



Dundee Housing Allocation Policy

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DUNDEE COMMON HOUSING REGISTER ALLOCATION POLICY

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Summary

This policy:

- Is compliant with current legislation and good practice;
- Makes accurate and consistent assessments based on housing need
- Targets those in urgent need of housing in a fair and consistent way
- Provides a policy which is clear, fair and transparent
- Puts in place and embeds a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse.



INTRODUCTION

Background

This policy describes how people can apply for housing and how they will be prioritised for housing which becomes available. The policy is used by Dundee City Council, Abertay Housing Association, Caledonia Housing Association and Hillcrest Homes who have adopted this policy by working together on a Common Housing Register. The Common Housing Register allows access to housing from all landlords participating in the Common Housing Register through a single application.

A Housing Options approach to meeting housing need will be taken. This combines assessing a person's legal rights to a home with a broader look at all possible housing options open to them which may include: renting from the Council or a housing association; private renting; home ownership; and support to assist tenants to stay in their homes. It is about providing clear, impartial advice and ensuring that applicants are empowered to make the choice that is best for them.

Our Aim, Objectives and Principles:

Our Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone who applies for housing is treated fairly, consistently and with respect and help secure accommodation for households in greatest housing need.

Our Objectives

We will meet our aims by:

- Giving the right priority to people who are in the most need of housing. This includes specific groups identified in legislation to whom we must give 'reasonable preference' namely:
 - a. People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and who have unmet housing needs (including those at risk of harassment and abuse);
 - b. Social housing tenants in Dundee who are under-occupying their home;
 - c. People living in unsatisfactory housing conditions with unmet housing needs; e.g. overcrowded, medical needs and social needs.
- Preventing and responding to homelessness by being proactive through providing appropriate advice and assistance or suitable housing within a reasonable timescale;
- Tailored interventions to support those who need extra help to find and keep a home and live independently and successfully by working in partnership with other agencies such as NHS, Social Work Services and other support providers;
- Making best use of housing that becomes available for rent;
- Working to create communities where people want to live.

Our Principles

Our policy is based on the following principles:

- Fairness and accountability
- Equality, openness and transparency
- Confidentiality
- Consistency of decision making

Acting within the Law

We have developed this policy using the good practice available from the Scottish Government, the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and the Chartered Institute of Housing. This means our policy is fair and gives reasonable preference to applicants in housing need. This policy complies with, and takes account of, the following housing legislation:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Homelessness, etc. (Scotland) Act 2003

We also protect the rights of applicants by meeting the legislative requirements set out in other legislation, including:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998 (GDPR Act 2018)
- Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Management of Offenders, etc. (Scotland) Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

The Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Housing Regulator uses outcomes and standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) to assess the performance of social landlords. To allow the Dundee Common Allocations Policy to meet the required outcomes and standards we have developed our policy to ensure:

- **Outcome 1:** Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.
- **Outcome 2:** Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.
- **Outcome 7:** People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them.
- **Outcome 8:** Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.
- **Outcome 9:** People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.
- **Outcome 10:** People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.
- **Outcome 12:** Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are proved with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when it is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

APPLYING FOR A HOUSE

We wish to make the application process as straightforward and as accessible as possible. We will achieve this by:

- Making application forms available in appropriate formats, at all offices and on the websites of all participating landlords.
- Accepting applications from anyone aged 16 or over who wishes to live in Dundee.
- Allowing applicants to choose the type of housing in areas they would prefer.
- Offering applicants help to complete their form if required.
- Providing advice and information on the options and availability of houses in the City, as well as applicants' housing prospects.

Guidance on how to complete the application is included in the form. Applicants should telephone the Council's Lettings Centre if they need assistance to complete the form. The details the applicant gives on their form will be used to work out how many points they will be given and what housing to offer, so it is important that applicants are accurate when they are telling us what kind of a house they want. To help tenants to sustain their tenancies applicants should describe any support that they need e.g., for furniture or white goods, etc.

Joint Applications

Joint applications are accepted from persons aged 16 or over who wish to be housed together. Applicants may or may not be related, but only two joint applicants may apply. Applicants do not have to be living at the same address to apply, but each will have to supply details of their present circumstances, so that their application for housing can be assessed. Any priority for housing will be based on whichever applicant has the greatest need.

Processing an Application

Applications will be accepted at any of Dundee House, East and West housing offices and by email (lettings.centre@dundee.gov.uk). Upon receipt, applications will be registered and assessed and acknowledged. Points will be awarded to reflect the applicant's housing need as set out in this policy. Applications will then be placed in their priority group.

Applicants will be sent an acknowledgement letter detailing the following:

- The group they are in.
- The points they have been awarded and how these have been calculated.
- Some information about their prospects of being re-housed.
- How to appeal if they feel they have been treated unfairly.
- Where they can get further advice and information about their housing needs.

Making enquiries and References

At the time an application is being assessed, the applicant's addresses in the 3-year period immediately before they apply will be confirmed along with the household composition. A check is carried out for any outstanding debt related to a Council tenancy where there is no existing agreement to repay.

We will ask your landlord for a reference if you've been a tenant at any time in the last three years to find out if:

- You owe any monies
- You have acted in an antisocial manner
- Your landlord has taken any formal action against you to end your tenancy.

If you refuse us permission to get references we won't make you an offer of housing until we receive a satisfactory reference, however your application will not be suspended.

Applications will be placed on the Active Waiting List, (*for those applicants who are currently seeking housing*), or the Inactive Waiting List, for applicants who do not wish to be considered for housing at the present time.

Review of Application

All applications will be reviewed at least once a year. We will take the opportunity to review the circumstances of any applicant whenever they contact us. There are two reasons that we review applications:

- To check that the applicant still wants to be on our waiting list, and
- To make sure that the information we hold is accurate and up to date.

Applicants can make changes to their housing application at any time. This can be done by telephone, by e-mail, in person or in writing to the Council or a Housing Association in the Common Housing Register.

Transfer of Applications

On notification of an applicant's death, the application will automatically be transferred to the surviving spouse or partner as long as they were living with the applicant at the time of their death. Where there is no surviving spouse or partner, the application may be transferred to any other person named on the application form, provided the person is aged 16 or over and has been resident with the applicant for at least 12 months prior to the applicant's death.

Relationship Breakdown

In the event of a relationship breakdown, where the applicants wish to be housed separately:

- Where the application is in joint names, the joint application will be reassessed and each person can apply for housing separately. A new assessment will be carried out for each applicant, based on their current circumstances. They will not lose the date of application originally made by them.
- Where the application was originally submitted in one name, but a joint applicant was subsequently added, each applicant will be entitled to the date they applied.
- Where one of the partners wishes to leave the household and apply for housing, they can submit an application form that will be assessed according to their current circumstances.

Suspensions from the Waiting List

We want to keep to a minimum the number of people we suspend on the Dundee Common Housing Register, but there are some circumstances where we may suspend people from the housing list. Where anyone is suspended we will offer advice and make referrals to mitigate suspensions where possible.

The circumstances where an application will be suspended are:

- Where the applicant owes a debt related to a tenancy which is more than one-twelfth of the annual rent owed to the landlord, or
- Where an applicant has acknowledged any debt and has made an agreement to clear the debt, but this agreement has not yet run for 13 weeks or where the terms of the agreement have not been met, or
- Where there is a current ASBO against anyone in the household or evidence of serious antisocial behaviour in the household, or
- Where the condition of their current house is deemed unacceptable to the Common Housing Register partners, or
- Where they have not supplied us with adequate information to allow us to fully assess their housing application.
- Where information indicates the applicant will not be able to maintain a tenancy straight away, the application may be suspended for a period of time (for example, to assess needs for support) to allow further investigation and/or a support package to be put in place or to allow the applicant to take the necessary steps to resolve their problem.
- Where an applicant deliberately makes a false statement in order to gain access to housing, or withholds important information.
- Where the applicant has refused two reasonable offers of housing

In cases of serious antisocial behaviour, consideration will be given to offering a Scottish Short Secure Tenancy along with the provision of appropriate support.

Appendix 1 details the length of suspension for each reason. Once the period of suspension is over, the application will be reviewed and the applicant re-admitted to the active waiting list with the date that their suspension was removed.

The Council or Housing Association may take action to repossess a tenancy that has been achieved by the tenant providing false and misleading information in respect of their housing application.

INACTIVE WAITING LIST

Applicants on the inactive list will not be made offers of housing until they let us know that they wish to be considered again. We will still continue to review their application annually to ensure that their circumstances are up to date. Applications will be placed on the inactive list where:

- The application is suspended at the applicant's own request.
- The applicant is serving a custodial prison sentence (6 months prior to an applicant's anticipated release date, their form can be re-activated and considered for offers of housing).
- Where we are awaiting further information before a priority can be awarded.

Applicants who are on the inactive waiting list will be placed on the waiting list using their original date of application when they notify us to re-activate their application.

CANCELLATIONS

Applications can be cancelled in the following circumstances:

- At the applicant's request. Where it is a joint application, both applicants must contact us in writing.
- In the event of failure to respond to correspondence, if we cannot contact an applicant by telephone, or a letter we send to them is returned, we will write again to their last known address with a reminder giving them 7 more days to reply. If this letter is also returned, or the applicant does not contact us, we will assume that they are no longer looking for a house and cancel their application. However, if they contact us again within 28 days of the application being cancelled, they can have their original application form reinstated to the date of registration and this will be based on the original application. They may be required to complete a new form if their circumstances have changed.

- When the applicant has been re-housed by the Council or another Registered Social Landlord who are in the Common Housing Register in the City, applicants will then have their application cancelled and may, if they wish, submit a new application.
- People who have applied for other housing associations and who have a nomination or Section 5 referral to the Council will have their application cancelled.

Where an application is cancelled, the applicant has the right to appeal.

MAKING OFFERS OF HOUSING

In accordance with the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Sections 9 and 10), when allocating housing, the Council cannot take account of:

- The age of the applicant (*provided they are aged 16 or over*).
- The length of time the applicant has lived in Dundee.
- The income of the applicant and their family.
- Whether the applicant is living in the same house as a spouse or partner.
- Whether a judicial separation or divorce has been obtained.
- Rent arrears or other tenancy related debt from a house where the applicant is/was not the tenant, there is no debt still outstanding, or the amount due is less than one month's rent.
- Any outstanding debts due by the applicant or their household that are not related to a tenancy.
- No offers will be made to applicants who have not passed the pre-tenancy check.

Offers of housing will be made reflecting applicants assessed housing need.

SIZE OF HOUSING

Applicants will be asked to indicate their preferred house size. To make best use of housing stock, we will only consider the request for one additional bedroom over assessed needs. However, applicants who need the size of house on offer will be prioritised over those who merely desire that house.

Where an applicant is potentially affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy or benefit cap, Housing staff will advise the applicant of their best housing option. Dependent upon demand for housing, applicants may only be offered the size of property their household needs (*refer to the guidance on minimum household sizes in the table on page 14*).

Applicants will not be offered housing that would result in them being overcrowded. Any permanent member of the household who is temporarily absent is still included in the household for the purposes of assessing the size requirements. The number of bedrooms needed shall take into account future or occasional members of the household. This may include:

- An unborn child.
- Where there is a separated parent whose visiting or access arrangements mean they require larger accommodation to accommodate children on a part time basis (who may be allocated a house with one extra bedroom*).
- Foster/adopted children where the applicant has Social Work approval and they need a larger house to provide care*.

***Note:** Applicants should note that if they opt for bedroom accommodation greater than their assessed needs and are eligible for housing benefit, these benefits may be reduced by up to 25%.

Definition of a Family

For the application of this policy a “family” is as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Section 108 as:

- A single adult, a married couple or a couple (*regardless of sex*) living as if married.
- Their children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces.
- A child raised or treated by the partner as if their own (even though the child is not related to them) shall be considered part of the family.
- Two unrelated households or people who apply for housing will be considered by us as one household.

An application for housing where any of the above family relationships are considered to reside with the applicant as part of their household can be assessed for a priority reflecting their needs. It may be that the applicant does not currently live with their extended family (or have not yet taken guardianship of an adopted or foster child) but wishes to obtain housing to accommodate them all. In this situation we will assess whether this is reasonable in accordance with this policy.

Minimum Household Sizes for Housing

Property	Bed space	Example Household Size
Studio	Single	1 Person
1 Bedroom 1 Person	Single	1 Person
1 Bedroom 2 Person	Double	1 person or couple
2 Bedrooms 3 Person	1 Double and 1 Single	Single parent/couple with one child/pregnant woman
2 Bedrooms 4 Person	2 Double	Single parent/couple with 1 child or 2 children(of the same sex under 16 years of age)/pregnant woman
3 Bedrooms 4 Person	1 Double and 2 Single	Single parent/couple with 2 children
3 Bedrooms 5 Person	2 Double and 1 Single	Single parent/couple with 3 children Couple with 2 children (if different sex and one or both children are over the age of 10) or same sex over the age of 16
3 Bedrooms 6 Person	3 Double	Single parent/couple with 2, 3 or 4 children, provided that no more than 2 children of the same sex (if over 10 years of age) have to share a bedroom
4 Bedrooms 6 Person	2 Double and 2 single	Single parent/couple with 4 children
4 Bedrooms 8 Person	4 Double	Single parent/couple with 4 to 6 children, provided not more than 2 children of the same sex (if over 10 years of age) have to share a bedroom
5 Bedrooms	5 Double	Single parent/couple with 6 to 8 children provided that not more than 2 children of the same sex (if over 10 years of age have to share a bedroom

GROUPS AND POINTS ON THE WAITING LIST [ref: page 21 summary of point awards & categories]

All applications will be assessed and placed in one of three priority groups, these being Homeless, General Needs and Transfers. Within each of these groups' applications will receive points reflecting their relative housing need. A description of each group and the points available for assessed needs can be seen below. The allocation policy ensures that each priority group gets a share of the available housing and we have targets for each of these groups. Targets will be subject to an annual review and will be published on the participating landlords' websites. When houses become available to let they will be offered in rotation to match the groups and targets that we have set.

Group	Target %
Homeless	55%
General Needs	20%
Transfer	25%

Homeless Group - Points Awarded: People who have been assessed as being homeless or potentially homeless and who have unmet housing needs will be given 70 points. Members of HM Forces, applicants who are serving custodial sentences and applicants currently living in 'tied' accommodation and who have received a "notice to quit" will also be given 70 points and placed in this group. Our policy objective to 'minimise the impact of homelessness' means that we will target our resources to try and prevent homeless situations before they arise, tenants who have received a valid "notice to quit" and there is threat of eviction will also be given 70 points and placed in this group. Applicants in the homeless group can only have medical points added to their homelessness points. No other types of points can be added. All applicants in the homeless group will be required to maximise their housing options.

- **For non-statutory homeless applicants** - Points may be removed if there is no longer a threat of homelessness or housing options are not being maximised.
- **For statutory homeless applicants** - though every effort will be made to secure accommodation in preferred areas and/or house types we may have to make an offer in areas/house types available to discharge our duties. Any offers made in discharge of our duties will meet the requirements set out at section 32(5) of the 1987 Act.

General Needs Group - This includes applicants who are owners, tenants of private landlords, non-householders, and applicants who have a Council or RSL tenancy out with Dundee. Applicants with unmet housing needs will be prioritised according to a medical need, a social need, those who are living in overcrowded conditions, those living in sub-standard housing conditions and applicants who are staying with family and friends or as lodgers or sub-tenants.

Applicants within this group who are assessed as having no housing need will have no points and will be placed in date order of application.

Transfer Group - This includes applicants who currently hold a tenancy in Council or Housing Association accommodation within Dundee. Applicants with unmet housing needs will be prioritised according to a medical need, a social need, those who are living in overcrowded conditions and those living in sub-standard housing conditions. This group includes transfers required as part of the City Council's redevelopment programme and those under-occupying social housing.

The Transfer Group also includes applicants adequately housed with no housing need. These applicants have no points and will be placed in date order of application.

Points Awarded - An application can be given multiple points if it is assessed as having more than one need (e.g., if an applicant is living in overcrowded conditions and has a medical priority, they will be given points for both needs). The applicant can only be placed in one group.

Points given to the General Needs and Transfer Groups can be awarded for the following needs:

Social Needs Points

People who are experiencing domestic abuse, racial harassment or experiencing violence and aggression towards them or their household, will be awarded 70 social need points. Those who need to live in a particular area to give or receive support, where there is an identified child protection issue, been assessed as a kinship carer, experiencing sustained anti-social behaviour or other extenuating circumstances will be awarded 40 social needs points. We will normally need proof from an applicant that they have a social need before they will be awarded.

People who are given medical points by the Medical Advisory Service because of a social need will not be able to have social needs points added to their application if they are for the same reason as the medical points. Those who are awarded social needs points will be expected to consider housing types and areas that may result in rehousing sooner. Social needs points will be reviewed after 6 months to ensure they are still warranted.

Overcrowding Points

A household is regarded as being overcrowded if they do not have all the bedrooms they need for their household. Excluding kitchen and bathroom, a household's requirements are for a living room plus bedrooms as follows:

- One single bedroom where it will be occupied by only one person.
- One double bedroom for:
 - A single person, a couple, single parent or pregnant single woman.
 - Two children of the same sex.
 - Two children of different sexes where both are under the age of 10.

We will treat a second public room, such as a dining room, as being a bedroom for the purposes of this calculation. No overcrowding points will be awarded to any applicant who intentionally over crowds their house because they have allowed other people to move into their accommodation.

When we check to see if a household is overcrowded, we will look at the number of people in the household and their relationships to each other, and compare that with the number of rooms (and their sizes) in their current accommodation.

We will not award overcrowding points if the applicant has 2 household members of opposite sexes under the age of 10 sharing a bedroom. When one of them reaches their 10th birthday, then 40 overcrowding points will be added to the application to allow them to have separate bedrooms.

If there are 2 people of the same sex in a household sharing a bedroom (whatever their relationship), no overcrowding points will be added to the application.

A child can be considered as part of the household for the overcrowding assessment if they stay in the household a minimum of 3 or more nights a week. Proof of access (e.g., a copy of the separation/joint custody agreement) will be required. Where the applicant has access to children who regularly stay overnight, the family can be assessed as needing an additional room, although they will not be awarded overcrowding points.

Under-Occupation Points

Where the applicant is a tenant of the Council or a Registered Social Landlord in Dundee and the house the applicant is living in is too big for the household, we will award extra points on their application. If the applicant has one bedroom more than needed, we will award 40 points and if they have two or more bedrooms than needed, we will award 70 points.

People Living in Sub-Standard Housing Conditions

This refers only to housing which is below the tolerable standard (BTS) as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, Section 86 (as amended). For an applicant to be awarded points, their accommodation must fail one or more of the following measures:

- Is structurally stable
- Is substantially free of rising and penetrating damp
- Has satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and heating
- Has an adequate supply of piped and wholesome water available within the house
- Has a sink provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water within the house
- Has a water closet available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the house and suitably located within the house
- Has a fixed bath or shower and a wash hand basin each supplied with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water and suitably located in the house.
- Has an effective system for the drainage and dispersal of both foul and surface water
- Has satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food within the house
- Has satisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings

Where an applicant is judged to be living in housing below the tolerable standard as outlined above, their application will be awarded 70 points.

(Note: Private Sector Services Unit/Housing Asset Management Unit should be requested to confirm whether a house falls below the tolerable standard).

Non-Householders

Applicants who do not have their own home but aspire to have a tenancy will be awarded 20 points.

Applicants who are staying with family, friends or as lodgers and are sharing facilities with that household will be awarded an additional 20 points.

Applicants who have been assessed as homeless will not be awarded additional points under this category.

Medical Points

If an applicant's present accommodation is unsuitable for medical reasons, then they should complete a medical assessment form. Applicants will only qualify for this priority where a house move is expected to improve the household member(s) medical needs/circumstances. The Tayside Medical Advisor will assess the form and may award a low, medium or high priority to reflect the applicant's needs. This will add 20, 40 or 70 points respectively to their application. The Medical Advisor may advise on the type, size and area of housing which is suitable. In the case of shared care or access to children, medical points will only be considered for a child's primary residence unless in exceptional circumstances.

Redevelopment Points

Where there has been a decision to demolish or redevelop their houses in Dundee, applicants will be awarded redevelopment points. Where an applicant has a current application form, they will be awarded 70 points based on the date of the decision to demolish, by committee. Where an applicant has no current application, they will be awarded 70 points from the date they apply.

Definition of Unmet Housing Needs

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 states that people have unmet housing needs 'where the social landlord considers them to have housing needs which are not capable of being met by housing options

which are available'. Being able to meet their own housing needs could be described as being able to secure suitable accommodation which meets their needs from existing housing options. No reasonable preference will be awarded in cases where these needs can be met from existing housing options.

A breakdown of points awarded can be seen in Appendix 2.

Exceptional Circumstances

In some cases, applicants may require to be awarded extra priority to meet an urgent or exceptional housing need in as short a timescale as possible. Examples of where exceptional circumstances may arise may include, but are not restricted to, care experienced young people, people leaving supported accommodation, people who are ready to leave hospital but cannot as they don't have suitable accommodation (usually referred to as delayed discharge), people staying in adapted housing who no longer need it.

If you are awarded extra priority over other types of housing applicant because of the urgent circumstances that you are facing, we will make you one reasonable offer of accommodation, this will usually be to housing which is most readily available. If you refuse the offer we make, this will normally result in the priority being withdrawn and your application will be reviewed.

Applicants who are given extra priority and are not rehoused within 3 months of being awarded extra priority will have their application reviewed

HOUSING FOR PARTICULAR NEEDS

Some of our housing has been built or adapted to meet the needs of people who have a particular need. A description of these house types and who qualifies can be seen below:

Amenity Housing

Amenity Housing provides independent accommodation for people aged 50 years or over in a warm, comfortable and secure environment. The accommodation is designed for older people who do not want or need a full sheltered warden service and who do not have significant physical impairment. Each property will normally comprise of a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom or shower-room with heating throughout with one or more of the following features:

- Raised sockets and switches
- Bathroom handrails
- Non-slip flooring
- Will be no higher than ground or 1st floor

The accommodation does not provide a sheltered warden service but the following can be provided if required:

- Community Alarm
- Communal Cleaning
- Housing Support

Applications for Amenity Housing will be accepted from households where one or more of the household members are aged 50 or above. Households containing children aged under 16 will not normally be accepted but it is possible for households with children to be allocated amenity housing on the recommendation of the Medical Advisory Service.

Sheltered Housing

Sheltered Housing is housing for older people aged 60 or over. A warden service and a community alarm are provided for which there is a charge. It is possible for people under the age of 60 to be allocated sheltered housing but this is exceptional and will only be done on the recommendation of the Medical Advisory Service (for example, someone with a learning disability who needs a degree of housing support). In two bedroomed sheltered accommodation it is possible for a carer or able bodied

relative to be part of the applicant's household with a recommendation from the Medical Advisory Service.

All applications for sheltered housing are assessed by the Medical Advisory Service, who will take into account the medical requirements and current housing circumstances of the household and may award a low, medium or high priority to reflect need. This will add 20, 40 or 70 points respectively to an application.

Retirement Housing

Retirement housing is accommodation designed to allow independent living within a safe community setting. This offers accommodation to those over the age of 60. Retirement schemes consist of self-contained properties with staff on site part time, usually a scheme manager. All properties are linked to a 24-hour emergency alarm system, meaning help is always on hand.

Very Sheltered Housing (Retirement with meals) and Housing with Care (Retirement PLUS, with meals)

Applicants for the above will have their medical needs assessed and prioritised by the relevant panel and will be awarded a low, medium or high priority, with 20, 40 or 70 points respectively, to reflect the severity or urgency of their needs. For this type of housing we will match an individual applicant to a specific property ensuring best use is made of the accommodation.

Disabled Adapted Housing

Applicants for the above will have their medical needs assessed by the Council's Medical Advisor and will be awarded a low, medium or high priority, with 20, 40 or 70 points respectively, to reflect the severity or urgency of their needs. For this type of housing we will match an individual applicant to a specific property ensuring best use is made of the accommodation. The Council will assist applicants to move when disabled adapted housing is no longer needed or required.

MAKING OFFERS OF HOUSING THAT IS "READILY AVAILABLE"

Houses may be classified as "readily available" under the following circumstances:

- When there is little or no demand for a particular empty property, or
- The property has been formally offered and has had 3 property-based refusals, or
- The property has been fit to view and had remained un-let after 3 weeks.

Properties deemed to be readily available will be let by advertising so that people who are on the waiting list can let us know that they are interested in being considered for it. The applicant's needs and household size must be suitable for the property. We will allocate the property to the applicant with the highest number of points and the greatest need. Properties will be advertised on the participating landlords' web sites, and in their offices.

LOCAL LETTING INITIATIVES

From time to time we may introduce special rules for letting houses in certain areas of the City. This can be for a number of reasons including:

- Where houses are difficult to let, or
- Where there are management reasons which mean that we wish to depart from the agreed letting policy for a certain area or a certain type of housing.

When we do this, we will publish the special rules, consult with local residents and seek the permission of the Council's Housing Committee or the Boards of participating Registered Social Landlords. The relevant landlord will monitor any local letting initiative to make sure that it has been effective.

When setting up initiatives, due regard will be taken of legislative requirements. Local tenants, residents and elected/board members will be involved in the development of local letting initiatives

and details of the scheme will be advertised. Initiatives will be reviewed every 6 months in order to assess their continued need.

Nomination Agreements

We have nomination agreements with other Social housing landlords who have housing in Dundee. They may ask us to tell them about anyone on our housing list who is looking for housing in areas where they provide houses. We call these nomination agreements.

Application Checks

On receipt of application, at periodic review and prior to making an offer of housing, pre-tenancy checks will be carried out for all applicants. Landlords who participate in the Common Housing Register will share information between them or seek references from other landlords operating out with Dundee.

These checks will include carrying out interviews with applicants to confirm their current housing circumstances and check that their current tenancy is being maintained to a satisfactory standard. This may include carrying out home visits. Checks will be carried out for evidence of any debt related to a tenancy, evidence of any serious antisocial behaviour or other serious breaches of tenancy.

Where information indicates the applicant will not be able to maintain a tenancy straight away, the application may be suspended for a period of time to allow further investigation, to allow a support package to be put in place or to allow the applicant to take the necessary steps to resolve their problem and provide support where required.

Where an applicant has been evicted as a result of antisocial behaviour within the past 3 years, where they are made an offer of housing, this will be a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy with support. Where there is evidence of antisocial behaviour, the applicant will remain on the active waiting list and have their behaviour monitored. No offer of housing will be made unless the level of behaviour is considered satisfactory by the Council or Housing Association.

Applicants who have a debt related to a tenancy that is worth more than one month's rent and there is no repayment arrangement in place which has been maintained for at least 13 weeks will be suspended for an offer of housing. Their agreement to pay will be monitored and offers of housing will be dependent on evidence of satisfactory repayments.

National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders

This policy is subject to the National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO) published in January 2012, which sets out the arrangements for housing offenders subject to the sex offender notification requirements.

OFFERS OF HOUSING

Number of Offers

Applicants will be made **two** reasonable offers of housing to meet their needs, as stated in their application. In cases where the applicant refuses their first offer, the application will be reviewed and their Housing Options discussed. In cases where the applicants two reasonable offers (i.e., meeting the assessed needs and preferences of the applicant), applicants will be suspended for 6 months.

In cases where the applicant is statutory homeless, after **two** reasonable offers have been refused, the Department may decide that their duty to re-house the applicant under homeless legislation has been discharged. The application will then be re-assessed and placed in the appropriate queue.

Mutual Exchanges

Several of the landlords participating in the CHR operate the House Exchange Scheme for Mutual Exchanges. The scheme provides the facility for secure tenants to exchange their home:

- Registration is made online at www.houseexchange.org.uk
The exchange must be with another Scottish Secure Tenant whose landlord is a local authority, registered social landlord, water authority or sewerage authority.
- Applications will also be accepted from tenants who wish to exchange with a secure tenant of a local authority in other parts of the UK.
- Both landlords must agree to the exchange. Applicants who wish to apply can contact the Letting Centre.

We will carry out a pre-tenancy check on our tenant/s, where there is a debt that is related to a tenancy, it must be no more than one-twelfth of the annual rent owed to the landlord, or there must be an agreement in place to clear the debt and this must have been kept for a minimum of 13 weeks. Tenants must not be subject to ongoing action for antisocial behaviour prior to the exchange being approved.

We will not refuse an application for a mutual exchange without good reason.

Management Transfers

A management transfer is used to assist in urgent re-housing cases where the allocation policy would not deliver a resolution quickly enough. Management transfers can apply to tenants of the Council or partner housing associations.

Management transfers should only be granted where there is a serious risk to the tenant should they remain in the current tenancy or where, for compelling and exceptional reasons, we wish to re-house the applicant as a matter, or urgency. Examples of this are:

- Information obtained from Police or Anti-Social Behaviour Unit that the person is under threat if they remain in their present accommodation.
- Requests regarding child or adult protection services to remove an individual or family for personal safety reasons, e.g., under a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
- Other reasons as deemed necessary by the landlord.

Only one reasonable offer of a Management Transfer will be given and, should this be refused, the Management Transfer will be cancelled, unless there are highly exceptional circumstances which can be justified to permit a second offer.

APPEALS

If an applicant is unhappy with a decision or an offer of housing we have made, they have the right to appeal. If the applicant wishes, we will help them to complete an appeal, or they can have a friend or relative make the appeal for them, as long as the applicant gives their permission.

The appeal will be dealt with by a more senior member of staff not related to the initial decision or offer of housing. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of the appeal in writing within 28 days. If an applicant is unhappy with a medical assessment made by the Tayside Medical Advisory Service, a separate appeals process exists. Where an applicant wishes to appeal, we will give them assistance.

All appeals should be sent by post or email to -

Lettings Centre
East District Housing Office
169 Pitkerro Road
Dundee
DD4 8ES

Email: lettings.centre@dundee.city.gov.uk

COMPLAINTS

If an applicant feels they have been treated unfairly or are unhappy with the level of service they have received from us, the applicant can complain by letter, by telephone, or by using a complaint form which is available on landlords' websites.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Should an applicant or service user remain dissatisfied having exhausted the organisations' internal complaints procedures the applicant/service user can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and/or the Scottish Housing Regulator :

SPSO Freepost EH641 Edinburgh www.spso.org.uk/online-leaflets 0800 377 7330	Scottish Housing Regulator 58 Waterloo Road Glasgow, G2 7D www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk 0141 305 4199	Shelter Housing Aid Centre 4 South Ward Road, Dundee, DD1 1PN 01382 225544
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Other local advice agencies within Dundee can provide advice and advocacy on housing allocation matters. Details can be found on the Council's website.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Council and RSL partners of the Common Housing Register will review this policy every 3 years. It will also be monitored regularly to ensure that equality requirements are met in terms of access to and allocation of housing as set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

- We will monitor regularly the quality of a percentage of all offers of housing made to applicants in each of the groups and review the data to ensure that we are meeting our objectives to giving greatest priority to people in need.
- We will monitor regularly the quality of a percentage of all application forms processed to make sure we are getting it right.
- We will review the targets for lets to each group every year and regularly ask our customers what they think of our policy and service.
- We will monitor the number of complaints and appeals we receive, analyse the data and use our findings to improve our future performance.

APPENDIX 1

Suspension Reasons and period

Reason for Suspension	Period of Suspension	Reason for Ending Suspension	Applicant Group
You refuse two reasonable offers of housing	6 months from date of second refusal	Application reviewed after 6 months	General Needs Homeless* Transfer
You withhold, or give wrong or misleading, information that you should have told us about your household details, housing needs, and any tenancies in the last three years that you owned, lived in or were evicted from	12 months from date discovered	Application reviewed after 12 months	General Needs Homeless* Transfer
You are a tenant but you've breached your tenancy conditions and your landlord has given you notice of proceedings for recovery of possession or has a decree or order from a court for your eviction	Duration of notice / order	Behaviour has to be satisfactory for length of notice / order	General Needs Transfer
You or someone that lives with you are the subject of an ASBO - the application will be suspended until the conduct or behaviour has changed	We will review your behaviour at the end of 12 months	Evidence that behaviour has improved	General Needs Transfer
You have lost a previous tenancy by abandoning it, within the last 3 years	12 months from date of application.	Application reviewed after 12 months	General Needs Transfer
You have outstanding rent arrears and there is no arrangement in place to repay what you owe	Subject to you repaying the debt, or making a satisfactory arrangement to repay the debt	Evidence that the rent or service charge debt has reduced and you have made at least 13 weekly payments of what you owe	General Needs Transfer
You have previously been evicted by a court order in the last 3 years.	12 months from date of application.	Application reviewed after 12 months	General Needs Transfer

**Statutory homeless applicants will not be suspended*

APPENDIX 2

Summary of Points Awards and Targets

Points Group		Number of Points	Targets
Homeless Group	Statutory Homeless or threatened with homelessness	70	55%
	People under active threat of eviction in the next 6 months due to receiving valid notices from their landlord (including tied accommodation) (not assessed as threatened with homeless)	70	
	People who have been released from prison or who are within 6 months of their anticipated release date	70	
	Members of HM Forces who are within 9 months of their anticipated date of discharge	70	
General Needs	Housing which is Below the Tolerable Standard	70	20%
	Overcrowded - require one additional bedroom	40	
	Overcrowded - require two or more additional bedrooms	70	
	Medical - Low	20	
	Medical - Medium	40	
	Medical - High	70	
	Social Need - Medium	40	
	Social Need - High	70	
	Non-householders - Want own Tenancy	20	
	Non-Householders - Sharing Facilities	20	
Transfers	Housing which is Below the Tolerable Standard	70	25%
	Redevelopment	70	
	Overcrowded - require one additional bedroom	40	
	Overcrowded - require two or more bedrooms	70	
	Under Occupied - 1 bedroom more than needed.	40	
	Under Occupied - 2 bedroom more than needed.	70	
	Medical - Low	20	
	Medical - Medium	40	
	Medical - High	70	
	Social Need - Medium	40	
	Social Need - High	70	