreements with some of the housing associations in the city to allocate 50% of their vacant properties to applicants from the Council's housing lists. These allocations are known as 'nominations'. These agreements are monitored and reviewed annually. Applicants wishing to be considered for nomination to these housing associations must indicate so by completing the appropriate section of the application form.

## 23. Offer restrictions

Notwithstanding the order of priority, certain restrictions will apply when selecting applicants for a vacancy as follows: Properties on the ground floor that have five or less access steps will be offered to applicants who have a recommendation for ground floor accommodation as determined by the Housing Needs Assessment Team. Where a property has been adapted or can be adapted to suit applicants with special needs, wheelchair users, priority is given to applicants who have a need for this type of accommodation. Any prospective offer would be subject to assessment by an Occupational Therapist.

Applicants will only be considered for one offer at a time. Applicants whose applications are deferred or suspended will not be considered for an offer of accommodation until the deferment has expired.

Applicants should note that in some accommodation cats and dogs are banned, except for guide dogs and hearing dogs therefore applicants who have a cat or dog will not be considered for these pet ban properties. A leaflet is available providing details of properties where dogs and cats are not permitted.

## 24. Delegated powers

Aberdeen City Council recognises that very occasionally an applicant may have exceptional housing circumstances which fall out with the points scheme. In these rare situations applicants may be offered re-housing through powers delegated to senior officers within the Housing Service. The delegated powers are listed in appendix 1 or can be obtained from the local housing office.

## 25. Applicants with housing related debts

At the time of applying for an Aberdeen City Council home all applicants will be advised by the Housing Access and Support Team of any housing related debts that may affect their entitlement to housing and the action they should take to address the debts. Applications will be suspended from obtaining an offer until the applicant provides evidence that the identified debts have been satisfactorily addressed.

Further checks on housing related debt will be carried out should an applicant subsequently qualify for an offer of housing. Applicants will be advised whether these checks affect their entitlement to housing.

### 25.1 All applicants who have housing related debts are treated equally

See table below which shows our policy on debt for all applicants for housing.

	Current Tenant Arrears	Current Tenant Legal Charges	Current Tenant Recharges	Former Tenant Arrears	Former Tenant Legal Charges	Former Tenant Legal Recharge
1. All applicants for housing will be subject to the same debt criteria.	If the debt is greater than 1 month's rent then an arrangement needs to be in place to clear the debt. The arrangement must be continuous and have been in place for at least 3 consecutive months.	If the debt is greater than 1 month's rent then an arrangement needs to be in place to clear the debt. The arrangement must be continuous and have been in place for at least 3 consecutive months.	If the debt is greater than 1 month's rent, then an arrangement needs to be in place to clear the debt. The arrangement must be continuous and have been in place for at least 3 consecutive months.	If the debt is greater than 1 month's rent then an arrangement needs to be in place to clear the debt. The arrangement must be continuous and have been in place for at least 3 consecutive months.	If the debt is greater than 1 month's rent then an arrangement needs to be in place to clear the debt. The arrangement must be continuous and have been in place for at least 3 consecutive months.	If the debt is greater than 1 month's rent, then an arrangement needs to be in place to clear the debt. The arrangement must be continuous and have been in place for at least 3 consecutive months.

At the time of offer, and for an offer to proceed, the current tenancy must be deemed to have been conducted in a satisfactory manner and must adhere to the debt policy highlighted above.

### 25.2 Private tenants

An offer of accommodation may be withheld if the applicant is a tenant of a private landlord and cannot provide proof of maintenance of satisfactory rent payments. If the applicant is the tenant of a private landlord and cannot provide proof of maintenance of satisfactory rent payments, their application will be deferred for a specified period.

## 26. Checks made at offer

Applications selected for an Aberdeen City Council tenancy will be checked for accuracy at the time of offer. If there has been a change to the information held that affects the application any offer of housing may be withheld. In addition, the applicant's current accommodation may be inspected where appropriate.

An offer may be withheld if the applicant(s):

- Threatening or aggressive behaviour towards Aberdeen City Council staff; • Been the subject of verified complaints of antisocial behaviour;
- Evidence of substance abuse;
- Subject to immigration control or no longer has the right to reside in the UK.

The applicant will be notified in writing of the reasons and any action they are required to take. On expiry of the deferment staff will carry out a follow-up visit to confirm the applicant's suitability for further offers of housing.

## 27. Deferment for refusals of offers of accommodation

If an applicant refuses an offer of accommodation from the waiting list, the transfer list, or the support list their housing application will be deferred for a period of 12 months. All refusal reasons count towards this deferment. Any exceptional circumstances which are presented at the time of refusal will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## 28. Appeals procedure

All applicants have the right to appeal a decision made in connection with their housing application. Appeals against the processing of an application or an offer of accommodation from the general lists should be addressed to the Housing Access and Support Team within 14 days of the decision. The Housing Access and Support Team will aim to respond within 14 days of receipt.

Appeals against a homelessness decision or a homelessness offer should go to the Housing Access and Support Team.

### Tenancy Support Panel

#### Downsizing

Initiative aimed at helping tenants to move to smaller more suitable housing which frees up larger family homes.

## 29. Risk

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Strategic</b>	That we do not make best use of our housing stock, and subsequently do not house those in most need and failing to be open and fair with all applicants for social housing.	H	The policy sets out in detail how each application is processed including the award of points or an assessment of need in order to prioritise applicants. It also provides information on other re- housing options such as mutual exchanges and Downsizing.
<b>Compliance</b>	That we are not compliant with legislation and guidance which could open the council up to litigation and intervention by the Scottish Housing Regulator.	H	The new policy clearly outlines the agreed principles through which all Aberdeen City Council allocations will be managed. It also is compliant with current legislation such as Equalities and Statutory duties and Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator guidance.
<b>Operational</b>	That the way we allocate our housing stock is inconsistent.	M	This policy will ensure our staff provide a consistent approach to allocations.
<b>Financial</b>	That we are not consistent or robust in allocation our housing stock.	H	The policy ensures as far as possible that a consistent and robust approach is taken to managing allocations, ensuring the financial loss to the council due to void rent loss is kept to a minimum.
<b>Reputational</b>	ReInconsistent decision making on individual applications due to the lack of a clear policy could lead to reputational damage to the Council.	H	Clearly setting out the policy principles and terms and conditions for allocating council houses will help to eradicate this risk.



29.30 The UK Government's PREVENT Strategy requires local authorities to ensure that publicly owned resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. During the allocation process, staff will report any concerns with regard to suspicious activity to their line manager for action. Reports will be reviewed by the responsible Service Manager and appropriate action will be taken to address any concerns.

## 30. Policy Performance

30.1 Detail the factors that will determine whether the policy is effect and adds the value intended and;

Social housing is a scarce resource and the main aim of the allocation policy is to house those who have the greatest need whilst making best use of our housing stock.

30.2 Specify the measurement criteria / indicators that will be used to monitor and demonstrate performance

There are numerous reports which focus on the performance of the various aspects of the allocation process, see below: -

- ✓ Number of Offers and Refusals
- ✓ Demand - House Types, sizes and Letting Areas
- ✓ Active application profile inc deferments and suspensions
- ✓ Year to date - number of offers and to which list
- ✓ Voids summary
- ✓ Housing Access score card
- ✓ Changes to the housing lists - new and cancelled

These reports are usually broken down into the various housing lists, house types sizes and letting areas, they also including information on homeless together with equalities data.

30.3 Specify how and where the performance data will be reported and the frequency of reporting

The reports are produced by the Performance Management and Quality Assurance team and distributed to appropriate offices either weekly or monthly showing current performance and year to date information so that officers can monitor and scutinise current performance and trends against targets and take appropriate action.

## 31. Design and Delivery

31.1 The policy provides for high priority for homeless applicants so they can be housed in settled accommodation quickly, this should assist in attaining the following objective in the LOIP  
 "Improve health and wellbeing outcomes for at least 50% of homeless people participating in the Housing First programme by 2021"

Consider how the policy is aligned to supporting delivery of the Target Operating Model (TOM) and strategic objectives contained within the LOIP

## **32. Housekeeping and Maintenance**

32.1 State how frequently the policy will be reviewed and consider;

- ✓ The current policy has been in place since 2012, it is monitored regularly with changes made where either there are changes in legislation or there are changes to the supply and demand for our homes.
- ✓ When amendments to the policy are made new or updated supporting document are drafted.
- ✓ Any new or updates to policy are supported by Northgate's iworld housing management system.

## **33. Communication and Distribution**

33.1 The current policy and any changes are consulted upon with service users, staff and elected members and other stakeholders. Final changes are reported to committee and updated policy documents are placed on our website. If applicants request it, we can provide the document in other formats such as different languages or fonts.

## **34. Information Management**

34.1 Information generated by the application of this policy will be managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Information Policy and supporting Procedures.

## Appendix 1

Housing Office Contact Information  
Marischal College Customer Service Centre  
Marischal College Ground Floor Broad Street Aberdeen  
AB10 1AB

Kincorth Customer Access Point  
Provost Watt Drive  
Kincorth Aberdeen AB12 5NA

Mastrick Customer Access Point  
Spey Road Aberdeen AB16 6SH

Woodside Fountain Centre  
Marquis Road Aberdeen AB24 2QY

Tillydrone Area Housing Office  
Formartine Road Aberdeen AB24 2RW  
Telephone: 01224 489500

Online applications  
<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/find-home/apply-council-house>

Mutual Exchange  
If you are interested in taking part in a mutual exchange, please visit [www.houseexchange.org.uk](http://www.houseexchange.org.uk)

Homeless Service  
Housing Access and Support Early Intervention and Community Empowerment Marischal College  
Broad Street Aberdeen AB10 1AB

Tillydrone Area Housing Office  
Formartine Road Aberdeen AB24 2RW  
Telephone: 01224 489500

Telephone  
For help completing a housing advice self-assessment contact the Housing Advice service on  
Tel: 03000 200 292

This document is available in various formats and languages

**If you want this document translated into another language or format (including Braille, large print, audio disk or BSL DVD) please contact us via email or telephone number listed below.**

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Ma tha thu ag iarraidh eadar-theangachadh den sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan neo cruth eile (clò mòr neo clàr clàistinneach) feuch an cuir thu fios gu

**If you are deaf or have a hearing impairment, you can still communicate with the Council via Text Relay by dialling 18001 + telephone number:**

**T: 01224 523947**



[www.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Allocation Policy Strategic Place Planning

Aberdeen City Council

Business Hub 3, Ground Floor South

Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB