

# Housing Allocation Policy

## Aberdeen City Council

Approved by Committee on the xx/xx/  
20xx with an implementation date of 20xx



## Document Control

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## 1 Why does the Council need this Policy

- 1.1 The council has a duty to make and publish rules covering priority of allocation of houses, transfers, and exchanges, setting out clearly how it will determine priority for housing (section 21 of the 1987 Act, as amended by section 155 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 and the 2001 Act).

The policy must be compliant within the legislative and regulatory framework for the allocation of social rented sector homes through the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 ("the 1987 Act") and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 ("the 2001 Act") and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act").

It must also comply with the homelessness rules set out in Part II of the 1987 Act (as amended by the 2001 Act and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 ("the 2003 Act")) to demonstrate how the Council will meet its statutory obligation to provide housing for homeless households.

- 1.2 The Policy will provide clarity to applicants and staff on how decisions relating to allocating our housing stock are made and will ensure that all allocations are administered fairly and consistently within the required legal framework. In order to mitigate any risks as far as possible the policy aims to ensure that we let our council houses in line with current legislation and guidance from the Scottish Government, this includes equalities and human rights legislation. Staff are trained to ensure we provide a consistent approach to letting our houses and in providing useful help and advice to applicants.
- 1.3 This policy was developed to comply with current legislation, statutory guidance, and best practice from the Chartered Institute of Housing incorporating the outcomes of stakeholder consultation with staff, applicants, and elected members.

## 2. Application and Scope Statement

- 2.1 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 Housing Options & Allocations Team Leader. Housing Options and allocation advice can be accessed here [housingaccess@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:housingaccess@aberdeencity.gov.uk).
- 3.4 Misuse or breached of this policy may result in applicants being suspended from bidding for properties for certain periods of time.

## 4. Supporting Procedures and Documents

- 4.1 The council has a housing options advice module which helps applicants to see other housing options in the city, see link to the guidance on how to use this self-assessment tool <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/find-home/apply-council-house/self-assessment-guidance>
- 4.2 Details of how the Council allocates property can be found [here](#)

## 5. About this Policy

### 5.1 Choice Based Lettings

Choice Based Lettings (CBL) is a method of letting our council accommodation which gives the applicant choice over where they live and what type of house they live in. We advertise the details of homes available, and applicants can choose which ones they would like to be considered for. We use the term 'bid' if an applicant registers that they want to be considered for a particular property. Properties will be advertised with photographs and videos to help inform the applicant. In applying for a house through Choice Based Letting, prospective tenants will automatically be signed up to our electronic tools such as 'Rent Online' so that their tenancy can be managed most effectively. Please click [here](#) to see our Q and A guide to CBL.

#### Equality for all applicants

Most applicants will be able to use the CBL system unaided, whether they bid for themselves or have someone bid on their behalf such as a Carer or relative. It is important to note that applicants who do not have access to digital technology and/or those who may have an impairment which would make bidding difficult, will be supported by council staff. If required, arrangements can be put in place for automatic bids to be made on their behalf for the areas and house types of their choice to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage.

## Before Applying

Before applying for housing, applicants must complete our Housing Options online self-service tool as there are numerous different housing options in Aberdeen. The online tool helps applicants find out about the different housing options which are available and provides a range of personalised housing advice. Applicants can access the online tool by following this link. [https://housing.aberdeencity.gov.uk/pls/ihslive\\_selfserv/f?p=12000:200](https://housing.aberdeencity.gov.uk/pls/ihslive_selfserv/f?p=12000:200)

Applicants will also be able to undertake a financial assessment at this point to check for affordability and if they are entitled to any benefits to maximise their income.

## Starters and Movers

In Choice Based Lettings, applicants are divided into two main groups called Starters and Movers. Starters are generally people who do not have their own home, rent privately or those who are owner occupiers. Movers are applicants who are tenants of Aberdeen City Council or tenants of a Registered Social Landlord within Aberdeen.

Starters	Movers
People staying with family or friends. Private sector tenants Owner Occupiers Registered Social Landlord or other social rented sector tenants out with Aberdeen. Statutory Homeless People/Families	Council tenants Tenants of a Registered Social Landlord or other social rented sector tenants in Aberdeen

## Homeless Applicants

Initially homeless applicants will not take part in the Choice Based Letting process but will be allocated housing using the current process. We are doing this because of the need to house these applicants as quickly as possible and with homeless applicants housed in temporary accommodation including Bed and Breakfast establishments, access to the bidding process could be limited. However, in time it is expected that homeless applicants will be able to take part in the CBL process.

## Advertising Properties

Our available homes will be advertised on our Aberdeen HomeSearch website for applicants to bid for. However, we reserve the right to make a direct offer to the applicant where the property has been adapted and will suit a disabled applicant, for example a wheelchair user or to other applicants who have particular needs. If applicants have any

difficulties in accessing the advertised properties, applicants can contact 03000 200 292 or contact [housingaccess@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:housingaccess@aberdeencity.gov.uk) for help and assistance.

How long are properties advertised?

Properties will be advertised with a closing date for bids clearly shown. This period will normally be 7 days from placing the advertisement. All bids must be received by the deadline stated in the advert. If no bids are received by the closing date, the property may be advertised again, or we will utilise the property for alternative use.

Help and Support

If applicants require additional advice or support, we can offer an appointment to discuss their housing options with their Housing Officer or if they are not currently an Aberdeen City Council tenant, one of our **Housing Options Staff**. Our Housing Options service is free for anyone over 16 years old to help them find, keep, and sustain their tenancy. The service can give advice on a wide range of subjects including:

- planning to move home and finding new accommodation.
- homelessness and help to prevent homelessness.
- an assessment of housing needs.
- getting support.
- finding education, training, and employment.
- affordability and benefits.

Applicants can contact the service on 03000 200 292 or visit [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/housing](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/housing)

Applying for housing

Before bidding for homes, applicants must first register on our Choice Based Letting platform by completing an application form for housing. Applicants will not be able to bid on any homes before the application process has been completed and the application is live. Before bidding for a property, applicants must ensure their application is up to date, for example, it should include the areas where they wish to live in or changes in the number of people in their household. If any of the applicant's circumstances have changed for example a change in the household or choice of areas, please advise [aberdeencity.gov.uk/housing](http://aberdeencity.gov.uk/housing) immediately. If we make an offer of accommodation and household details are not correct, the offer may be withdrawn.

Who can apply?

Anyone aged 16 years and over can apply for housing unless they are subject to immigration control. Applicants must supply all the information we ask for (proof of identification, etc.) before the application can go live. Staff in Housing Options or Housing Offices can help to complete the application.

To assess an application, we need accurate and up-to-date information about the applicant's circumstances. If the applicant deliberately provides false or misleading information the application will be suspended, meaning the applicant will not be able to bid on or be matched to properties.

Applicants can apply on their own, jointly with a partner or jointly with anyone else who will be living with the applicant. However, we cannot allow the applicant and two or more other applicants who are unrelated to rent a property under this policy because this creates a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) which is governed by separate regulations.

When we process the application, we will advise the applicant whether they are a Starter or a Mover from the information on the application. We will provide the applicant with a unique reference number which is required to access the bidding site, and the applicant will also need to enter a password. The applicant will need to keep the reference number and password safe as it will be needed to enter the site to make bids on properties.

#### Priority

We will also provide the applicant(s) with a priority award, which is based on our current Housing Allocations policy which sets out the priority awarded for certain housing needs, either through the number of points applicant(s) have been awarded based on housing need or a priority assessment. Applicants for housing will be placed in one of three priority groups as follows:

#### Urgent Priority

These applicants are deemed to be those in greatest need and will include the following:

- Serious medical need
- Care Leavers
- Delayed Discharge
- Committee and discretionary cases
- Next Stage Housing
- Statutory Homeless

Should two or more applicants with equal priority bid for a particular property they will be further prioritised by the date on which their priority was awarded. In exceptional cases, the Letting Team Leader may award enhanced priority for people who require immediate re-housing, this will be called Urgent Priority Plus.

#### General Needs Priority

These applicants will be a mixture of Movers and Starters and will be awarded points for their housing need. Should two or more applicants with equal points bid for the same property they will be further prioritised by the date on which their points were awarded.



## Support Priority

These applicants are seeking homes with an element of support which can be either physical or personal and allows for applications to Amenity, Sheltered or Very Sheltered Housing. Applicants will be awarded a High, Medium or Low Priority based on their housing need as assessed by the Housing Needs Assessment Team. Should two or more applicants with equal points bid for a particular property they will be further prioritised by the date on which their priority was awarded.

## Bids

When applicants wish to access HomeSearch they will be asked to enter their reference number and password to access the site. They will then see advertised properties which are suitable for them to bid on. Applicants may bid for as many properties as they wish.

When applicants have either successfully bid or have been matched to a property which has been specifically adapted, we will contact them to make a formal offer of housing. If we offer them the property by telephone, we will always confirm the offer in writing or email. This will include clear steps for the applicant to follow to arrange to view the property which can be done either via a Property Schedule, a virtual viewing or in person.

If applicants do not respond to our attempts to contact them within 5 working days, we will assume they do not want the property and it will be considered as a refusal.

We will ask the applicant to tell us within 48 hours of viewing the property if they are going to accept our offer or not. If an applicant accepts our offer, we will sign them up as our tenant. If they make a joint application, they will have a joint tenancy. All joint tenants must be present when we ask them to sign their tenancy agreement. We will give advice, information, and support throughout the process of becoming our tenant. We will clearly explain all rights and responsibilities under the tenancy agreement before the applicant signs it.

## Bypassing bids

Where we do not make an offer of housing to the highest ranked bidder, we call this 'bypassing.' Only in exceptional circumstances will we bypass a successful bidder. Reasons we may bypass a successful bidder include:

- Public protection / community safety issues.
- The successful bidder has had a change of circumstances but did not notify us.
- The successful bidder's application should be suspended from receiving offers.
- The property does not meet the successful bidder's medical or support needs.
- The property has two bedrooms and is required for a family with children.

We will review offers and bypasses to ensure that bypasses are made fairly.

## 5.2 Who Can Apply

Couples, partners, and people who are cohabiting will be treated as joint applicants. To be eligible for admission to the Council's register, 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 Housing Register unless one of the exceptions listed in that section are met. 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 register does not mean applicants have the right to be housed by the Council.

### Movers and Starter applicants

**The Council uses a Choice Based Letting approach to letting its council houses.**

- Movers are current tenants of Aberdeen City Council or a Registered Social Landlord within Aberdeen.
- Starters are those who are not tenants of Aberdeen City Council or a Registered Social Landlord within Aberdeen.

Prospective applicants can apply online

[https://housing.aberdeencity.gov.uk/pls/ihs/live\\_selfserv/f?p=12000:200](https://housing.aberdeencity.gov.uk/pls/ihs/live_selfserv/f?p=12000:200)

## 5.3 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, ensure 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.

For people in the first two 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.

## 5.4 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:

- 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 person is 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). These powers are used when the circumstances of an applicant are exceptional and fall out with the scope of the policy, decisions on such matters usually reside with the Chief Officer. Click [here](#) for list of 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 live with the applicant for more and less than 50% of the time. For example, one child lives with the applicant full time and other children live with the applicant at the weekends only if the inclusion of the children who are resident less than 50% of the time increases the number of bedrooms 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.

### **5.5. 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.

If an applicant knowingly gives false information on a housing application, the application will be cancelled from the housing register. 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. Any information you provide us is treated in confidence, please see link to our privacy notice.

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/your-data/why-and-how-we-use-your-data/your-data-application-social-rented-housing>

## **5.6 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.

## **5.7 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 register. If they do not respond within 21 days, it is assumed that they no longer wish to be considered for housing and their housing application will be cancelled.

### **5.8 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 who are 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 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.

## **5.9 Types of Households**

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 being statutory homeless, they will receive Urgent Priority 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.

Applicants applying for temporary accommodation from a designated housing renewal area

The 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 Council may assist landlords, owner occupiers and Aberdeen City Council tenants with temporary accommodation see below:

Private tenants

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

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.

#### Aberdeen City Council tenants

Where Aberdeen City Council tenants must 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 given Urgent Priority.

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.

#### **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.

#### **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. 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.

#### 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.

#### Homeowners

In certain circumstances Aberdeen City Council will grant a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy for a temporary let to homeowners who cannot live in their own homes. This is to allow the homeowner 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.

#### 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 personnel 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 Urgent 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 out with 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.

### **5.10 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 Through Care and Housing Service 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 provided with Urgent Priority 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.

### **5.11 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.

## 5.12 Housing Priority and Points and Offers.

All offers are initially given to the applicants with Urgent Priority status with the General needs priority applicants having a quota of 50% of the remaining properties. Quotas are subject to review and can change over time.

### Urgent Priority

Applicants who are awarded Urgent Priority depending on their circumstances as detailed below.

**Emergency homeless:** Applications from persons who are assessed as emergency homeless through fire, flood, or other natural disaster. Such applicants will be awarded Urgent Priority.

**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.

Chief Officer Early Intervention and Community Empowerment can exercise the ability to award a higher priority where issues of Public Protection prevail.

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

**Next stage housing applicants:** applications which are accepted for priority rehousing from such applicants will be awarded Urgent Priority.

**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 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:

- In certain exceptional circumstances either council officers or elected members may present the case to the Operational Delivery Committee, the details of which are held in private session for a decision to be made.
- 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, 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 significantly reduce 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.

## **Housing with support - 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. There is a weekly charge for sheltered, very sheltered and high support housing. Click [here](#) to find details. 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 include 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 in this category 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 in this category will 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

### **Starters**

Applicants will be placed in this category 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 (ii) 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 Starter register 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 Starter register.

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 for Starters.

#### Description

**Room deficiency:** 10

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. 5

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. 0

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

**Mixing of sexes** 4

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. 0

Where the second bedroom would be 4

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:	0
Where the final two bedrooms would be occupied by three people:	4
Where the final two bedrooms would be occupied by four people	6

**Lack of facilities:**

In addition, points are awarded where:

- There is no piped hot water supply within the house. 1
- There is no fixed bath/shower within the house. 1
- There is a toilet outside the dwelling but within the building. 2
- The water supply is outside the dwelling but within the building. 2
- The toilet is outside the building; 5
- The water supply is outside the building. 4

**Non-security of tenure:**

Single persons, couples or families living care of, in the parental home or of no fixed abode 10

**Caravans:**

Applicants who live in a static caravan. 10

**Movers**

Applicants are considered Movers 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 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 a Mover criteria and the other under Starter criteria. It is the responsibility of the joint tenants to decide who will be considered under which criteria. Applicants 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.

### Points available to Movers.

Description	Points
<b>Under occupation:</b>	
For 1 Bedroom surrendered	4
For 2 Bedrooms surrendered	7
For 3 Bedrooms surrendered	10
<b>Room deficiency:</b>	
For every room by which the applicant's accommodation falls short of the required number of bedrooms.	10
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.	5
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.	0
<b>Mixing of sexes:</b>	4
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).	
<b>Size of family</b>	
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	0



Where the second bedroom would be occupied by two people. 4

**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. 0

Where the final two bedrooms would be occupied by a total of three people. 4

Where the final two bedrooms would be occupied by a total of four people. 5

### **5.13 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 Register.

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.

The age qualification for children requiring separate rooms will be in accordance with the bedroom requirements outlined in this policy and not those of the DWP.

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.

### 5.14 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 outwith Scotland. 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 Register.

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
  - Applicants who have a live housing application and who have indicated their interest in considering a mutual exchange, 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.**
  - Tenants can also advertise in the local paper or alternatively place an advert in their local supermarket or shops.
  - Is possible for more than two households to exchange with each other where, appropriate.

### **Some exceptions:**

- Exchanges will not be approved involving owner/occupiers or tenants of a private sector landlord.
- Applicants 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.
- Applicants 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**

- Make arrangements to visit each other's home.
- Inspect 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:**

- Ensure both properties are inspected to see that they are in good condition
- Confirm the size of the houses to make sure that there will be no overcrowding issues or excessive under occupation.
- Check all applicants have a clear rent account and have no outstanding debt in relation to overpayments of Housing Benefit, Rechargeable Repairs or for a former tenancy.
- 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.
- Not refuse consent to exchange without reasonable grounds.
- Not 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, 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.
- When 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.

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

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 click on the link to visit our online Options pages.

[https://housing.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ords/ihslive\\_selfserv/f?p=13000:101:](https://housing.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ords/ihslive_selfserv/f?p=13000:101:)

### **5.15 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 Register. 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.

## **5.16 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 Assistance 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, click [here](#) to see our Pet Policy.

## **5.17 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 list of delegated powers can be found [here](#).

## **5.18 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. Applicants 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. 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 Recharges
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.

#### 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.

#### 5.19 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):

- Use threatening or aggressive behaviour towards Aberdeen City Council staff.
- Have been the subject of verified complaints of antisocial behaviour.
- Evidence of substance abuse.
- Are 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.

## **5.20 Deferment for Refusals of Offers of Accommodation**

If an applicant refuses an offer of accommodation 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.

## **5.21 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 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 with 14 days of receipt.

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

## **5.22 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 register, 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 the 2014 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 which Councils must comply with. These are:

[Human Rights Act 1998.](#)

[UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018](#)

[Matrimonial Homes \(Family Protection \(Scotland\) Act 1981.](#)

[Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995.](#)

[Civil Partnership Act 2004](#)

[Immigration & Asylum Act 1999.](#)

[Protection from Harassment Act 1997.](#)

[Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#)

## **Equalities**

### Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

Aberdeen City Council is subject to duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#). This duty requires us, as a public authority to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act 2010 provides the legal framework to protect the rights of individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. It places a duty on the council to not discriminate against a person because of one or more of their protected characteristics. There are additional legislative requirements and policy changes since the Equality Act 2010, including The Fairer Scotland Duty, introduced in 2018 and others directly related to human rights which have been considered through the Integrated Impact Assessment this policy has undergone.

## **6. Risk**

This policy is designed to mitigate the councils risks in letting its housing stock.  
Strategic - Having a clearly defined policy together with detailed and robust procedures and processes will help staff to clearly understand their role and provide appropriate help and advice to applicants.

Compliance – The new policy clearly outlines the agreed principles through which all Aberdeen City Council houses will be allocated, so that it complies with government and the Regulator legislation and guidance.

Operational - This policy will ensure our staff provide a consistent and robust approach in allocating our council houses. It also provides those applying for housing with help and guidance including other housing options and providing choice to applicants.



Financial – The policy ensures as far as possible that a consistent and robust approach is taken to managing the allocation of our houses. Currently we have high levels of refusals which increases the number of void properties that we're not receiving an income on. This is due to applicants changing their preferences and household make up over time. The CBL bidding process is immediate and applicants have a choice over where they live, this should assist in reducing the refusals and subsequently our Void Rent Loss. Choice Based Letting puts the customer in control. They decide whether they wish to live in a particular property and bid accordingly.

Reputational - Clearly setting out the policy principles, procedures, and actions on how we allocate our council houses will help to eradicate the risk of reputational damage caused by high levels of refusals. This policy will help to mitigate this risk by providing staff and applicants with details on how the process works and affects their priority, together with a robust appeals process.

## **PREVENT**

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. Frontline staff who engage with the public should understand what radicalisation means and why people may be vulnerable to it. PREVENT training is mandatory for all staff, therefore allocations staff applying this policy will have been trained on the PREVENT Strategy and will report any concerns regarding suspicious activity on the part of tenants and other relevant parties for action to their line manager.

## **7. Environmental Considerations**

It is not anticipated that this policy will have a positive or negative impact on the environment.

## **8. Policy Performance**

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

The reports are produced by the Quality Assurance and Performance Management team and are distributed to appropriate officers either weekly or monthly. These detail current performance and year to date information so that officers can monitor and scrutinise current performance and trends against targets and take appropriate action, as required.

Reports will provide data on the properties advertised including the address, area, type, and size, also the number of bids and from which list they come. Also the number of offers generated and to which list they pertain and, number of refusals and acceptances will be monitored to assess the performance of the policy in achieving its objectives.

It is anticipated that the introduction of a CBL system will reduce refusals and help to reduce void rent loss, it is also anticipated that customer satisfaction levels relating to quality of the property will increase given the increased choice for the applicant. Applicants and members of the public can find information regarding this policy on our website, when reporting to council committees, the Scottish Government, or the Scottish Housing Regulator.

## **9. Design and Delivery**

It is anticipated that the proposals in this report will have a positive impact on the number of homelessness. For those who cannot make bids for properties under a choice based letting system, we will use auto-bidding. Auto bidding is a feature of the system which make bids automatically where applicants are unable to bid on-line e.g. those who have no access to computers. This will ensure that people move quickly through the homeless journey. It may also contribute to improved mental health and wellbeing by enabling people to have an improved choice of property and location to meet their needs and improving customer service.

- 9.1 The policy will address the LOIP stretch outcome 11-Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026 by the provision of settled accommodation which is fit for the household needs.
- 9.2 The council's statutory obligations will be met through the policy implementing requirements from the legislation detailed in section 5.

## **10. Housekeeping and Maintenance**

- 10.1 This new policy is replacing the current policy and 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. This policy and supporting documentation will be reviewed and updated annually or sooner if there is new legislation or guidance issued.

## **11. Communication and Distribution**

This policy will be available on the Aberdeen City Council website to be accessed by householders/service users and shared with relevant staff. If applicants have no digital access, information can be obtained by contacting your local housing office. If applicants request it, the policy can be provided in other formats such as different languages or fonts.

## **12. Information Management**

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

### **13. Definitions and Understanding this Policy**

#### Self-Assessment

This is a tool the council has developed so that applicants can enter details of their household including income to determine which housing options are available to them.

#### Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

CBL is a method of letting our council houses, it advertises empty homes and applicants can note an interest "Bid" for properties they are interested in and wish to be considered for.

#### Delegated Powers

These are decision-making powers delegated by Full Council to a Chief Officer to determine any increased priority to applicants whose housing circumstances are outwith the scope of this policy.

## Appendix 1

### Housing Office Contact Information

Marischal College Customer Service Centre  
Marischal College Ground Floor Broad Street Aberdeen  
AB10 1AB

Mastrick Customer Access Point  
Spey Road Aberdeen AB16 6SH

Woodside Fountain Centre  
Marquis Road Aberdeen AB24 2QY

Tillydrone Community Campus  
52 Hayton Road  
Aberdeen  
AB24 2UY

### 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) or

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/information-council-tenants/exchanging-your-council-home>

### Homeless Service

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

### 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.**

Jeżeli ten dokument jest wymagany w innej wersji językowej lub formacie (w dużym druku lub na dyskiecie audio) proszę się skontaktować z

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Allocation Policy Strategic Place Planning

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