

ALLOCATION POLICY – Changes for consultation

SECTION 2 THE POINTS SYSTEM

(*Note Lanarkshire Housing Association hereinafter referred to as LHA)

2.0 THE POINTS SYSTEM

2.1 Basis of selection and allocation – The Points System

The points system is designed to ensure that priority is given to those identified in most housing need and eligible for housing. The selection and allocation of a property will be based upon applicant's housing need relative to others, that is, applicants with the highest point level for a house size, area and house type following assessment will be considered for allocation.

Normally houses will be allocated on the basis of accommodation required as follows:

- 1 Living room for each household
- + 1 bedroom for each couple (or persons living as a couple)
- + 1 bedroom for first child
- + 1 bedroom for each child over 8 years of different gender
- + 1 bedroom for each pair of children up to 14 years of same gender
- + 1 bedroom for each remaining member of the household

Subject to availability, in cases where there is an identified community need or acute housing need, the Association may consider allocating a property with one more or one less bedroom than required.

2.2 Assessing housing need for existing Tenants

Applicants who currently hold a tenancy with LHA are defined as transfer applicants within this policy.

In contributing to our stated aims of creating balanced sustainable communities, we recognise a clear need for existing tenants, who may require to move to a more suitable property, through evaluating housing need and aspirations to transfer to another property.

We accept that giving existing tenants the opportunity to move house, a further property will be released to provide an opportunity for other households, to be considered for housing.

2.3 Points system

(a) Lacking amenities

We will consider applicants facilities assessed against tolerable standard.

Points will be awarded as follows: -

For EACH Amenity lacking or Tolerable Standard failure:

- Structurally stable
- Free from rising or penetrating damp
- Satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting, ventilation and heating
- Adequate supply of piped water
- Sink with hot and cold water
- Toilet facilities for exclusive use of occupants of the house
- Fixed bath or shower and wash hand basin, each with satisfactory supply of hot and cold water, located within house
- Effective drainage, and disposal of foul and surface water
- Satisfactory facilities for cooking of food
- Satisfactory access to external doors and outbuildings
- Further assessment of property linked to condition or amenity will include properties identified as subject to disrepair or fail energy efficient factors

40 Points will be awarded for each amenity lacking or Tolerable standard failure

- **(Remove Previous Maximum points level)**

(b) Urgent rehousing

- (i) Houses purchased for clearance/demolition under Statutory Housing Action Area procedure OR dangerous property. (150)
- (ii) Houses within declared Housing Action Areas for Improvement where works are programmed to commence within an agreed timescale. (40)

(c) Overcrowding

Family unit(s) living in proven overcrowding circumstances will have the number of bedrooms required compared with the number presently available to them.

Points may be awarded to one applicant only.

Points awarded as follows: -

FIRST additional bedroom required. (40)

EACH additional bedroom required thereafter. (60)

NB on basis of agreed bedroom requirements -

1 bedroom for each couple (or persons living as such)

+ 1 bedroom for first child

+ 1 bedroom for each child over 8 years of different gender

+ 1 bedroom for each pair of children up to 14 years of same gender

+ 1 bedroom for each remaining member of the household.

** Where a transfer is granted on the basis of overcrowding and a member of the household has an application on the waiting list, that application will be reviewed accordingly.

(d) Property condition

Areas of severe disrepair (not assessed under 'lacking amenity' category) adversely affecting applicants living conditions

Points awarded where physical condition of the property is adversely affecting applicants living conditions

- sub-standard electrical wiring (20)
- severe condensation/dampness (20)
- extensive dry/wet rot (20)
- statutory repairs notice (20)
- infestation (20)
- severe water penetration (20)
- inadequate heating and ventilation (20)

Add - Poor energy efficient - property difficult to heat (20)

• Remove Maximum points

*Points will be awarded subject to evidence available or inspection of property

No maximum property condition points will apply

(e) Homelessness

Homelessness is recognised as the most extreme form of housing need, we are committed assisting to alleviate homelessness, recognising legislative requirements.

We will assist the local authority in achieving its statutory duty through Section 5 Referrals protocol. Additionally, we will award specific points for applicants identified as having a priority need as specified by Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 Part II – Homeless persons, as amended by Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

We have used a broad interpretation of homelessness through our housing need and market analysis to assist applicants in insecure tenancies or those threatened with homelessness within specified homeless categories.

Homeless applicants will be assessed and qualify for points under many areas of our housing need points as dictated by their needs.

In order to address situations of potential 'hidden homelessness' points will be awarded in the following situations:-

(i) Relationship breakdown

- Persons at risk of domestic abuse (100)
- due to incompatibility (40)

(ii) Homeless Persons

Priority Need assessment of Homelessness as determined by the local authority, where applicants are not intentionally homeless.

- **On presentation of LA assessment (40 points will be awarded)**

(iii) Harassment

Harassment deriving from unfair discrimination against any individual, household or group on the grounds of race, colour, culture, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, family circumstances or marital status. (80)

(iv) Financial difficulties

Homeless points will be awarded under financial difficulties, where an applicant's house is likely to be sold or repossessed owing to the applicant (s) genuine financial difficulties.

(A decision as to whether someone is in financial difficulties will be based upon financial assessment, taking account housing costs, disposable income, assessed against entitlement to income support).

- Threat of sale of house or repossession(80)

(v) Homeless as a result of being discharged from H M Forces (80) Points

(Moved from Insecure Tenancy Category)

(f) Social priority

Persons within whose household, or environment, there is a serious social problem made worse by current living conditions, where rehousing would enable a solution to the problem, and where in the opinion of both LHA and other appropriate agency, the problem cannot be adequately resolved under present housing conditions, or through other housing need factors.

Social conditions will be assessed under the circumstances and severity of each case. Points awarded as follows: -

- (i) Serious harassment/severe neighbour problem (where applicant is confirmed as not causing problem).
Circumstances will be considered on merit and will be subject to documentation/evidence, with points subject to approval by Housing Manager (80)
- (ii) Differences in lifestyle (documentary evidence required from appropriate agency i.e. Social Work Department, Housing Department, Strathclyde Police, **ASTF** prior to points being awarded) (40).

Applicants reporting incidents of harassment will be advised to make a homeless application to the local authority.

(g) Under- occupation

Persons under-occupying houses will have the number of apartments they need, compared with the number of apartments presently available.

Points awarded as follows: -

For EVERY apartment more than needed (20)

** N.B the number of apartments needed is calculated as for overcrowding (see (C) above).

(h) Health Needs

(Change of name of Category from Medical Factors to Health Needs)

We will address health factors of applicants using key principles to assess if rehousing may alleviate or ease health or mobility problems.

(A medical self-assessment form will be used to inform the point's award, and assess if rehousing would alleviate or significantly reduce the applicant's health/mobility difficulties).

Points will be awarded in accordance with the undernoted assessment, for each member of household who is recorded as having a medical or health problem and where rehousing may ease or alleviate problems experienced. The evaluation will take account of the severity of the problem or urgency of the situation, and the extent rehousing would reduce or alleviate difficulties experienced:-:

- How the problem is affected by specific aspects of the housing or immediate environment; and
- Will this be eased by rehousing

(i) High (100)

- Hospital discharge delayed due to current housing conditions
- Housebound
- Denied use of essential toilet or kitchen facilities due to physical mobility problems
- Hospital admission due to physical/psychological deterioration

(ii) Medium (60)

- Severe mobility problems
- Severe psychological problems
- Severe medical problems

(iii) Low (30)

- Medical condition made worse by current housing circumstances

(i) Environmental factors

Consideration will be given to immediate environmental proximity to family and support services. e.g.

- (i) Applicants who currently experience difficulty travelling to work, or are actively seeking employment in the Lanarkshire Area. This assessment takes account of difficulties experienced under the reasons of financial, distance, or transport difficulties.
- (ii) Relative or friends in need of care or support.
- (iii) Support requirements, i.e. family or social support which would be eased by moving applicant or carer.
- (iv) Access to facilities: persons requiring being located near essential services.

An Assessment will be made on the priority and proximity of above named facilities subject to supporting documentation to verify:

Totally Unsuitable (45)

Unsuitable (25)

Moderately Unsuitable (10)

Factors including age, mobility or health problems will influence level of points.

(j) Height of accommodation

Families with a child or children under 15 year's old living above Second Floor.

Points awarded as follows: -

For EACH Child over 10 but
under 15 (10)

For EACH Child over 5 but
under 10 (20)

For EACH child under 5(30)

(k) Insecure tenancies

Insecurity of Tenure will be assessed in **proven** circumstances such as:

- (i) Tied Houses: persons or families of those occupying tied accommodation who are required to vacate their home owing to death, retiral, termination, or removal from employment. Points will be awarded to one Applicant only. (80)

- (ii) Caravans/Lodger/Sub-Tenant: persons in short term accommodation (up to 12 months lease) only where no security of tenure is applied. (40)
- (iii) Applicants whose present accommodation is of a temporary nature; hostel dwellers, long term hospital patients, temporary lets, short tenancies, homeless accommodation. (40)

(Leaving HM Forces Moved from Insecure Tenancy to Homeless Category)

(l) Sharing amenities

- (i) For applicants who share standard amenities with household other than immediate family.
- (ii) Where an applicant had to return to family home after setting up a home elsewhere, following a minimum break period of SIX months.
- (iii) In relationship breakdown situation where both parties still require to share home.

Points awarded are as follows: -

Sharing –

living-room (20)

kitchen (20)

Bathroom/w.c. (20)

(Remove Maximum of 60 points)

**Where qualifying individuals are also seeking independent housing, points will be awarded in respect of the highest point level applicable independent housing or sharing amenities.

(m) Independent housing

Applicants who wish to establish independent housing as their first home will be eligible for 10 points for each year of continuous occupation in their present home **from the date of application for housing:**

- (i) Single applicants/or couples having lived continuously in the family home
- (ii) Students who fulfil (i) above with the exception of term time
- (iii) Individuals whose continuous residence was broken due to hospitalisation

Where continuous residence is broken for a temporary period points will be awarded if the absence was:

13 weeks or less and points will be awarded up to 52 weeks were:

- a person has been detained in custody on remand pending trial
- stay in a hostel is required as a condition of bail or

- detained pending sentence upon conviction

Where qualifying individuals are sharing amenities; points will be awarded in respect of the highest point level applicable i.e. sharing amenities – or independent housing

Amendment from age of 16 until date of application

(n) Transfers – aspirational need

Current tenants, who present identified housing need, will be considered for **10 points for each year of continuous occupation from their date of application, to a maximum level of 120 points.**

Amendment from Date of Entry to date of Application)

2.4 Time in need

Where applicants share an equal number of points, the Applicant suffering identified housing need for the longest period would be given priority and offered the tenancy. In the case of transfer applications the date effective will be the date of tenancy.

