



ALLOCATIONS POLICY

AS WITH ALL OF THE ASSOCIATION'S POLICIES, THIS GUIDE IN FULL AND IN PART IS AVAILABLE IN SUMMARY, ON TAPE, IN BRAILLE, & IN TRANSLATION INTO MOST OTHER LANGUAGES –

PLEASE ASK A MEMBER OF STAFF IF YOU WOULD LIKE A VERSION IN A DIFFERENT FORMAT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 Abronhill Housing Association is a registered social landlord, set up to provide and manage property for people in housing need in Abronhill, Cumbernauld, registered in 1993. The Association acquired properties by a unique combination of tenants' choice and trickle transfer during 1995 and 1996 and has since acquired properties through a new build project, tenants' choice transfers and acquisitions through other initiatives. It operates on a "not-for-profit" basis, and is run by an elected Management Committee consisting of local residents who employ a small staff to manage the Association on a day-to-day basis.
- 1.2 This document outlines the Association's Allocations Policy, one of the key documents we produce. In line with good practice, the underlying principle is to allocate our housing stock to those households displaying the highest levels of housing need.
- 1.3 The Association is committed to:
- Providing quality rented accommodation affordable to those in housing need
 - Contributing to the physical, social and economic regeneration of the area
 - Providing a safe environment in which all residents can live
- 1.4 The Association maintains an in-house waiting list.

Housing Stock

- 1.5 The Association owns 227 properties in Abronhill. The type of housing presently provided by the Association is mainly for general needs and, with no current development funding commitment from the Scotland Government, our ability to provide housing for those with special needs is limited.

Formulation of Policy

- 1.6 This policy takes account of the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

Consultation

- 1.7 Consultation with the community and resident participation has always been one of the key aspects of the way in which the Association operates. We therefore welcome the statutory provisions in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 which require all social landlords to take tenants' views into account when formulating key service delivery policies.
- 1.8 We will provide details of proposed changes to tenants and applicants and invite their feedback.



The Role of the Management Committee

- 1.9 The Committee will approve the allocations policy, quota system, the points awarded for different categories of need and the procedures staff will follow.
- 1.10 Committee will consider appeals by tenants or applicants against decisions by staff.

2.0 HOW THE POLICY WORKS

Methods of Assessment and Allocation

- 2.1 The Association operates a points system for allocating its housing. This is a system which is easily understood and simple to administer. It is a fair system of assessment and does not discriminate against any applicant.
- 2.2 Each housing application will be assessed and applicants will be notified of the number of points they have been awarded within 10 working days of receipt of their completed application form.
- 2.3 In operating this system the Association will ensure that priority is given to applicants who are in most housing need. This will include:
- People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness; or
 - Living in houses which do not meet the tolerable standard; or
 - Are living in overcrowded houses; or
 - Have large families; or
 - Are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- 2.4 The Association appreciates that no system can cover all eventualities and there will be some situations where senior management deem it necessary to allocate a tenancy out with the normal points framework. These will be allocated as “Exceptional Circumstances” lets and will include cases such as management transfers and emergency rehousing requests from the police or other agencies. Due to the nature of these lets they are likely to be infrequent and indeed most years there might be none. These will be reported to the Association’s Management Committee and will be included in the annual committee report on allocations.

3.0 ADMISSION TO THE HOUSING LIST

- 3.1 Anyone who is 16 years or older has the right to apply for housing and to be admitted to our Housing List. Applicants will be advised of the Association’s stock type and level. The Association has, on average, 17 vacant properties to allocate each calendar year.



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- 3.2 Applicants will be advised of the likelihood of being housed by the Association once their points total has been assessed. This may be of particular importance to households whose applications attract few points and, unless there is a change in circumstances, it is extremely unlikely that the Association is going to be able to make an offer in the foreseeable future.
 - 3.3 Applicants will be encouraged to consider their housing options and staff will guide applicants in this regard.
 - 3.4 All applicants will be given information and advice of their position on Abrohill Housing Association's list on request. Applicants will also be made aware that their position on the list may change as applicants in greater need apply.

Periodic Review of the List

- 3.5 In order to help ensure that the information held is up-to-date and that each applicant still wishes to be considered for housing by the Association, the Housing List will be subject to review. There will be a constant review cycle in which all applicants will be required to confirm their wish to remain on the Housing List on an annual basis, within one month of the yearly anniversary of their last contact with the Association.
- 3.6 At the time of the review, the Association will ask applicants to confirm that all details held are still relevant, or if a change in circumstances has occurred that needs to be taken into account.
- 3.7 Applicants will be advised that failure to contact the Association in response to the review can lead to their application being cancelled from the Association's Housing List. The Association will write to applicants, however applicants can respond by telephone, email, or visit the Association's office if this is an easier option. Where there is no response within 14 days, the applicant will be sent a second letter advising them that their application will be cancelled from the list if no contact is made within 14 days. All of this will be made clear in the correspondence sent out. If their circumstances have changed applicants may be asked to complete a change of circumstances form. Applicants living at a different address will be asked to complete a change of address form.
- 3.8 If there is no response to the second letter, the applicant's name will be removed from the list. Applicants who subsequently contact the Association within 14 day of cancellation be reinstated.

4.0 QUOTA SYSTEM

- 4.1 Allocations are made principally on the basis of housing need, however the Association operates a quota system under which 25% of allocations are offered to internal transfer applicants; 25% to the Housing Waiting List; 25% to



the Council for homeless applications; and 25% to the Council for non-homeless (other) applicants. The applicant with the most points will be offered a let under the quota system.

5.0 INTERNAL TRANSFERS

5.1 Internal transfers occur where a current tenant wishes to move to another one of the Association's properties. All current tenants have the right to apply and be admitted to the Internal Transfer List.

6.0 THE TENANCY AGREEMENT

6.1 The vast majority of lets will be made on the basis of a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST). In certain very limited circumstances, however, the Association may decide to let on the basis of a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy in compliance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

7.0 MOBILITY SCHEMES

7.1 HomeSwapper is an exchange scheme operated throughout the United Kingdom to assist local authority and social landlord tenants to contact each other to arrange an exchange. The Association supports the principles of the scheme and will:

- advise any Abronhill tenant of the scheme; and
- advise a tenant of another local authority or social landlord wishing to move to Abronhill as part of the scheme.

8.0 WORKING WITH NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

8.1 The Association works in partnership with the Council in the following ways:

- (i) via a Nominations Agreement whereby the Council is asked to provide nominations for 50% of our annual lets (25% to homeless and 25% to non-homeless). This is an annually reviewed agreement which must be confirmed by the Council in writing.

9.0 LETS TO STAFF, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, OR MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES

9.1 Please refer to the Association's Payments & Benefits Policy.

10.0 SUSPENSIONS & REMOVAL FROM THE HOUSING LIST

Suspensions from the Housing and Transfer List



10.1 Abronhill Housing Association will ensure a continuous opportunity for people to apply for housing, be assessed using the needs-based points system and be able to access the housing list.

10.2 In the following circumstances, the Association **will suspend** an application:

- Where an applicant has rent arrears equivalent to, or more than, one month's rent and where an arrangement to repay this amount has not been adhered to for a period of three consecutive months.
- Where an applicant has outstanding charges, rent or rechargeable repairs from a former tenancy, equivalent to (or more than) one month's rent charge and where an arrangement to repay this amount has not been adhered to for a period of three consecutive months.
- Where there is a current Anti-Social Behaviour Order against the tenant or a member of the household to be re-housed, an eviction in the last three years or violence to staff in the past three years. (The final criterion would have to be evidenced and legal advice sought on an individual case basis).
- Where information is required to complete the processing of an application. Two attempts by mail, email or by phone will be made and recorded to obtain the necessary information before suspension. Suspension will be lifted immediately on receipt of the required information. However if the information has not been received within one month of the date of suspension, the application will be cancelled.
- Where an applicant has refused 2 reasonable offers their application will be suspended for a period of 6 months. However this suspension will be lifted where substantial changes in the applicant's circumstances occur.

10.3 Applicants who are suspended from the list will be notified of this in writing. An explanation will be provided on the reasons and the time period that the suspension is to apply will be clearly noted. Applicants will have the right of appeal against suspension. Appeal against suspension should be made in the first instance to the Deputy Director. If the suspension is upheld by the Deputy Director, the applicant has the right to appeal to the Management Committee. Details of the right to appeal shall be included in all correspondence advising applicants of the suspension of their application.

Removal from the Lists

10.5 It will not be usual practice for the Association to remove applicants from the lists and, where this does occur, it will be confined to the following circumstances:



- the applicant has been offered a tenancy by us or another RSL, this offer has been accepted;
- the applicant has requested to be removed from the list;
- the applicant has not responded to the review process;
- the applicant has died; or
- where mail has been returned indicating that the applicant has moved house.

11.0 MEASURING THE OUTCOMES OF THE POLICY

11.1 This policy was last reviewed in June 2016, approved by the Management Committee and will be reviewed every three years unless there are substantial changes, e.g. legislation which will impact on the policy. In order to review this policy effectively, the Management Committee must be able to assess how well the ways in which the policy has been operated accords with the agreed objectives.

11.2 The current reporting framework used by the Management Committee provides them with quarterly reports and an annual report on numbers on the housing lists and details on lets made. This will continue to be the case, however, the annual report will contain the following **additional** information:

- the number of cases where points have been awarded in the “exceptional circumstances” category
- details on any Short Scottish Secure Tenancies let in the year
- details on any instances where the Association has not complied with a request from the Council to provide accommodation to a homeless household
- the number of suspensions applied in the year and the reasons for these
- details of alternative formats requested
- equal opportunities monitoring information (this will be supplementary to the outturn report on the Equality Action Plan)
- number of lets to internal transfer applicants, housing list applicants, council nominees, mutual exchanges, successions/assignments and HOMESWAP

11.3 There will also be a commentary on how the main objectives of the policy have been achieved, together with suggestions on any improvements that need to be made at the next review (or immediately if this is required).

12.0 WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY WITH OUR DECISION REGARDING



YOUR APPLICATION

- 12.1 Applicants or others who are unhappy with our decision regarding a housing application should refer to the Association's Complaints Policy.

13.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITES

- 13.1 The Association is committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for all people in its work. In implementing this policy, our commitment to equal opportunities and fairness will apply irrespective of factors such as gender or marital status, race, religion, colour, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes.



APPENDIX 1

THE POINTS SYSTEM

Working Out How Many Rooms Are Required

- One living room for each household

Plus

- One bedroom for the applicant and his/her partner

Plus

- One bedroom for each person aged 16 years or over

Plus/or

- One double bedroom for up to 2 persons of the opposite sex who are both aged 8 or under (please note: same sex children can share a bedroom up to the age of 16 years old)

Proof of identity and address for all applicants is required. Further information may be requested for other household members at the time of home visits.

The above will be used by the Association when calculating overcrowding or under-occupation points.

1. Overcrowding and Under-Occupation

For every bedspace lacking

10 points

For every bedroom surplus to need

6 points

Where an applicant has part-custody of children, they will be included in the application. A copy of the custody/court order or written confirmation from a solicitor is required. In some circumstances written confirmation from the child's parent/carer (who has the 'main custody') may be sufficient. The parent/carer providing the written confirmation of the custody arrangements must provide full contact details, so the arrangement can be verified by the Association, if required.

Where an applicant is pregnant, the new child will be counted as part of the household upon birth. A copy of the child's birth certificate will be required to confirm identity.

2. Medical Priority

Applicants who indicate they have a medical need for rehousing will have their Application assessed by a suitably qualified medical professional engaged by the



Association. Points are awarded dependent upon the extent to which a medical problem can be resolved or improved by a change in the housing situation of the applicant. Points will be awarded as follows:

0 points	no medical priority
10 points	low priority
15 points	medium priority
20 points	high medical priority

If an applicant requires an additional bedroom due to medical reasons, evidence will be required to substantiate the need.

3. Insecurity of Tenure/Homelessness

For the purpose of this Policy, this group includes all households who, although they are maybe not without shelter, are nevertheless without secure tenure of their home. This includes any applicants whose home is directly provided with their job. Points will only be awarded in one insecurity of tenure/homeless category. Points will be awarded to applicants within this group as follows:-

(i) Homeless Applicants

- Applicants who are registered homeless with Local Authority with a letter stating unintentionally homeless
- Applicants with a valid Notice to Quit
- Applicants with a repossession order
- Notice to leave armed forces/tied accommodation/care leavers
- Applicants currently in prison but due to be released within 2 months.

Evidence is required for all of the above.

It is important to note that households who have been issued with a Notice to Quit will have their application for housing reviewed after the 2-month period. If their landlord is allowing them to remain within their accommodation, the applicant will have their points reduced [to 20 points as noted in (ii) below].

30 points

(ii) Households living in insecure accommodation and under threat of homelessness due to:

- a Notice to Quit in place which is more than 2 months old;



- households who have sold their home and have less than two calendar months to remain within their home
- Applicants living in tied accommodation or armed forces
- Applicants who are registered homeless with the local authority with a letter stating intentionally homeless

Evidence is required for all of the above.

20 points

(iii) Households sharing facilities with another household:

15 points

Please note points can only be issued for one insecurity of tenure/homelessness category

4. Condition of Current Accommodation

Applicants living in conditions that have been formally assessed by an approved environmental assessment officer as 'Below Tolerable Standard' will receive **25 points**. Please note: written evidence will be required to substantiate the 'Below Tolerable Standard' assessment.

5. Harassment

This group will include applicants applicants fleeing domestic abuse, racial harassment, religious or sectarian harassment, homophobic harassment, transphobic harassment and harassment of those with a disability. Points will be awarded to applicants within this group as follows:-

(i) Applicants requiring rehousing due to domestic abuse - **30 points**

(ii) Applicants suffering from anti-social behaviour or harassment (please note: to receive these points appropriate evidence is required)

Extreme (immediate re-housing recommended, serious police involvement) - **30 points**

Serious (landlords warnings issued, police action taken against perpetrators where actions of an anti-social nature are directly targeted at the applicant or member of their household) - **15 points**

Sustained Nuisance (anti-social action in area not directly targeted at the household but causing distress to household where landlord/police action has been taken) - **10 points**

Anti-social behaviour/harassment which applicant cannot provide substantial evidence supporting claim other than written statement from themselves – 5 points

6. Social/Family Need



Only one of the following categories will be awarded (if both apply the higher points will be given.)

- (iii) Applicants or household members over 16 years old wishing to move to Abronhill in order to be close to relatives/friends to give or receive support or to remain in the Abronhill area to give or receive support [evidence required to substantiate] - **10 points**

- (iv) Applicants or household members wishing to move or remain in Abronhill area for employment or educational reasons (e.g. closer to work, transport, etc - evidence required to substantiate) - **5 points**



Appendix 2

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS WITH A LOW NUMBER OF POINTS

The Association is obliged by law to accept all applications. However, the Association owns a limited number of properties. It is not possible to house all who apply and people whose applications attract a low number of points are unlikely to be made an offer of rehousing.

Right to Appeal ~ all applicants have the right to appeal against the points awarded. Information about the allocations policy and the points system are available, free of charge, from the Association. Please tell the Association of any change in your circumstances so appropriate changes can be made to the points awarded.

Award of Points ~ the Association's waiting list is structured to meet the requirements of people in house need, so applicants with a secure home (e.g. a bought house or one rented from an accountable landlord like a Council or Registered Housing Association) are not awarded any points for tenure. It is felt these applicants have more opportunities to solve their housing problems than those without such security.

Mutual Exchanges ~ the Association is a member of HomeSwapper, an online mutual exchange list. It also operates a manual exchange register which lists the name, address and house size of tenants who would like to swap homes with someone whose home would meet their needs. Tenants of any Council or RSL can apply.

Mortgage to Rent ~ owner occupiers who are experiencing financial difficulties may wish to enquire about a Government scheme under which they can sell their home to a housing association or council and continue to occupy it as a tenant. More, free information is available from the Association, Citizens Advice Bureau or other housing and money advice agencies.

Private Lets ~ there is a shortage of socially rented properties in Cumbernauld, a number of private landlords provide accommodation to let. The website www.cumbernauldestateagents.co.uk may be useful.
