

## **POLICY**

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## **Allocations**

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# **Wellhouse - The Place to Be**

Draft Policy Created:  
September 2021 and  
amended after consultations

Date of Last Review:  
October 2022

Date of Current Review:  
November 2023

Date of Next Review:  
November 2026

Reviewed by: Housing and  
Customer Service Manager

**We can produce this document in different formats, for instance, in larger print, Braille or audio-format; we can also translate this document into specific languages, as appropriate.**

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## **Linked Policies/Procedures**

1.	Equalities and Diversity Policy
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## **1. Vision and Values**

### **Wellhouse – the Place to Be.**

Our Allocation Policy is a strategic policy in helping us deliver our vision of ‘the place to be’ by promoting a sustainable community, social justice and equal opportunities.

The policy is underpinned by our strategic values of Trust, Honesty, Integrity, Excellence, Accountability and Sustainability.

## **2. Governance**

Wellhouse HA is a community controlled Registered Social Landlord and is managed by our Management Committee.

Our allocation policy has been approved by the Management Committee, and they will monitor its implementation, to ensure that it delivers against our strategic aims, promotes our strategic values, delivers against our agreed service standards and that outcomes are broadly in line with targets set and our equality duties.

## **3. Policy Aims**

The Allocations Policy sets out the principles that Wellhouse Housing Association follows to allocate our housing stock. The Association aims to:

- Comply with legislative and good practice requirements regarding the assessment and allocation of housing
- Prioritise those in housing need with reasonable preference being given to applicants that are homeless or threatened with homelessness and who have unmet housing needs; applicants who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and who have unmet housing needs; our tenants whom we consider to be under occupied
- Promote social justice and equal opportunities
- Facilitate fair and open access to the housing lists for those aged 16 or more
- Make the best use of stock by seeking to promote a sustainable community
- Establish tenancies which are successful and encourage tenants to maintain their tenancies
- Provide good quality affordable and secure rented accommodation to those with unmet housing need

## **4. Equal Opportunities Statement**

We aim to ensure that all our services provide equality of opportunity.

We will not discriminate against any individual for any reason, including age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or other status.

We will promote equality and diversity throughout our allocation policy and related procedures by:

- providing accurate and clear information to housing applicants about our allocation policy
- using interpreters for people from black and minority ethnic groups, or for disabled people, as appropriate
- working in partnership with the Glasgow City Council to address homelessness and to promote social inclusion
- responding to the different needs and service requirements of individuals (including those with protected characteristics)
- monitoring allocation services to ensure that our services prevent any form of discrimination, as well as promoting awareness of equal opportunity matters

## **5. Legislation**

The following legislation is relevant to this policy:

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended)
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 & 2010
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2022
- Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Management of Offenders Act 2005
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998

## **6. Scottish Housing Charter**

The Scottish Government's Social Housing Charter came into force in April 2012 and was reviewed in 2019. The Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that Registered Social Landlords should achieve.

There are 8 outcomes under the Charter that are especially relevant to our allocation policy, these are:

### **Outcome 1 Equalities**

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

- 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 Communication**

Social landlords manage their business so that:

- tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides

### **Outcome 3 Participation**

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords decisions at a level they feel comfortable with

### **Outcomes 7, 8 & 9 Housing Options**

Social landlords work together to ensure that:

- people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them
- tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options

Social landlords ensure that:

- people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness

### **Outcome 10 Access to Social Housing**

Social landlords ensure that:

- 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 on their prospects of being housed

### **Outcome 11 Tenancy Sustainment**

Social Landlords ensure that:

- Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their homes and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and other organisations

## 7. Guidance

The Allocations Policy has been developed with due regard given to the Scottish Governments “Social Housing Allocations in Scotland: A Practice Guide” February 2019

## 8. Service Standards

The Association will provide applicants with up-to-date advice regarding their housing prospects and, where appropriate, discuss other housing options.

We will make reasonable adjustments to our service delivery to accommodate your individual needs. This could include, for example, arranging an interpreter or providing a hearing loop for face-to-face interviews. Any of our allocation documents can be produced in different formats, for instance, in larger print, Braille or audio-format. We can also translate our allocation documents into specific languages, as appropriate.

We will also set targets for key stages of an application, for example how long we will take to assess and process an application once we have received all the information we require. Further details will be provided in our Guide to Allocations Leaflet.

## 9. The Policy

### Access to Housing

Applicants aged sixteen or more are entitled to join our housing list. The Association maintains an open list, which means that people can apply for rehousing at any time.

The Association operates a three list (or groups) and points-based system based on a range of unmet housing needs. This is to ensure we can meet the aims of our policy, reach those in reasonable preference groups and address a wide range of unmet housing needs an applicant may have, based on the source of an application.

### Housing List

We operate three separate lists (or groups) being:

- Homeless
- Transfers
- Waiting List

### Joining Our Homeless List

Homeless applicants are held on a **separate priority list**. This is to allow the Association to meet its obligations under the joint Glasgow City Council/Registered Social Landlord protocol in relation to homeless applicants. All referrals must come from the Housing Access Team.

As soon as a Section 5 Referral is received from Glasgow City Council (GCC) and accepted by the Association, the application will be processed onto our Homeless List.

## **Joining Our Transfer List**

Existing tenants of Wellhouse Housing Association can apply to be rehoused. They will complete our Housing Application Form and will be added to our Transfer List.

## **Joining Our Waiting List**

All other applicants will complete our Housing Application Form and will be added to our Waiting List. The Waiting List will include households threatened with Homelessness but whose applications have not yet been assessed by Glasgow City Council. We advise such applicants to contact Glasgow City Council to be assessed. We also refer other applicants to Glasgow City Council such as people leaving care and those fleeing domestic violence.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is carried out by allocating points based on the applicant's Housing Needs, Medical Needs and Social Needs, as defined below, and as described by them in their application form.

Please note when the Association is assessing applications, in accordance with legislation, certain factors must be ignored by landlords when assessing applicants access to the housing register. These factors are:

- Length of time applicants have lived in the area
- Housing debt not owed by applicants, for example, rent arrears owed by a partner
- Housing debt that has been repaid
- Any non-housing debt such as council tax
- Age of applicants unless under the age of 16, unless:
  - (a) houses which have been designed or substantially adapted for occupation by persons of a particular age group
  - (b) houses to persons who are, or are to be, in receipt of housing support services for persons of a particular age group
- Applicants income, including other household members income
- Any housing debt, for example, where the amount outstanding is not more than 1/12th of the annual amount payable or was payable by the applicant to the landlord in respect of the tenancy or where the applicant has agreed arrangements with the landlord for paying the outstanding liability and has made payments in line with that arrangement for at least three months and is continuing to make such payments

Whilst these factors do not affect an applicant gaining access to the housing list, there are factors that can affect the status of an application. These include:



- Any housing debt, for example, rent arrears, where the amount is more than 1/12th of the annual amount payable or was payable by the applicant or where the applicant has not been maintaining an arrangement for paying the arrears for at least three months
- If you have acted anti-socially within the last three years
- If you own a property

## Owner Occupiers

Applicants, who own a property or properties, who are seeking a move will be assessed as all other applicants, given that we aim to rehouse those with the greatest unmet housing need.

In line with legislation, we will not take account of property ownership when:

- The property has not been let, but the owner cannot secure entry to the property. This could, for example, be where it is not safe to enter the property due to severe structural faults or where there are squatters living in the property
- Where it is probable that occupying the property will lead to abuse from someone currently living in the property
- Where it is probable that occupying the property will lead to abuse from someone who previously resided with the applicant whether in that property or elsewhere
- Where occupation of the property may endanger the health of the occupants and there are no reasonable steps that can be taken by the applicant to prevent that danger

Where none of the above apply owners will not be eligible for an offer until the Association receives proof of either a house sale or repossession and the points / priority will only be applied at the date of sale / repossession.

## Letting Targets

Housing List	% Target
Homeless	45%
Transfers	20%
Waiting List	35%

## The Points Scheme

The priority awarded to Transfer and Waiting List applicants is dependent upon the number of points that the application attracts in terms of the points scheme as detailed below: -

## Housing Needs

## **Security of Tenure**

### **Clearance/Major Works 250 Pts**

Your home is due to be demolished or major repairs works is being carried out that prevents you from occupying your home.

### **Property is below The Tolerable Standard 200 Pts**

Your home falls below the legal Tolerable Standard, in place at the time.

### **Homeless 75 points**

To assist with the effective management of homelessness, applicants threatened with homelessness but whose applications have not yet been assessed by Glasgow City Council will be given additional points. We will advise such applicants to contact Glasgow City Council to be assessed.

### **Tied Accommodation 75 Pts**

You are living in accommodation linked to your job and your employment is due to end within the next six months.

### **Discharge from Armed Forces 75 Pts**

You are currently in the armed forces and are due to leave within the next six months

### **Notice to Quit 75 Pts**

You are in private rented property and have been served a notice to quit through the correct legal procedures or your home is being repossessed because you have not kept up with your mortgage payments.

### **No Fixed Address 30 Pts**

You have no fixed address that you can freely and safely reside at.

### **Insecure Tenancy 20 Pts**

You are in a private sector tenancy

## **Access to Suitable Facilities**

### **Sharing Facilities (No Family) 20 Pts**

Applicant/s who are sharing cooking, toilet or bathing facilities with another household

## **Sharing Facilities (Family) 30 Pts**

Applicant/s, with family, who are sharing cooking, toilet or bathing facilities with another household

## **No or Inadequate Facilities**

We will advise applicants of the Tolerable Standard.

## **Occupancy Rules**

### **Overcrowding 50 Pts per bedroom lacking**

Points for overcrowding will be based on the following criteria: -

- Applicants and partner to occupy one bedroom
- With the exception of couples or children aged 9 or under, persons of different sex shall not share a bedroom
- Any members of the household aged 15 years, or over, require a separate bedroom
- Normally there should be no more than two occupants in any bedroom (excluding newly born)
- Where overcrowding will occur because of pregnancy confirmation will be required and points awarded 12 weeks prior to the date of confinement
- Applicants who require sole use of a bedroom due to a medical condition and that cannot be facilitated within existing accommodation

**Please note that only one award of overcrowding points will be given, being 50 pts, where an applicant has shared access to children. This restriction will also apply to applicants who deliberately worsen their housing circumstances. For example, an applicant who has given up a tenancy to move in with another household.**

## **Carers**

The Association will allow applicants with carers to queue for a larger house where the carer sleeps over for three nights or more in any given week. Proof of such an arrangement is required, however, no additional overcrowding points will be awarded.

## **Under Occupation 25Pts per bedroom under occupied**

Under Occupancy Points are awarded to reflect our aim of making best use of housing stock. Under Occupation points will be awarded all applicants except owner occupiers.

**Please note that to free up larger accommodation we will award 50pts per bedroom underoccupied to Wellhouse Housing Association tenants who under occupy their existing property by 2 or more bedrooms.**

## Medical Needs

The award of medical points based on three medical categories A, B & C and seeks to allow applicants to access housing which is more suited to their medical condition, be this their physical and/or mental health.

Any award of medical points will be made in the context of it improving the quality of life of the applicant by accessing more suitable housing.

The **key consideration** in the award of medical points is not the medical condition itself but whether the medical condition will be wholly or partly alleviated by rehousing. So, the **key test** in the award of medical points is that the tenant or member of the household has a serious medical condition and the present housing is unsuitable.

A medical self-assessment is included within our Housing Application Form and should be completed for each household member who wishes to be considered for medical points. This can be submitted at the time of the application for re-housing or when medical problems arise.

Assessments will normally be completed based on your self-assessment. However, the Association will reserve the right to seek medical advice / proof in exceptional cases.

An applicant or member of their household may be awarded medical points. However, only one medical award can be claimed per application. The award will be made based on the person with the greatest assessed medical need.

### Category A 100 Pts

Applicants will be living in accommodation that is wholly unsuitable for their medical condition.

The default position is that all applicants wishing to claim medical points in this category will be queued for ground floor property. Properties with internal stairs, will only be considered where it has ground floor sleeping and bathroom facilities or where reasonable adaptations can be made, based on an occupational therapist report.

### Category B 75 Pts

Applicants will have moderate health and or mobility problems which is adversely affected by current housing.

The default position is that all applicants wishing to claim medical points in this category will be queued for either a ground or first floor property on a single level. Properties with internal stairs, will only be considered where reasonable adaptations can be made, based on an occupational therapist report.

## **Category C 50 Pts**

Where an applicants' current accommodation is causing a significant degree of discomfort to the applicants' medical condition.

## **Social Needs**

Social factors will be considered where alternative accommodation could improve the quality of life of the applicant or members of the family. Cases under this section will be dealt with sensitively and on their own merits. Assessment will be based on the evidence it is possible to gather, for example, from Police, Social Work Services, Education Services or a Hospital Consultant.

## **Domestic Abuse 150 Pts**

Applicants who are or have recently suffered from domestic abuse.

For tenants of Wellhouse Housing Association, such applications will be dealt with in line with our Vulnerable Tenants Policy. When the victim requires emergency rehousing, WHA will provide advice and assistance on accessing emergency accommodation from Glasgow City Council'.

## **Harassment 150 Pts**

Applicant/s or members of their household suffering from ongoing or recent harassment. Harassment abuse can take many forms, and at its most acute can be life threatening.

Types of harassment could include, but are not limited to:

- Racial harassment
- Religious or sectarian harassment
- Homophobic harassment
- Transphobic harassment
- Harassment of people with a learning or physical disability
- Sexual harassment

WHA will provide general advice and assistance on dealing with harassment to applicants. Victims may have a range of options about what to do next because there are different laws to protect victims in different situations.

## **Looked After Young People 100 Pts**

We support the national approach of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and we will support a smooth and supported transition for young people leaving care into a home of their own. This is in response to care leavers' particular vulnerability and needs.

Points will be awarded to any young person (up to 25 years of age) who is currently or was recently looked after and accommodated by a local authority and are now ready to move on to their own accommodation.

### **Leaving Long-Term Care 100 Pts**

We will support those who are currently living in a care setting such as long-term hospital care or other institution, who need to move to alternative accommodation.

Points will be awarded to applicants that currently live in a care setting and need to move to alternative accommodation.

### **Merged Household 50 Pts**

Where two tenants of Wellhouse HA wish to move to other accommodation together these additional points will be awarded to assist facilitate such a move and to free up accommodation.

### **Relationship Breakdown 20 Pts**

Partners who now want to live separately, because of their relationship breaking down.

### **Employment 20 Pts**

Applicants who need to move to the Wellhouse area because of an offer of employment nearby.

### **Moving to Wellhouse Area to Provide Or Receive Care and Support**

When re-housing within the area, would allow the applicant to give support to / or receive support from a tenant/resident already living within the Wellhouse area.

### **Category A 20 pts**

Will be awarded to applicants providing or receiving essential care and support.

### **Category B 10 pts**

Will be awarded to applicants providing or receiving necessary care and support.

### **Other Factors**

To make best use of stock, there will be two other factors we will consider for transfer applicants only:

## **1. Move Within A Close**

Where an existing tenant expresses an interest for a move within a close, we will allow this to happen prior to considering all other applicants, due to equivalency.

## **2. Aspirational Move**

Where an existing tenant expresses an interest to move from a flat to a house within the Wellhouse area we may allow an aspirational move. Whilst we may facilitate an occasional move under this category, to keep a balanced community and make best use of stock, such moves will come from within existing targets and where there is no other demand from within our Transfer List.

## **Priority of Applicants**

The decision on who is allocated a house will be determined by several factors. Initially, this will be both the list the applicant is placed on and the points the application has been awarded.

We will then take into consideration the size and type of the accommodation required, along with any restrictions the applicant has placed on their application. Examples could include not wanting a particular floor level or street.

Where two or more applicants have the same number of points the deciding factor will be decided by the date of application, to reflect the known length of time the applicant has been in unmet housing need.

## **Offers**

Wellhouse Housing Association will not normally place a limit on the number of offers that will be made to applicants. However, after each refusal a discussion will take place with the applicant to review their application. This is both to ensure applicants have a realistic understanding of their rehousing prospects and that the Association is better able to match applicants needs on any subsequent offer.

Wellhouse HA reserves the right, where it considers reasons for refusals to be unreasonable, to suspend an application from receiving further offers for a 3-month period.

## **Suspensions**

Suspension of an applicant will follow the statutory grounds set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. Suspension of applicants will be for up to 12 months. Suspended applicants will be advised of the reasons for the suspension, the period of suspension and when the position will be reviewed. They will also be advised of their right to appeal the decision.

We will look at other cases (not statutory grounds) on an individual basis and determine whether it is reasonable to suspend that applicant. The Association may suspend an applicant for any of the following reasons:

- The applicant knowingly supplied false information either on their application or at subsequent interviews. If this becomes apparent after a tenancy is granted the Association may serve a Notice of Proceedings with a view to recovery of possession
- Repeated failure to respond to Association communications. The application will be reinstated after contact from the applicant
- Failure to advise the Association of any change in family circumstances or change of address. In this case a new application form would have to be completed
- Following receipt of an unsatisfactory tenancy reference and where the issues remain unresolved including rent and other housing debt, anti-social behaviour and other tenancy breaches
- The household on a transfer application does not match the recorded household. The application will be suspended until the matter is resolved in accordance with related tenancy change policies

### **Policy Exception - Need for an Adapted or Accessible Property**

Wellhouse HA has a very limited stock of such housing. These have a very low turnover and waiting times may be lengthy. When such properties become available, they will be offered to the applicant whose medical needs match the provision offered, or where further adaptations could be made to the property to make it suitable for them.

### **Re-housing Offenders**

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) were introduced by the Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005. We manage any such allocations at a senior level and in consultation with relevant agencies such as the Police and Social Work Services. All aspects of this policy may not be applied in making any such offer and any offer of housing will be dealt in line with MAPPA Protocols which cover the Glasgow area

### **Outcomes and Targets**

The Association will seek to achieve the following:

- Lets will be made in accordance with the policy while also considering the best use of stock in relation to promoting a sustainable community within the Wellhouse area
- Produce an annual lettings plan, setting out targets and priorities for the following year
- Lets will be made as far as possible within the targets set annually by the Management Committee



- Outcomes, based on policy rules, will be checked as part of our equalities monitoring

## **Responsibilities and Delegated Authority**

Our Housing Officers are responsible for managing lettings on a day-to-day basis.

## **10. Monitoring and Performance Management**

### **10.1 Monitoring**

We have monitoring systems in place to enable our allocation practices to be audited. This enables us to demonstrate our compliance with legislation and regulatory standards.

Monitoring the implementation of this policy enables us to assess if we are meeting our stated policy objectives and ensure our practices are subject to continuous improvement.

Monitoring of allocation outcomes allows us to carry out equality checks and ensure our practices are non-discriminatory. It will also provide any evidence to support any required positive action, in future.

### **10.2 Performance Management**

Our Housing and Customer Services Manager monitors our performance against service standards for processing allocation forms and use of suspensions or cancellations, as well as against Charter Indicators.

Our Management Committee are provided with quarterly performance information on allocations. They also set our lettings targets annually and are provided with performance information against these targets at each review, to ensure we are meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

## **11. Consultation**

We aim to deliver excellent services, which respond to local needs and reflect what is most important to our customers.

To do that we need our customers to tell us how well our policy is working and help us to make the changes which will improve it and generally do this in line with our Tenant Participation Strategy.

However, as legislation has evolved specific requirements have been placed on us, with regards the consultation process for developing or reviewing our allocation policy.

We must consult with:

- applicants on the housing list

- our tenants
- registered tenant organisations

In addition, we can consult with other persons as we see fit. We will therefore also consult with the local authority including its homeless service, and other housing related agencies within our area of operation or who we have a working relationship with, such as Women's Aid.

We are also required to prepare and publish a report on the consultation and review of the policy.

## **12. Training**

To ensure we can implement our allocation policy objectives effectively, we will put in place a training programme for:

- staff
- committee members
- tenants and housing applicants, as appropriate

Staff training will include the legislative framework, our policy and procedures, performance and equalities recording and an understanding of applicants' different needs and other housing options.

## **13. Complaints and Appeals**

If you believe we have made an incorrect decision while assessing your application for housing, we have a clear procedure for dealing with appeals about decisions we make during the application and allocation process. If you are unhappy about a decision made, you should first appeal to one of our Housing Officers. If you are still not satisfied, you can then appeal to the Housing and Customer Services Manager.

We have a separate complaints policy and procedure. Leaflets and copies of the complaint's procedure are available from the Association's office and on our website. We also provide information on how our customers can make a complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (4 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS, telephone, 0800 377 7300) and how to contact the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Ombudsman will not normally deal with complaints unless customers have followed the Association's complaints' procedure.

## **14. Review Timeframe**

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner, in response to a change in legislation or circumstance. The Housing and Customer Service Manager will be responsible for reviewing the policy.

## **15. General Data Protection Regulation - UK**

The organisation will treat personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own GDPR Policy. Information regarding how data will be used and the basis for processing data is provided in Wellhouse HA's privacy notice.