

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 26 JUNE 2006

REPORT ON: LETTING POLICY REVIEW – CONSULTATION DRAFT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO.: 379-2006

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1. This report suggests a review of the Council's House Letting and Allocation Policy to ensure that it takes regard of legislative change and best practice.
- 1.2. The report suggests that a draft policy is consulted upon with the aim of adopting a revised Letting and Allocation Policy to co-incide with the opening of the Letting Contact Centre.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. It is recommended that:
 - i. The Draft Policy at Appendix 1 is circulated for consultation with all stakeholders and tenants' representatives.
 - ii. On completion of the consultation exercise, the Director of Housing brings forward a finalised Letting and Allocation Policy to a future meeting of the Housing Committee.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. Implementing the recommendations of this report will have no implications for the Housing Revenue Account or Council Tax.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. As a result of implementing these recommendations:
 - i. Local needs will be met locally.
 - ii. Access to shelter at a reasonable cost will be achieved.
 - iii. All sections of the community will be empowered to participate in decision making.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. As a result of implementing the recommendations of this report:
 - i. Discriminatory practices and procedures will be eliminated.
 - ii. The needs of women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and other target groups have been assessed.

6. BACKGROUND

Legislation and Good Practice for Letting Policies

6.1. The duties required of local authorities when letting their houses are set out in Sections 19 to 21 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by Sections 9 and 10 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. A summary of these requirements are:

- i. **Anyone aged 16 or over must be admitted to the waiting list.**
- ii. **Reasonable preference for housing must be given to:**
 - a. **Homeless persons/those threatened with homelessness.**
 - b. **People living in housing which does not meet the tolerable standard.**
 - c. **People who are overcrowded.**
 - d. **Large families.**
 - e. **People living in unsatisfactory conditions.**
- iii. **When selecting tenants we can take no account of:**
 - a. **The length of time an applicant has resided in the local authority's area.**
 - b. **Whether the applicant or his family owns or has owned heritable or moveable property.**

6.2. Best practice in letting suggests that letting policies should:

- i. Contribute to the development of balanced and sustainable communities.
- ii. Create and maximise choice for applicants.
- iii. Promote social inclusion.
- iv. Involve service users in development and revision of policy.
- v. Make effective use of housing stock.
- vi. Make provision for residents of hostels and non-secure accommodation to move on to permanent homes.
- vii. Promote and achieve equality of opportunity.

6.3. It is proposed that the aims and objectives for our Letting Policy are that:

- i. It will contribute to keeping voids down to annual targets.
- ii. It will give greatest priority to people with housing need, in particular:
 - a. Homeless people.
 - b. People living in poor housing conditions (i.e. below the tolerable standard).
 - c. People who are overcrowded.
 - d. People who live in houses or areas which are causing them stress (e.g. suffering racial or domestic abuse, people who need to live close to carers or support).
 - e. People who have a medical reason for rehousing.
 - f. People who are under-occupying a social-rented house.
 - g. People whose houses are to be demolished.
- iii. It will contribute to enabling the regeneration programme to progress (rehousing for demolition areas to help progress to meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015).
- iv. It will be as clear, simple and understandable as we can make it.

- v. Decisions will be made openly and transparently with rights of appeal for all applicants.
 - vi. It will contribute to social inclusion and promote equality of opportunity.
 - vii. It should be flexible to changing needs and priorities in the City.
 - viii. It should be flexible to the requirements of the Common Housing Register and Letting Contact Centre.
- 6.4. Taking into account legislative duties and best practice a draft letting and allocation policy has been drawn up and can be seen at Appendix 1.
- 6.5. The draft at Appendix 1 suggests a “points and groups” system for allocating housing. Within this, points will be awarded to applicants who have a housing need:
- i. Homeless people or people who are at risk of becoming homeless
 - ii. People living in housing which is Below the Tolerable Standard
 - iii. People who are overcrowded
 - iv. People who are under occupying their accommodation
 - v. People who have a medical reason for rehousing
 - vi. People who need to move for social reasons
 - vii. People whose houses are to be demolished
 - viii. People who aspire to their own tenancy
- 6.6. It is also proposed that targets are set to share out available housing among the following groups:
- i. Homeless people
 - ii. People whose homes are to be demolished
 - iii. People with other defined needs
 - iv. People with no defined needs
- 6.7. It is recommended that the Housing Committee approves that the draft Letting and Allocation Policy (Appendix 1) is used as a basis for consultation with partner agencies, tenants’ representatives and other interested groups.
- 6.8. It is further recommended that on completion of this consultation exercise, the Director of Housing brings forward a report to a future Housing Committee with recommendations for a finalised Letting and Allocation Policy.

7. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1. The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning), Director of Economic Development, Director of Planning and Transportation, Head of Communities and Dundee Federation of Tenants’ Associations have been consulted on this report.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1. None.

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DIRECTOR OF HOUSING
1 JUNE 2006

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ALLOCATION REVIEW

CONSULTATION DRAFT

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INDEX

D

PAGE NO

1.	Applying for a House	1
2.	Making Offers of Housing.....	6
3.	Description of Groups.....	8
4.	Making Offers of Housing that is Readily Available	15
5.	General Issues.....	15
6.	Monitor and Review.....	17
7.	Appeals and Complaints.....	18
8.	Appendix 1 Summary of Points Awards and Targets	

General Principles

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that everyone who applies to us for housing is treated fairly, consistently and with respect.

Our policy aims to promote equality and diversity, by eliminating discrimination between persons on grounds of race, colour, ethnic and national origins, marital status, domestic circumstances, gender, sexuality and transgender, age, class, ethical or religious belief, basic skills, disability, trade union activity or long term unemployment.

1. APPLYING FOR A HOUSE

1.1. 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 Council's website.
- Enabling applicants to apply by telephone.
- Accepting applications from anyone aged 16 or over who wishes to live in Dundee.
- Ensuring that all applications are acknowledged, registered and assessed.
- Allowing applicants to choose the type of housing in areas they would prefer.
- Setting a qualifying age for sheltered housing of 60.
- Offering applicants help to complete their form if required.
- Providing, in appropriate formats, advice and information on the availability of houses in the City, as well as applicants' housing prospects and options.

1.2. Processing an Application

Applications will be accepted at any of our housing offices.

- Upon receipt, applications will be acknowledged, registered and assessed.
- 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 advised of the points awarded, how they have been calculated and how to appeal if they feel they have been treated unfairly.
- Applicants will be advised of where they can get further advice and information about their housing needs.

- At the time an application is being assessed the applicant's previous addresses will be confirmed and a check carried out for any outstanding debt related to a Council tenancy where there is no existing agreement to repay.
- 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 will not be considered for housing at the present time.

1.3. **Joint Applications**

The Council welcomes joint applications from persons aged 16 or over who wish to be housed together.

Where joint applications are not from the same family, no more than 2 joint applicants may apply. This rule is in place to prevent Houses in Multiple Occupation regulations from being enforced.

They 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 to ensure they get the highest number of points possible.

Should their circumstances change, and they no longer wish to be rehoused together, a new assessment will be carried out for each applicant. They will not lose the date of application originally made by them. Where the application was originally submitted in one name, but another joint applicant was subsequently added, then each applicant will be entitled to the date they applied.

1.4. **Review of Application**

All applications for housing will be reviewed regularly. Applicants on the Waiting List who are within 3 months of being offered housing will have their application reviewed. This will be carried out in order to check the applicant's circumstances, and to confirm their housing need and preferences. For those applicants who have been suspended through the Access Policy, their applications will be reviewed at a time determined by the Access Officer, but will be reviewed at least once a year. Where there has been no activity on an application form for twenty four months, applicants will be contacted to check if their circumstances have altered, and if they wish to remain on the Council's Waiting List.

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. All contact we have with applicants will advise them that it is their responsibility to inform the Council if their circumstances change.

1.5. **Cancellations**

Applications can be cancelled in the following circumstances:

- At the applicant's request. *(A letter of confirmation will be sent to the applicant).*
- In the event of failure to respond to correspondence. *(In the event of no contact to a telephone call, a follow up letter will be sent).*
- On the death of the applicant.

Where an application is cancelled, the applicant has the right to appeal. Where an appeal is successful, the application will be reinstated with the date of the most recent form.

It is the applicant's responsibility to advise us of a change in circumstances to allow us to re-assess their application.

1.6. **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 6 months prior to the applicant's death. **The Council may ask for proof of residency when a request to transfer an application is received.**

1.7. **Relationship Breakdown**

In the event of a relationship breakdown, where the partners wish to be housed separately, the following will apply:

- Where the application is in joint names, the joint application will be cancelled 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, then 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. Where there is a current joint application for housing, 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, then each applicant will be entitled to the date they applied.

1.8. **Inactive Waiting List**

The Council holds list of applicants who are not actively seeking housing at the present time, or who, through the pre-tenancy checking process are suspended. The reasons are:

- Applications deferred at the applicant's own request.
- Those living in tied accommodation and not under notice to quit.
- Those currently serving a custodial prison sentence.
- Where we are awaiting further information before a priority can be awarded.
- Applicants who are suspended through the pre-tenancy checking process.

Applicants who are held on this list can make changes to their application. Where a change in circumstances is made, that could affect their priority, the Council will review the application to ensure any priority awarded is accurate and up to date.

Where applicants who are deferred at their own request or are living in tied accommodation re-activate their application, they will be placed on the waiting list with their original date of application. Similarly, where an applicant has been suspended awaiting the award of a priority, the original application date will be given.

The Council will suspend applicants for non payment of debt related to a tenancy, proven anti-social behaviour or breach of tenancy. Their application will be placed on the active waiting list with the date their suspension was removed when they are re-instated.

1.9. **False and Misleading Information**

Where an applicant deliberately makes a false statement in order to gain access to housing, or withholds important information, their application may be suspended for a period of 6 months. Once the period of suspension is over, the application will be reviewed and re-admitted to the waiting list with the date that their suspension was removed. The Council 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.

1.10. **Pre-Tenancy Checks**

All applications will be admitted to the waiting list. Prior to making an offer of housing, the Council will carry out a pre-tenancy check for all applicants.

These checks will include carrying out interviews with applicants to confirm current housing circumstances and check that, where appropriate, their current tenancy is being maintained to a satisfactory standard. This may include carrying out home visits or, seeking references from other social registered landlords and registered private landlords.

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 (*from a minimum of one month, for example to assess needs for support to a maximum of one year for evidence of serious anti-social behaviour*), 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. Where an applicant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour within the past 3 years, they may be offered a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy with support.

Applicants who have a debt related to a tenancy and who have signed an agreement to repay will be placed on the waiting list. This agreement will be monitored and offers of housing will be dependent on evidence of satisfactory repayments.

If the application is suspended, the applicant will receive written confirmation of the following:

- The reason why they will not be offered housing now.
- An explanation of the next steps in the process.
- The steps they can take to resolve the problem.
- Advice on when their case will be reviewed.
- Their right to appeal the decision.

2. MAKING OFFERS OF HOUSING

2.1. Information to be Considered when Selecting Applicants

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 they own or have owned a property.
- 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 (*including Council Tax*) 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.

2.2. Size of Housing

Applicants will be asked to indicate their preferred house size. However, actual house size required (*using the guidance included in the table on page 7*) will be taken into consideration when allocating properties. Applicants will not be offered housing that would result in them being overcrowded. When deciding between applicants with the same number of points, priority will be given to the applicant whose household will make best use of the number of bedrooms the property has. 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 will take into account future or occasional members of the household. This may include:

- An unborn child where a member of the household is pregnant.
- Where there is a separated parent whose visiting or access arrangements mean they require larger accommodation.
- Foster/adopted children where the applicant has Social Work approval and they need a larger house to provide care.

**Minimum Household Sizes
for City Council Housing**

Property Size	Bed Space	Household Size
Studio	Single	1 person
2 Apt (1 bedroom) 1 person	Single	1 person
2 Apt (1 bedroom) 2 person	Double	1 person or couple
3 Apt (2 bedrooms) 3 person	1 Double and 1 Single	Single parent/couple with one child/pregnant woman
3 Apt (2 bedrooms) 4 person	2 Double	Single parent/couple with 1 child or 2 children of the same sex/pregnant woman
4 Apt (3 bedrooms) 4 person	1 Double and 2 Single	Single parent/couple with 2 children
4 Apt (3 bedrooms) 5 person	2 Double and 1 Single	Single parent/couple with 2 or 3 children
4 Apt (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 have to share a bedroom
5 Apt (4 bedrooms) 6 person	2 Double and 2 Single	Single parent/couple with 4 children
5 Apt (4 bedrooms) 8 person	4 Double	Single parent/couple with 4 to 6 children, provided not more than 2 children of the same sex have to share a bedroom
6 Apt (5 bedrooms)	5 Double	Single parent/couple with 6 to 8 children provided that not more than 2 children of the same sex have to share a bedroom

2.3. Definition of a Family

For the application of this policy a “family” is as defined in the Housing Scotland 2001 Act s108. The Act defines a family 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 containing any of the above family relationships shall be accepted as a household which can be given 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.

3. DESCRIPTION OF GROUPS

The allocation policy is based on housing need, and a group plus points system is used to assess applications. A summary of the points awarded and the targets for each group is attached at Appendix 1.

There are 4 target groups for letting. These groups are:

- **Homeless** – Target to be 35% of all lets.
- **Redevelopment** – Target to be 20% of all lets.
- **General Needs** – Target to be 40% of all lets.
- **Choice** – Target to be 5% of all lets.

A description of the groups and the points awarded to each priority need is outlined below:

3.1. The Homeless

The Council has responsibilities in relation to homeless people, people threatened with homelessness and the prevention of homelessness in Dundee. Services to the homeless or those threatened with homelessness are based on current legislative requirements and the Code of Guidance issued by the Scottish Executive in 2005.

Applicants within this group will comprise of the following categories:

- Statutory homeless in priority need.

This group will consist of those applicants who have been assessed by the Homeless Services Unit as being homeless or threatened with homelessness and who have a priority under the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Homelessness, etc (Scotland) Act 2003.

Applicants who may be assessed as having a priority need are:

- Those with dependant children.
 - Those who are pregnant.
 - Those aged 60 or over.
 - Young people (*those under 18 years of age, those between 18 and 20 and either living in circumstances which put them at risk of sexual or financial exploitation or misuse of drugs or alcohol, or who had been looked after by the Local Authority, those under 25 years of age if it is felt that they are likely to be at risk of sexual or financial exploitation, those leaving care*).
 - Mental ill health, personality disorder or learning difficulties.
 - Physical disability or serious chronic ill health.
 - Those recently discharged from prison, hospital or the armed forces who has no other means of support.
 - Those fleeing domestic violence or abuse.
 - Those applicants who may be vulnerable for other reasons.
- Non-priority homeless. This group will consist of those who are homeless, but who are not assessed as having a priority for any of the above reasons.

More detailed information about the assessment process can be found in the Council's Homelessness Policy.

Applicants within each of the categories will attract differing amounts of points to reflect their need. Statutory homeless applicants who have a priority need will be awarded 70 points. Non priority homeless applicants will be awarded 20 points. In addition, where appropriate, homeless applicants will be entitled to points as detailed in this policy for medical reasons, overcrowding/ under-occupation or living in sub-standard housing.

3.1.1. Ex-Offenders on Release from Prison and Others Leaving Institution Care

Will be assessed as homeless and may be given a priority under the terms of current homeless legislation depending upon their vulnerability and their circumstances at the point of release or discharge. The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Homelessness, etc (Scotland) Act 2003 states that those leaving prison or another institution should be regarded as having a priority need. Letting staff will liaise with Social Work and the Homeless Services Unit to put in place measures to prevent people becoming homeless on release from prison or another institution and to ensure that, where possible, offers of housing can be made prior to release.

Where the homeless assessment finds the applicant to have become homeless intentionally the Council could offer the applicant a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy with support.

3.1.2. Armed Forces

Will be assessed as homeless and may be given a priority under the terms of current homeless legislation depending upon their vulnerability and their circumstances at the point of discharge.

3.1.3. Tied Applicants

Will be assessed as homeless upon receipt of Notice to Quit, or upon receipt of written confirmation from their employer that they are required to vacate their tied accommodation within 2 months. Applicants may be given a priority under the terms of current homeless legislation depending upon their vulnerability and circumstances.

3.2. Redevelopment

This group will comprise of applicants where the Council has decided to demolish or redevelop their houses. Applicants will be placed in this group after the Housing Committee has made the decision to declare their houses surplus for demolition. Applicants in this category will have points awarded to reflect their length of tenancy in their current address up to a maximum of 70 points. Points will be awarded on a sliding scale from 20 points, for tenancies of up to 5 years, 40 points for tenancies between 5 and 10 years and 70 points for tenancies of more than 10 years' duration.

Applicants who have other housing needs, ie a medical priority, overcrowding or under-occupancy points as detailed in this policy, will have those points added to their redevelopment priority.

3.3. General Needs

Applicants within this group will comprise of the following categories.

3.3.1. Under-Occupation

Points will be awarded to applicants who are under-occupying any socially rented accommodation. Points will be awarded as follows:

- Under-occupation by 2 bedrooms – 20 points.
- Under-occupation by 3 or more bedrooms – 40 points.

For the purposes of this calculation, the degree of under-occupation will relate only to the difference between the number of bedrooms in the applicant's current accommodation, and the number of bedrooms specified on their application.

3.3.2. Overcrowding

Points will be awarded to tenants or householders who are currently living in overcrowded conditions. Points will be awarded as follows:

- Where the requirement is for one more bedroom – 20 points.
- Where the requirement is for 2 more bedrooms – 40 points.
- Where the requirement is for 3 or more bedrooms – 70 points.

A household is regarded as being overcrowded if an applicant does 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. In addition:

One double bedroom for:

- A single person, couple, single parent or pregnant single woman.
- Two children of the same sex.
- Two children of different sexes under the age of 5.

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 is overcrowded because they have allowed other people to move into their accommodation.

3.3.3. 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, s86 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.

(Note: Private Sector Services Unit/Housing Investment Unit should be requested to confirm all cases of BTS).

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

3.3.4. Non-Householders

Applicants who are staying with family, friends or as lodgers or sub-tenants and who wish to have their own tenancy, will be awarded 10 points.

Applicants who have no fixed address or are sleeping on the floor or sofa will be treated as non priority homeless unless they are in priority need as defined by the Housing (Scotland) 1987 as amended by the Homelessness, etc (Scotland) Act 2003.

3.3.5. Medical Reasons for Re-Housing

To qualify for medical points an application must have been assessed by the Council's Medical Advisor. Up to 70 points will be awarded by the Medical Advisory Service according to assessed need. Applicants will only qualify for this category where the expected house move will alleviate a long term and persistent medical condition.

3.3.6. Special Needs Committee

Applicants in this category will not require specially adapted housing, but owing to a mental illness, learning disability, sensory impairment or other incapacity, may require housing of a particular size, type or location to suit their needs. Up to 70 points will be awarded for a medical recommendation and, where appropriate, up to 40 points for a social reason, as per those categories and as agreed by the Special Needs Committee.

3.3.7. Specially Adapted Housing (Including Sheltered, Very Sheltered, Extra Care Housing, Amenity and Disabled Adapted Housing)

Applicants for specially adapted housing will have their medical needs assessed by the Council's Medical Adviser/Assessment Panel/Single Shared Assessment and will be awarded points to reflect their need. These applicants may also be eligible for points to reflect other defined housing need.

An applicant for sheltered housing can also apply for mainstream housing. An applicant awarded points for specially adapted housing can only use these points towards the allocation of such a property.

Applicants' needs will be assessed through the appropriate Committees and will be awarded points to reflect the severity of urgency of their needs. For Disabled Adapted Housing, Very Sheltered Housing and Extra Care Housing, the Special Needs Unit/Assessment Panel will operate one-to-one matching of applicants to housing.

3.3.8. Social Need

- **Racial Harassment** Up to 40 points can be given at discretion of the Director of Housing after gaining the advice of RIMAP. In extreme or emergency situations, the applicant may be referred to the Homeless Services Unit or rehoused using a Management Transfer.
- **Victims of Domestic Abuse** Up to 40 points to be given at discretion of the Director of Housing. In extreme or emergency situations the applicant may be referred to the Homeless Services Unit or rehoused using a Management Transfer.

- **To give or receive support or care**, up to 40 points will be awarded at the discretion of the Director of Housing. Evidence that such a move is necessary would be required from a competent authority. Medical points cannot be added if awarded for the same reason as social points.

3.4. Choice

This group will comprise of applicants who currently have no defined housing need. These will be ranked in date order. Applicants from this group may be offered housing if the resultant vacancy will release a house for someone in one of the priority groups. Applicants from this group will also be considered for readily available housing.

3.5. Selecting Applicants

To allow Allocation Officers to select an applicant for a vacancy, the following letting information will be available:

- Address and property attributes of the house to be allocated.
- The agreed target percentage for lets to each of the 4 groups. (*Homeless, General Needs, Redevelopment, Choice*).
- The performance percentage (*cumulative percentage of lets*) for each group.
- The number of offers per let, to each group.
- The current percentage of outstanding offers to each of the groups.

A list of each of the 4 priority groups, showing the application numbers of the applicants who have been awarded the highest number of points at the top of each list. Each list will consist of only those applicants whose needs match the property attributes of the house in question and who have chosen that area.

The Allocation Officer will select an applicant from one of the priority groups.

Allocations will be made on the basis of “best match”. This means that in allocating a vacancy, applicants preferences will be matched to property attributes. Offers of housing will normally be made to the applicants with the highest number of points within their Priority Group who have stated a preference for this type of housing. When deciding between applicants with the same number of points, priority will be given to the applicant whose household will make best use of the number of bedrooms the property has. Medical requirements will also be taken into account.

4. **MAKING OFFERS OF HOUSING THAT IS READILY AVAILABLE**

4.1 **Readily Available**

We will classify a property as readily available under the following circumstances:

- When there is no demand for a particular empty property, or
- The property has been formally offered and refused three times, or
- The property has been fit to view and had remained unlet after 3 weeks.

Properties deemed to be readily available will be let in a way deemed appropriate by the Director of Housing.

5. **GENERAL ISSUES**

5.1. **Number of Offers**

- To achieve consistency across groups, all applicants will be entitled to 3 formal offers of housing.

Applicants will have the right to appeal against offers of housing made. Where 3 reasonable offers are refused, the application will remain on the waiting list, but no further offers will be made for a period of 6 months.

5.2. **Homemove Scheme**

We will participate in the Homemove Scheme which is a free scheme for all those wishing to move to Dundee for:

- Employment reasons.
- Medical reasons.
- Social reasons.

Applicants could be eligible if:

- They are taking up a job which is too far away to travel to every day.
 - They need to be closer to relatives or friends so that they can give or receive support.
 - There are other pressing reasons such as domestic violence or harassment or health reasons.
- Registration is by the completion of a Homemove application form.
 - Where we receive an application from another landlord, we will carry out an assessment, a pre-tenancy check in line with the access policy, including any debt related to a tenancy and add the applicant to the General Needs group of the current waiting list.
 - Any offers subsequently made will be on the basis of number of points awarded, and the applicant's housing need.

5.3. **Homeswap Scheme**

We will participate in the Homeswap Scheme, which offers:

- A UK-wide database of people who want to swap their home.
- Operates in much the same way as a mutual exchange.
- For secure tenants renting from a Council, registered social landlord or housing association.
- For tenants who wish to swap houses with another tenant anywhere within the UK.
- Registration is by application form.
- Matching process is carried out by Homeswap staff, not by Council staff.
- Homeswap staff provide a list of applicants wishing to move to this area for display in reception areas.

5.4. **Mutual Exchanges**

We will provide the facility for secure tenants to exchange their home.

- 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 England.
- Both landlords must agree.

We will carry out a pre-tenancy check on both applicants, and require both to have a clear rent account and not 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. More detailed information can be found in the Council's Mutual Exchanges policy.

5.5. **Local Letting Initiatives**

In order to allow flexibility where letting performance shows that there are difficulties in letting houses of a particular size, or in a particular area, or where we need to find houses for applicants who need to be housed in a specific area, local lettings initiatives may be investigated.

When setting up initiatives, due regard will be taken of legislative requirements.

Local tenants, residents and Elected Members will be involved in the development of local letting initiatives, in accordance with the Council's Tenant Participation Strategy and details of the scheme will be advertised. We will monitor lettings initiatives in order to assess their effectiveness.

Initiatives will be reviewed every 6 months in order to assess their continued need.

5.6. **Allocation Audits**

A selection of allocations made from each of the 4 groups will be checked by a senior staff member to ensure compliance with our policy and procedures.

6. **MONITOR AND REVIEW**

- The Council will review this policy every 2 years together with tenant representatives in accordance with the Tenant Participation Strategy.
- It will also be monitored regularly to ensure that equality requirements are met in terms of access to and allocation of housing.
- The following specific monitors will be kept and published:
 - The number of applications received this month and cumulatively.
 - The percentage of applications processed and acknowledged within target time limits this month and cumulatively.
 - The number of applications cancelled this month and cumulatively.
 - The percentage of the waiting list reviewed this month and cumulatively.
 - The number of applicants on the waiting list by group.
 - The number of offers made by group this month and cumulatively.
 - The number of offers refused by group this month and cumulatively.
 - The number of offers per let this month and cumulatively.
 - The number of lets by group this month and cumulatively.
 - The performance against agreed targets this month and cumulatively.
 - The number of appeals this month and cumulatively.
 - The number of mutual exchanges this month and cumulatively.
 - The number of allocations quality checked this month and cumulatively.
 - The operation of any local lettings initiatives.

7. **APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS**

- 7.1. Service users who feel that they have been treated unfairly or are unhappy with the level of service they have received, can complain using the Housing Complaints Form, or alternatively, they can use the Corporate Complaints Procedure. We will assist service users wherever necessary to complete complaint forms and associated documentation.

We will monitor the number of complaints we receive, analyse the data and use our findings to improve our future performance.

- 7.2. Service users who are unhappy with the decision we have made in their case can appeal against the decision using the Housing Appeals Form. We will assist service users wherever necessary to complete appeals forms and associated documentation. We will monitor the number of appeals we receive, analyse the data and use our findings to improve our future performance.

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SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDS AND TARGETS

Points Group	Number of Points	Target Groups
Homeless priority	70	Homeless Group 35%
Homeless non-priority	20	
Tied - notice to quit	20	
Ex-offender within 2 months of release	20	
Ex-forces - notice to quit	20	
Housing which is below the Tolerable Standard	70	General Needs Group 40%
Overcrowded - require one more bedroom	20	
Overcrowded - require two more bedrooms	40	
Overcrowded - require 3 more bedrooms	70	
Under-occupied by 2 bedrooms	30	
Under-occupied by 3 bedrooms	40	
Medical low	20	
Medical medium	40	
Medical high	70	
Social needs low	20	
Social needs high	40	
Want own tenancy	10	
Redevelopment - less than 5 years tenancy	20	Redevelopment Group 20%
Redevelopment 5-10 years tenancy	40	
Redevelopment - more than 10 years tenancy	70	
Choice	0	Choice Group 5%