

# NORTH VIEW Housing Association

North View is a registered Scottish charity – charity registration number SC032963

## POLICY

## ALLOCATIONS

Passed:-

21/10/09

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Sept 2012

All North View policies and publications can be made available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages.

For further details please contact us on 0141 634 0555 or email us on [enquiries@nvha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nvha.org.uk)

### CONTENTS

Item Ref No		Page Number
1- 4	Policy Objectives	2
5 - 10	Local Context	2-3
11 - 15	The Law and Regulatory Requirements	3-4
16 - 18	Equal Opportunities	4
19 - 27	Admission to the Housing List	5-6
28 - 29	Applications from Sex Offenders	6
30 - 33	Keeping the Housing List Up to Date	6
34 - 35	Deferring Applications Until a Future Date	6
36 - 52	Deciding Who Has Priority for Rehousing	7-11
	– Summary	
	– The Points System	
	– Size and Type of House Needed	
	– Annual Lettings Plan	
53 - 59	How Lettings Decisions are Made	11-12
60 – 69	Other Allocations Issues	12-14
	– Applicants with Particular Needs	
	– Suspending Applications	
	– Use of Short Scottish Secure Tenancies	
70-77	Service Standards for Housing Applicants	14-18
	– Information and responding to applications	
	– Choice for housing applicants	
	– Consultation and feedback	
	– Ensuring fair treatment for all applicants	
	– Confidentiality and access to personal information	
	– Complaints and appeals	
78 - 86	Managing the Allocations Policy	18-19
	– Roles and Responsibilities	
	– Performance Management and Continuous Improvement	



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## Policy Objectives

- 1 North View Housing Association Limited is a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and a registered Scottish Charity (SCO32963). The Association owns and manages houses in the Windlaw neighbourhood in Castlemilk.
- 2 This Policy describes how the Association will manage access to our housing list, and how we will let houses to people on the list.
- 3 The Association's aim is to provide affordable rented housing of a high quality, and to make Windlaw a thriving, sustainable community.

In support of this aim, the objectives of the Allocations Policy are as follows:

- To let our houses primarily to people with high levels of housing need, including existing residents and people wishing to move or return to our area;
  - To support Glasgow City Council in meeting the needs of people who are homeless;
  - To provide access to our houses in a way which is clear and fair to everyone;
  - To provide rehousing opportunities to existing North View tenants who wish to move within the area to another type of house for Aspirational reasons.
  - To provide all housing applicants with good quality information and opportunities to exercise choice about where they want to live.
- 4 The Allocations Policy has been approved by the Association's Management Committee. The Policy describes how we will achieve the objectives described above. It also provides guidance to people applying for housing and to the Association's staff team, who are responsible for all aspects of letting our houses.

## The Local Context

- 5 The Association owns around 694 properties in the Windlaw area of Castlemilk. 470 are fully refurbished properties and 224 are newly built. A profile of our houses is provided in the "Information to Applicants" which all applicants receive.
- 6 To simplify access to our houses, the Association uses a shared application form with 4 other housing associations in Castlemilk. In future, we may also participate in Glasgow City Council's proposed Common Housing Register, which could allow people to apply to a number of housing providers by filling in a single form.
- 7 There are currently around 600 applications on our housing list, although the numbers change regularly. The housing list includes:
  - People who wish to return or move to the Windlaw area, for example for social, medical or employment reasons, or because of factors such as harassment or domestic abuse
  - Existing North View tenants who need or wish to move to another house within the area.



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In addition, some people are referred to us for rehousing by the City Council or other organisations, for example if they are homeless or have other support needs. We also receive referrals from moveUK, a scheme which helps tenants move between different parts of the country.

- 8 Accepting an application on to the housing list does not mean that we will always be able to make an offer of rehousing. This depends on each applicant's level of housing need, the number of properties which become available for letting, and the level of demand for different house types and sizes.
- 9 On average, the Association relets around 45 properties each year. To make sure that applicants have a good understanding of their prospects of being rehoused by us, we provide all applicants with updated information each year about current levels of letting and demand for our houses.
- 10 The Association's policy on mutual exchanges provides a further route to rehousing. This allows two (or more) tenants to exchange their houses with each other, as long as the Association, and any other landlords involved, agree to this. Further information is provided in the policy on mutual exchanges.

## The Law and Regulatory Requirements

- 11 North View assesses applications and lets houses in line with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements. Our main legal obligations are set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The law requires us to:
  - Provide open access to our housing list.
  - Give reasonable preference, when letting houses, to:
    - People who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness;
    - People living in houses which do not meet the tolerable standard;
    - People living in houses which are overcrowded;
    - Large families;
    - People living under unsatisfactory housing conditions.
  - Publish our rules for letting houses, and consult with tenants on any changes to these rules.
  - Promote equal opportunities in all of our services.
  - Provide Glasgow City Council with access to some of our houses, for people who the Council has assessed as being homeless.
  - Take no account of certain factors (such as applicants' age, income, property ownership, and residence in our area of operation) when we are letting houses.



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- 12 The Association will ensure that nobody who applies for housing experiences discrimination because of their sex, race or any disabilities they may have. We also recognise our duty under the Human Rights Act 1998, to ensure that applicants' human rights are respected during the assessment and allocation process.
- 13 The letting of houses to past and present employees and committee members of the Association, and their close relatives, is subject to Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and guidance published by Communities Scotland. This ensures that if anyone in these categories is applying for a tenancy, they will not receive any special treatment as a result of their connection with the Association.
- 14 This is a brief summary of the main legal requirements. All of the Association's legal obligations are reflected in the rest of this Policy, and in our procedures for housing applications and letting houses.
- 15 North View will also work in accordance with "Performance Standards for social landlords", published by our regulator Communities Scotland. "Performance Standards" oblige us to:
- Ensure that people have fair and open access to our housing list and assessment process.
  - Work with others to maximise and simplify access routes into our housing.
  - Let our houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need; makes best use of available stock; maximises choice; and helps to sustain communities.
  - Ensure that our approach to letting houses is well managed, and that we achieve high standards of customer service, information and consultation.

## Equal Opportunities

- 16 North View Housing Association recognises that certain people may be discriminated against by the housing system, and that discrimination can be direct or indirect and can take place at a personal or at an institutional level.
- 17 The Association is committed to providing equal access to housing and services for all individuals and groups. We will give high priority to meeting legal and good practice requirements, including our obligations under:
- Current legislation relating to discrimination on the grounds of sex, race and disability
  - The Codes of Practice published by the Commission for Racial Equality and Disability Rights Commission.
- 18 The "Service Standards" described later in the Allocations Policy describes the main measures North View will take, to ensure that its policy and working practices are non-discriminatory and promote fair access and treatment for all individuals and groups.



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## Admission to the Housing List

- 19 Anyone aged 16 or over is entitled to be admitted to our housing list at any time.
- 20 The Association will ensure that information about our housing is widely available to all sections of the community. We will make information freely available in response to individual requests, and through places and services which housing applicants are likely to use. These places and services will include:
- All other housing organisations in Castlemilk;
  - The Castlemilk Law Centre;
  - The Citizens Advice Bureau;
  - Organisations representing or working with people from Black and Minority ethnic groups and people who have a disability.
- 21 To be placed on the housing list, applicants will complete a Housing Application. The Association also accepts referrals from Glasgow City Council, where the Council is seeking accommodation for homeless people, and from other organisations working with people in housing need.
- 22 Housing applications are assessed by the Association's staff, based on the Allocations Policy. Applications are then placed on the housing list in accordance with the points or priority they have been awarded and the size of house they need. When a house comes up for letting, our computer system identifies the people who are waiting for that size and type of house (for example, based on the number of rooms and whether the house is suitable for any applicant or for people with particular needs).
- 23 For some types of housing need, we may need evidence from the applicant to show that their needs meet the conditions for receiving points or priority under the Allocations Policy. The Association will ensure that the information needed in support of housing applications is reasonable and not excessive.
- 24 Each applicant is responsible for providing all the information specified in the housing application form. If this involves providing additional supporting information, the applicant is responsible for paying any costs involved.
- 25 Where the applicant fails to provide information, the Association will confirm in writing how this affects the application. This may include not awarding points for a need stated in the application form which is not backed up by the required information.
- 26 Each applicant must also:
- Make sure that all information provided in the application form is true and accurate, and confirm this when signing their application form.
  - Notify the Association of any changes in their circumstances that are relevant to their application.

The Association is entitled to take legal action to recover a tenancy which has been granted on the basis of false or misleading information which a housing applicant has



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knowingly provided.

- 27 If an applicant needs a size of house the Association does not have, we will place the application on our list but will not be able to consider the applicant for offers. We will advise the applicant in writing of the situation, and use the details of any such applications to inform the planning of new developments.

## Applications from Sex Offenders

- 28 North View Housing Association recognises that an applicant should not be excluded from housing simply because he or she is a convicted sex offender. Such exclusion may increase the risks to the community, if offenders are homeless or mobile.
- 29 In accordance with the law, convicted sex offenders will be admitted to the housing list. In considering any such applications, and prior to any rehousing decisions being made, it is of the utmost importance that a robust strategy for managing the risk from the offender to the wider community is developed by the Social Work Department, Police, the Prison Service etc. The Association will participate fully in any risk assessment so that risks are minimised.

## Keeping the Housing List Up to Date

- 30 Each year, we will write to everyone on the housing list, asking them to confirm that:-
- a) They wish to remain on the list; and
  - b) The information provided in their Application Form is still accurate and up to date.

When sending out review letters, we will provide our most up to date information on turnover and availability for the Association's houses.

- 31 If we do not receive a response to our review letter after 28 days, we will send a second letter to the applicant. If we do not receive any response within 14 days of our second letter, the application will be removed from the housing list.
- 32 Applicants should advise the Association if their household circumstances or needs change, in between annual reviews.
- 33 Applicants may themselves ask to be removed from the housing list and should normally do so in writing.

## Deferring Applications Until a Future Date

- 34 The Association recognises that for a variety of reasons, people may wish to apply for housing, without being considered for rehousing until a predicted future date.

Applicants can choose to have their application "deferred" in this way, until a future date. This means that the Association will not make offers of housing during the period specified by the applicant.



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- 35 We will check whether the applicant wishes to continue to defer their application, during annual reviews of all applications. We will not make changes to the date of the application, because an application has been deferred.

## Deciding Who Has Priority for Rehousing

### Summary

- 36 There are three main factors which decide who has priority for rehousing:

- The Association's points system
- The rules we use to decide what size of house an applicant should be considered for
- The Association's annual lettings plan.

The annual lettings plan is used to set targets at the start of each year. The targets are a guide to what groups of applicants we will try to house. For example, how many houses will be let to homeless people, how many to existing North View tenants, how many to applicants from the housing list from applicants who are not North View tenants (external applicants) etc.

Each of these three factors is described in this section of the Policy. The following section then explains how these factors are taken into account, when houses become available for letting.

### The Association's points system

- 37 North View's Policy gives priority for rehousing based primarily on housing need.

To do this in a fair and consistent way, we use a points system to assess applications. Details of the points we use are shown in **Appendix 1** to the Allocations Policy.

- 38 Points are awarded for each type of need the applicant has. For some types of points, we ask for back up information or evidence to be provided. The housing application form gives details of the information we need.

- 39 Each applicant's position on the housing list will depend on the overall points level they have been awarded. Where more than one applicant has the same points total when a house is being let, priority will be given to the applicant who has been on the list longest.



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- 40 The points system takes account of the Association's legal obligations to give "reasonable preference" to certain types of housing need. In summary, the Association will regard applicants as being in housing need and award them points if they are:
- Homeless
  - Threatened with homelessness or do not have security in their present accommodation
  - Living in overcrowded accommodation
  - Living in unsatisfactory housing conditions, for example:
    - a property in very poor condition
    - a property which lacks satisfactory amenities, including situations where amenities are being shared with others.
    - In need of rehousing because of a medical condition, disability or sensory impairment
  - Having to move for personal or social reasons (such as domestic violence, harassment, or as a result of the breakdown of a relationship).
- 41 We also award points where rehousing an applicant would contribute to our aim of making Windlaw a stable and sustainable community. For example, points are awarded if an applicant is:
- Moving to the area to provide or receive support from family members
  - Occupying a North View house which is too large for their needs
  - Vacating a wheelchair property they no longer need
  - Seeking to move to the area for employment or other reasons.
- 42 Also to promote the sustainability of our community, we let a small percentage of our houses without taking any account of points. This involves allowing our existing tenants to seek an "Aspirational move" to a different property within the area (for example, a move from a flat to a house with its own entrance and garden or to move a property nearer friends or family).
- 43 As well as the points system, the Association uses additional qualifying conditions when letting properties which have been specially designed or designated to meet particular types of housing need. This applies to properties that have been -
- Designed and built for wheelchair users.
  - Adapted to full wheelchair user standard.
  - Fitted with specialist aids (either when the property was built or through adaptation) to such an extent that it is not feasible to use the property for "general needs" housing.
- Designated as housing that will be used to house people with support needs.

### **Size and type of housing needed**

- 44 We place applications on the housing list based on the size and type of accommodation needed.

In general, this is worked out as follows:

- One bedroom for couples/partners
- One bedroom for single adults/parents



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- One bedroom for two children of different sex up to 10 years of age.
- One double bedroom for two children of the same sex up to 12 years of age.

One bedroom for each child of 12 years or over.

- 45 Where 2 people will be sharing a bedroom, we will ensure that the house they are offered contains double sized bedrooms with a floor area of 10 square metres or more. We will also do this for single adults or parents.
- 46 Normally only the permanent members of the applicant's household and those who will be using the accommodation as their principal home will be taken into consideration in deciding what size of property is needed. To make the best use of its housing stock, the Association will generally offer houses to households who will make full use of all the rooms.
- 47 In some circumstances, we make common sense exceptions to the normal rules on what size of house is needed. This usually requires the applicant to provide evidence of their household's needs, as explained in the housing application form.
- 48 The main exceptions are as follows:
- If a household needs an extra bedroom for a medical, social or other relevant reason.
  - Where a member of the household is pregnant, the application will be reassessed from 20 weeks before the expected date of delivery. This will cover both the number of bedrooms needed, and whether the household is overcrowded in its present accommodation.
  - If a house has been designed or adapted to meet a particular type of need (for example a wheelchair property, or a house with a walk-in shower), we will allocate the house to a household which needs this type of property, even if it is larger than they need.
  - If an applicant has access to children who do not live with them, we will consider them for one extra bedroom (regardless of the number and ages of children).
  - If an applicant provides foster care, or has been approved to provide foster care, they will qualify for a house one bedroom larger than the permanent members of the household need.
  - If management difficulties are being experienced in a tenement due to the number of children living in the building, we may let empty properties to applicants who would under-occupy the property by no more than one room.
  - If there are no applicants who need the size of house being offered, we will consider letting the house to a smaller household which would under-occupy the house by no more than one room.
  - When providing follow on accommodation for people leaving our Youth and Housing project and, we may let a house which has an extra room, if we have no properties of the appropriate size.



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- 49 The Association will not generally consider an applicant for a house which is smaller than their household needs, since this would result in overcrowding. We may make an exception to this if rehousing would still improve the household's existing housing circumstances, and as long as the living room does not need to be used as a sleeping area. People who are rehoused in this way will remain on the housing list for the size of house which will fully meet their needs.

### **The Annual Lettings Plan**

- 50 North View produces an annual lettings plan. This sets out how many houses we expect to relet during the course of the year, and targets for lets to each of the main types of applicant. For example, the lettings plan estimates how many houses we will let to homeless applicants, how many to other external applicants, and how many to existing North View residents.

- 51 The purpose of these targets is:

- To ensure that we address our legal obligations and policy objectives in a fair and open way.
- To provide people with different types of needs with access to our houses, while making the best use of our housing and helping to make Windlaw a sustainable community.

The main features of the lettings plan will be publicised to local agencies and to people on the housing list.

- 52 The targets contained in the lettings plan are based on rehousing people in the following categories:

#### **Housing List**

People who apply direct to us for housing and are not already North View tenants.

#### **Transfer List**

North View tenants who apply for a move because they have a housing need (for example, they may need to move to a bigger or smaller house or for medical reasons).

#### **Homeless Referrals**

People passed to us for rehousing under the law or under local rehousing arrangements with Glasgow City Council's Social Work department.

#### **Other referrals**

People passed to us for rehousing by specialist agencies which provide support and advice to people in housing need. This may include referrals from the Social Work department, organisations supporting people experiencing domestic violence, and organisations providing support/care to people who live in an institutional setting and who wish to move to their own accommodation in the Windlaw area.



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### **Mobility schemes**

People who are tenants of other landlords who wish to move to a different area and look for employment and housing opportunities. The main mobility scheme which helps tenants to move in this way is the national scheme, moveUK.

### **Aspirational lets**

To encourage existing residents to remain in the area, a small number of “Aspirational lets” will be made each year. These will be made to North View tenants who do not have housing need, but who wish to move to another location or type of housing - for example, a move from a tenement flat to a main door house.

### **Youth and Housing**

The Association has a Youth and Housing project, to provide support to young people setting up home in their first tenancy. The criteria for allocating housing are described in a separate Policy.

## **How Lettings Decisions are Made**

53 When a house becomes available for letting, the decision-making process is as follows:

- Which category of applicant should the house be offered to?

This is based on the applicant categories contained in the Annual Lettings Plan, as described in the previous section of the Policy.

- Within the selected category, which individual applicant has greatest priority for the house?

This is generally based on:

- Which applicants are on the list for that size of house?
- Which applicants are on the list for that type of house, if the house is a wheelchair or adapted property
- Which applicant has the highest number of points?

54 The target figures in the annual lettings plan are indicative, and will not prevent us from responding to changes in the law or if additional properties are needed for homeless referrals.

55 The Housing Manager is responsible for ensuring that these targets are met during the course of the year. The Association will monitor the number and quality of lets made to the various categories of applicants and an annual report about this will be submitted to the Management Committee.

56 Working within the overall lettings plan targets, and provided that there are no statutory homeless referrals outstanding, the housing management team will decide which category of applicant each individual property should be let to. To ensure transparency in the way this discretion is used, the Association’s staff will complete a decision pro forma, to record the reasons for deciding which category of applicant should be offered the house.



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- 57 In general, the house will be offered to the applicant in the selected category who has most points and who is already on the list when the property becomes available for reletting. Exceptions to this are:
- Homeless referrals from Glasgow City Council, which are dealt with in date order of referral
  - Aspirational applications from existing North View HA tenants, which are dealt with in date order of application.
- 58 The housing management team will also be able to apply sensitive lettings criteria, if letting a property to the applicant with the greatest number of points would be contrary to the policy objectives of community sustainability. The housing management team will be able to exercise reasonable judgment in making lettings decisions, for example:
- Where letting a property to a particular household would add to an existing concentration of the same household type within a tenement close, and there is a significant risk of creating or adding to neighbour relations or management problems.
  - Where letting a property to a particular household would create a significant risk of clashes of lifestyle between tenants.
- 59 The use of such sensitive lettings criteria is likely to be exceptional. Where these criteria are used, the reasons will be recorded by staff on the decision pro forma already described. The use of sensitive lettings criteria will also be the subject of reporting to the Housing Management Committee at least annually, so that the Committee may monitor the frequency and the circumstances in which the criteria are used.

## Other Allocations Issues

### Applicants with Particular Needs

- 60 The Association welcomes direct applications from all sections of the community, including people with particular needs (such as support needs, a physical disability or impairment etc). Where appropriate, and with the individual's permission, we may contact relevant support and/or specialist agencies for advice on meeting an individual applicant's housing needs.
- 61 Where a housing applicant needs support in order to sustain a tenancy, but there are no support arrangements in place, the Association will make an individual assessment of whether it is reasonable in all of the circumstances to make an offer of housing. Any such assessments and decisions will be reviewed by the Housing Manager, and will have regard to:
- the applicant's current circumstances
  - any risks to the applicant or to others if a tenancy was granted without support.

In any cases where the Association decides that making a let without support being in place would be irresponsible, the applicant will be informed of the reasons for our decision, and of their right to appeal against the decision.



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## Suspending Applications

- 62 There are some circumstances in which applicants will stay on the housing list but will not be considered for offers of housing for a specified period of time. This is known as suspending an application.
- 63 The Association's policy is to limit the use of suspensions, but there may be circumstances where this may be unavoidable. If we suspend an application, the decision will be authorised by the Housing Manager. The Association will inform the applicant in writing, giving the reasons and the length of time the application will be placed on hold. We will also specify any action the applicant needs to take, to have the suspension removed. The Association will review the circumstances of each case before re-activating housing applications.

64 Reasons for suspension may include the following:

- The applicant owes the Association, or another landlord, a tenancy related debt such as rent or rechargeable repairs and the debt is equivalent to more than one month's rent, and the applicant has not kept to a repayment arrangement for a 3 month period.

In considering such cases, the Association will seek to identify those applicants who are genuinely struggling to cope with their circumstances and those who wilfully and persistently refuse to pay rent.

- The applicant or a member of their household has behaved in an anti-social manner, and the conduct involved is of a serious nature, relatively recent, and is confirmed by an official source.

The Association's definition of anti-social behaviour is behaviour which has caused significant distress, or harm to others, including harassment, threats or unnecessary or deliberate disturbance. Any decision to suspend an application for these reasons will take account of:

- The extent to which the conduct is a consequence of acts of people other than the applicant;
- The nature and frequency and duration of the conduct;
- The effect the conduct is having on other people.
- The applicant or a member of their household has broken a condition of their tenancy agreement, such as causing damage to their home.
- The applicant has knowingly given false information on their application form.
- The applicant has not provided information needed to assess their application, despite reminders from the Association
- The applicant has used violence towards a staff member and has been charged with an offence in relation to this behaviour.
- The applicant is an asylum seeker and is awaiting a decision regarding their application for leave to remain in the United Kingdom.



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- 65 Before suspending an application for the reasons stated above, or for any other reason, the Association will assess each case individually. We will place applications on hold for a period of 6 months and then review the circumstances of the case. If a suspension is continued, we will review the case again after a further 6 months.
- 66 Any person whose application has been suspended can ask the Association to review the decision. For example, a suspension decision relating to rent arrears can be reviewed as soon as the applicant has made payments towards the debt for the required period. In addition, an appeal can be made against a suspension decision at any time.

### **Use of Scottish Secure Tenancies**

- 67 To maximise tenants' rights, the Association's general policy is to provide a Scottish Secure Tenancy when it relets a house.
- 68 With the exception of Youth and Housing Project, Short Scottish Secure Tenancies may be offered in the following circumstances, as permitted by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001:
- Lets to persons evicted for anti-social behaviour from a tenancy in Scotland England, Wales or Northern Ireland, within a period of three years prior to the service of a notice that a short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SST) will be offered
  - Lets to persons where they or other members of their household are subject to an ASBO (Anti Social Behaviour Order)
  - Temporary lets to persons moving into the area to take up employment
  - Temporary lets pending development affecting the house
  - Temporary lets to homeless persons for tenancies of 6 months or over
  - Temporary lets to people requiring or receiving housing support services as defined in section 91(8) of the 2001 Act
  - Lets in houses leased from another body, where the terms of the lease preclude sub letting under an SST.
- 69 The Housing Manager will be responsible for authorising any decision to award a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy. Where a tenancy agreement of this type is to be offered because of anti social behaviour, the Association will work with the applicant and other organisations, to ensure that appropriate housing support services are in place.

### **Service Standards for Housing Applicants**

- 70 To ensure that our service is responsive to the needs of housing applicants, the Association will implement the following Service Standards.

#### **Information and responding to applications**

- 71 i) The Association will provide information freely about the availability of housing, and how to apply for housing, to anyone who requests it.
- ii) Housing Application forms will be given to everyone who wants to apply, by contacting or calling at the Association's office.



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enquiries@nvha.org.uk



- iii) North View's staff will provide any help that is needed with completing a Housing Application form. All applicants will receive an information leaflet about applying for a house. This will provide information about the range of house types and sizes we own in different areas, and a broad indication of current levels of letting.
- iv) If an applicant wishes to receive more detailed information than is contained in our leaflet, copies of the Allocations Policy and the procedures we use (for example, detailed information about how points decisions are made) will be available to anyone who wishes to see these documents.
- v) All information about applying for a house can be made available in different languages and information formats, upon request. The Association will also arrange access to interpreting services, free of charge, for any applicant who needs this.
- vi) A summary information leaflet about the Association and its houses will be available in a range of community languages.
- vii) The Association will aim to assess and provide a written response to housing applications within 15 working days. If an applicant subsequently reports a change in their circumstances, we will aim to provide a written response within 15 working days.
- viii) The Association will provide applicants with realistic, factual information about their prospects of being rehoused. We will also provide information about other landlords with houses in the Castlemilk area.

### **Choice for housing applicants**

- 72
- i) The Association will not place any limit on the number of offers made to an applicant. We may contact applicants if they have refused 2 offers, and the association is unclear about the reasons for refusals and to review their prospects of being rehoused.
  - ii) Since the Association's houses are all located within the Windlaw area of Castlemilk, we will make offers of rehousing for any property of a suitable size which becomes available for reletting.
  - iii) With the exception of Aspirational lets to existing North View tenants and specially adapted properties, we will not make a distinction between flats and houses when we make offers of rehousing.



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## Offers of housing

- 73
- i) With the exception of applicants who are homeless and have no fixed address or have applied due to domestic violence or have applied using the Aspirational Policy, the Association will visit applicants at home. The purpose of a home visit is to ensure that the circumstances reported in the Housing Application form are correct and up to date.
  - ii) We may also need to seek information from third parties – for example, a tenancy report from a current or previous landlord, or reports from a health or social work professional if medical points are sought.
  - iii) We will issue a written offer of rehousing, in plain English and will allow up to 2 working days for the applicant to let us know if they wish to accept the offer.
  - iv) Where the offer is accepted, we will complete a tenancy sign-up interview and arrange to carry out a settling-in visit, within 6 weeks of the tenancy start date.

## Consultation and feedback

- 74
- i) We will consult with customers (existing tenants and housing applicants) about any significant changes to our Allocations Policy.
  - ii) As part of reviews of the housing list, the Association will provide applicants with information about our performance in letting houses, the turnover of properties, and the lettings plan for the year ahead. We will also provide information about our performance through tenant newsletters, the Association's annual report and other appropriate methods.
  - iii) We will ask all new tenants for feedback about their experience of applying for a house from the Association, and their views about the standard of service we have provided.

## Ensuring fair treatment for all applicants

- 75
- i) The Association will take positive measures to ensure that the availability of housing is made known to all members of the community. We will make information about our housing available to organisations which represent or support people from disadvantaged groups, including Positive Action in Housing and the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living.
  - ii) Our selection and allocation policies will be clear, comprehensive and non-discriminatory.
  - iii) We will give priority to meeting extreme forms of housing need which some applicants may be experiencing. This includes victims of racial harassment and domestic abuse (including same sex relationships), and people with urgent rehousing needs because of a disability or medical impairment.



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- iv) We will maintain records of housing which is suitable for disabled people, to help match people and houses.
- v) All selection and allocation procedures will be designed to deal quickly and fairly with applicants. Proper recording, reporting and monitoring procedures will be carried out. To ensure accountability and fairness more than one person will be involved in each allocation decision.
- vi) In arranging consultation and participation activities, the Association will be sensitive to the needs which different groups and individuals may have.
- vii) The Association will monitor access to the housing list and rehousing outcomes for different groups, in particular people with disabilities and people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups. Monitoring results will be reported to the Association's Housing Management Committee, along with recommendations about any changes needed to improve the Association's performance.
- viii) We will also report access and rehousing outcomes for different groups in public documents such as our annual report and newsletters.
- ix) The Association will provide prospective tenants with information (eg about the Allocations Policy, offers of housing, tenancy conditions and rent levels) in a form appropriate to their individual needs.
- x) The Association will remove unnecessary communication barriers. Application forms and other information will be in simple jargon free language and where appropriate translation and interpretation services will be provided. The Association will offer help to fill out the relevant forms, and will be sensitive to the needs of people with communication difficulties.

### **Confidentiality and access to personal information**

- 76
- i) The Association will treat as confidential any information provided as part of housing applications. If we need to obtain information from anyone else to assess the application, we will only do so where we have obtained the applicant's written consent. We will ask for consent on our housing application form.
  - ii) The Association maintains paper and computerised information about housing applications. We have registered under the Data Protection Act 1998, to enable us to do this. Applicants can request access to any personal information which we hold about them, as long as this does not affect anybody else's rights to confidentiality. Further information about the procedures for doing this are provided in the Association's Policy on Data Protection.

### **Complaints and appeals**

- 77
- i) An applicant can appeal against:
    - The points total awarded.
    - A decision to suspend an application from the housing list.

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- Any other aspect of the applications and lettings process, if the applicant believes their application has not been dealt with in accordance with the Association's Policy.
- ii) In the first instance an informal appeal can be made to the Association's Housing Manager. Where the applicant remains dissatisfied he/she can use the Association's Complaints Procedure. The Complaints Procedure can also be used if an applicant is concerned about the standard of service they have received or the conduct of a staff member.
  - iii) Information about how to make a complaint is available from the Association's office. Complaints about allocations matters will be dealt with by the Association's Director. If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they can ask for the matter to be referred to an appeals committee, made up of Management Committee members.
  - iv) Having used North View's complaints and appeal procedure, applicants can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman if they wish to have their complaint considered by an independent body. Details are available from our office or by contacting the Ombudsman direct at:

4 Melville Street  
 Edinburgh  
 EH3 7NS  
 Telephone: 0870 011 5378  
 Fax: 0870 011 5379  
 Email: [enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk)

## Managing the Allocations Policy

### Roles and responsibilities

- 78 The implementation of this Policy and day-to-day management of applications and allocations will be carried out by the Association's housing management staff. The staff team is responsible and accountable to the Housing Management Committee and to the Association's Management Committee.
- 79 Reporting to the Director, the Housing Manager is responsible for ensuring effective implementation of the Allocations Policy, and the services provided to housing applicants.
- 80 The assessment of all applications and the making of offers will be checked and countersigned by a second member of the housing management team. Clear records will be maintained of all applications and all lettings decisions, to provide a clear audit trail.
- 81 Decisions about offers of housing are almost always made by the Association's staff. This includes any "special lets" which may arise, to respond to urgent housing needs which are not fully recognised under the Allocations Policy. The Director has delegated authority to make decisions on special lets, and will report to the Management Committee on the number and general circumstances of any such cases.



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82 In very exceptional circumstances, an offer of housing may need the prior approval by the Association's Housing Management Committee or Management Committee. This applies where:

- The Housing Manager and Director consider that a proposed special let would involve a significant departure from normal policy and practice, and that committee approval should be sought;
- An offer of housing is subject to Schedule 7, Part 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

#### **Performance management and continuous improvement**

83 The Association will closely monitor its performance in relation to access and lettings. Quarterly reports on performance will be provided to the Housing Management Committee and these will address:

- i) applications received
- ii) applications on the housing list
- iii) applications suspended
- iv) applicants re-housed
- v) performance in relation to the Annual Lettings Plan
- vi) the equalities profile of housing applicants and of people rehoused

84 In addition, the Association will review the outcomes from the Allocations Policy on an annual basis, to assess whether objectives are being met and to inform the Annual Lettings Plan for the coming year.

85 The Association will periodically assess service outcomes and performance in relation to "Performance Standards", to measure service quality and improvement.

86 The Allocations Policy will be reviewed in 3 years time, or earlier if required.

**End**

#### **Revision and Amendments:-**

2<sup>nd</sup> August 2006 - Adopted in this written form by Housing Management Committee.  
21<sup>st</sup> October 2009 - Reference to Asylum Seekers deleted.



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# **NORTH VIEW Housing Association**

*North View is a registered Scottish charity – charity registration number SC032963*

## **Appendix 1 - Guide to the Points System**

The points system is used to assess all housing applications, with the exception of the following:

- **People who have been assessed by Glasgow City Council as homeless and in priority need for permanent rehousing**

If you have been assessed by Glasgow City Council and passed to us for permanent rehousing, you will not receive points. Instead, you will receive an offer of housing under the procedures set down in the law and in our agreement with the City Council. This helps make sure that homeless people receive the highest priority when we are letting houses.

- **Applicants being considered for an Aspirational let**

We let a small number of houses each year to North View HA tenants who don't qualify for points but who want to move to a different house within the area. These are called Aspirational moves, and offers are made based to the applicant who applied for a move first.

- **Applicants who have been referred to the association from Agencies** such as Social Work, or specialist agencies that provide help and support to individuals in housing need or MoveUK which is a national mobility scheme to help people to move around the country for a variety of reasons, for example to get work.

All other offers are based on the number of points you have, as described in the attached table. If two or more people have the same number of points, the person who has been on the housing list longest will receive the offer.

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS	MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE POINTS
<p><b>1. You do not have secure accommodation</b></p> <p>The association will review whether these points are still applicable at home visit stage or at the next review of the housing list.</p> <p>Points may be reduced if the applicant is no longer in immediate risk of homelessness.</p>		<p>Applicants with no secure accommodation will also be provided with information about contacting the local authority homeless service.</p> <p>Applicants receiving points for no secure accommodation can also receive points for lacking/sharing facilities.</p>
<p>1.1 You have been assessed by Glasgow City Council as homeless but not in priority need for permanent rehousing</p>	<b>15</b>	<p>When you apply to us for housing we will need you to provide confirmation from the City Council about their decision on your homeless application</p>
<p>1.2 You have not been assessed by the Council as being homeless, but you are threatened with homelessness <b>within the next two months</b>, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your lease or tenancy has expired, or your landlord has served you with a Notice to Quit.</li> <li>• You are an owner occupier and have had to sell your home (there are no restrictions on home owners applying and being assessed for rehousing).</li> <li>• You are having to leave tied housing; supported or temporary furnished or hostel accommodation; long term residential care; or the Forces.</li> <li>• You are an asylum seeker who has been granted permission to stay permanently in the United Kingdom, and you have to leave your NASS accommodation.</li> <li>• No Fixed Abode</li> </ul>	<b>15</b>	<p>At application stage we need to have written evidence of your circumstances (for example: A copy of a Notice to Quit; a mortgage repossession order; a solicitor's letter showing that you have sold your current home; a letter from your employer; a discharge letter from the Forces etc).</p> <p>You should also consider applying to the City Council as homeless, as this may improve your chances of being rehoused by North View or another landlord.</p> <p>If you have no fixed abode we would ask for written confirmation of the address you use for benefit/employer purposes.</p>

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS	MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE POINTS
<p>1.3 You do not have secure accommodation of your own.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your lease or tenancy will run out within the next 12 months</li> <li>• You are living in a boarding house, hostel, caravan or refuge</li> <li>• You are having to leave your current home because of a family or relationship breakdown</li> <li>• You are applying from prison</li> <li>• You are having to sell your current home</li> <li>• You are living as a lodger with relatives/ friends</li> </ul>	<b>10</b>	<p>When you apply we will ask you to show us written evidence of your circumstances for example a copy of your lease, confirmation of your address.</p> <p>A solicitor's letter that you are selling your current home/ a mortgage repossession order. If there is a difficulty about us visiting you at your home please let us know.</p> <p>If you become homeless after you have applied to us, you should make a homeless application to Glasgow City Council. You should also let us know about any change in your circumstances, as you may be entitled to receive more points.</p>
<p><b>2. You live in a house which is in poor condition</b></p>		
<p>2.1 Your home is in serious disrepair</p>	<b>10</b>	<p>This level of points will be awarded where your home is affected by <b>one or more</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- structural defects</li> <li>- dry rot</li> <li>- problems with the roof</li> <li>- subject to a closing order</li> <li>- confirmed for demolition</li> </ul> <p>At application stage we will ask you to provide documentary evidence such as a report from your landlord (if you are a tenant) or a structural survey or copy of an environmental health report.</p> <p>Alternatively, we may assess the problems when we carry out a home visit, but we can only do this if the problems are immediately apparent.</p>
<p>2.2 Your home is affected by <b>2 or more</b> of the following:</p>	<b>10</b>	<p>Points will be awarded based on the information in your application form and</p>

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS	MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dampness</li> <li>• Condensation</li> <li>• Inadequate heating (no central heating or partial central heating)</li> <li>• Window frames inadequate or in poor repair</li> </ul>		<p>confirmed when we carry out a home visit. We may ask you to supply supporting evidence such as an environmental health report.</p> <p>These points will only be awarded to the tenant or owner of the property.</p>
2.3 Your home is affected by <b>one</b> of the problems described at 2.2	<b>5</b>	
<p><b>3. Your home does not have adequate facilities, or you have to share facilities with others</b></p>		<p>You can be awarded points for not having secure accommodation and for lacking or sharing facilities</p> <p>People living in hostels where they do not have a kitchen can receive points for lacking facilities and for sharing facilities. Otherwise points will be awarded for only one of the categories 3.1 and 3.2</p>
<p>3.1 You <b>do not have 2</b> or more of the following facilities inside toilet, suitable cooking facilities, hot water supply, bath or shower;</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>You do not have <b>one</b> of the above facilities</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>5</b></p>	<p>Points will be confirmed when we visit you at home. If you live in a hostel and you do not have kitchen facilities, or there is a canteen, you can receive points in this category, as well as points for sharing facilities with others.</p>
<p>3.2 You <b>share 2</b> or more of the following facilities with family or friends, or as a lodger: cooking or kitchen facilities, toilet, bath or shower;</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>You share <b>2 or more</b> of the above facilities within a hostel or with more than two other households not related to you</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>5</b></p>	
<p><b>4. Overcrowding – your house is not big enough</b></p>		
<p>4.1 You need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 or more extra bedrooms;</li> <li>• 2 extra bedrooms;</li> <li>• 1 extra bedroom.</li> </ul>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>10</b></p>	<p>We work out overcrowding as follows:</p> <p>Your home should have a living room which is not used for sleeping in, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One bedroom for couples/partners</li> <li>• One bedroom for single adults/parents</li> </ul>

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS	MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE POINTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One bedroom for two children of different sex up to 10 years of age</li> <li>• One bedroom for two children of the same sex up to 12 years of age</li> <li>• One bedroom for each child of 12 years or over</li> </ul> <p>We also use these guidelines to work out what size of house you need. This is explained in the booklet you received with your application form.</p>
<b>5. Underoccupation – your house is too large</b>		
5.1 You are already a North View HA tenant and have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 or more extra bedrooms</li> <li>• 2 extra bedrooms</li> <li>• 1 extra bedroom</li> </ul>	<b>20</b> <b>15</b> <b>5</b>	To free up larger houses for people who need them most, we give points to North View HA tenants who are prepared to move to a smaller house. The guidelines on house size shown above are used to work out how many points are awarded. Points are only awarded where the applicant is the tenant of the property.
<b>6. You need to move for medical reasons</b>		<b>General</b>
		<p>Medical points are awarded if rehousing would help to relieve a serious medical problem. To receive medical points, you should complete all the questions in the Housing Application form about medical issues.</p> <p>Medical points will be awarded based on the information provided in the Application Form and confirmed when we carry out a home visit (for example, to confirm what health related benefits you receive).</p> <p>With your agreement, we may also ask for additional information to be provided by an occupational therapist, medical practitioner or medical social worker at home visit. If evidence submitted or passed to an occupational therapist/ independent GP for verification. We may do this before home visit stage, if this is needed to assess what level of</p>



TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS	MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE POINTS
		medical points you should receive.
6.1 You qualify for urgent rehousing on medical grounds, as a matter of emergency	<b>25</b>	<p>This level of points will be awarded where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant, or a member of the household, is housebound or virtually unable to leave their home unassisted - for example a wheelchair user living above the ground floor.</li> <li>• Where someone is living in hospital or away from home and cannot return to their home because their accommodation is unsuitable.</li> </ul>
6.2 You have serious medical and mobility problems and your current housing is not suitable e.g. not adapted for your needs.	<b>15</b>	<p>This level of points will be awarded where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant, or a member of the household, has serious medical problems which affect their mobility, and their current housing is not suitable.</li> </ul> <p>This could be due to the floor level/ number of stairs to the property, internal stairs, location of the property (e.g. up a hill or isolated location) or where the property has not been adapted for their needs.</p> <p>Examples of severe illness could include: cancer, heart disease, severe arthritis, chronic bronchitis or emphysema, where mobility is severely restricted and the applicant or household member currently lives at a higher floor level than they require.</p> <p>This list is not exhaustive and each case will be assessed individually, taking account of the impact on housing factors on the impairment.</p>
6.3 You have other medical problems, which make your home unsuitable for you and could be improved by re-housing	<b>5</b>	<p>This level of points will be awarded where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant, or a member of the household, is living in accommodation which is having a detrimental effect on a proven medical condition.</li> <li>• The medical condition does not need to be of a physical nature and does not affect the person's mobility.</li> </ul>

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS	MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE POINTS
		<p>Examples could include: HIV, cancer, heart disease, angina, arthritis, bronchitis, severe depression or other mental illness.</p> <p>If mobility is affected, this may qualify for the higher level of points described above.</p> <p>This list is not exhaustive and each case will be assessed individually.</p> <p>The Association will take into account the severity of the impairment, whether mobility is affected and the likely benefit of re-housing.</p>
<b>7. You need to move for social reasons</b>		
<p>7.1 You need re-housing for social reasons, such as harassment, as an emergency case (potentially life-threatening situation);</p> <p>7.2 You are experiencing serious social problems such as racial harassment or domestic violence</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p><b>20</b></p>	<p>People in these circumstances can apply to the Association direct, or be referred by a specialist support agency.</p> <p>The Association will assess each case based on the information supplied by applicants. Where confirmation can be provided by the police, Women's Aid or other agencies this will be taken into account if provided. For the higher level of points, we would expect that such confirmation would be available.</p>
<p>7.3 You have experienced social problems over a period of time and re-housing would help</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p>This level of points applies to less serious cases of harassment which have been ongoing over a period of time. It does not apply to problems with neighbours, unless these escalate and/or lead to more serious problems on a landing, or within a close or block.</p> <p>We may confirm details with the Police or landlord if appropriate.</p>
<p>7.4 You have experienced problems with neighbours over a period of time and re-housing would help</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p>This level of points applies to circumstances where an applicant has problems with their neighbours.</p>
<p>7.5 You live on or above the fifth floor and this is unsuitable for your household.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p>Points will be awarded to applicants living on or above the fifth floor, where the household includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons above retirement age</li> </ul>

TYPE OF HOUSING NEED	POINTS	MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE POINTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children aged 12 years or younger</li> </ul>
7.6 You or a member of your family needs to stay in the area to provide or receive family or other personal support	<b>5</b>	We will need information about the type and frequency of support to be provided or given (for example, shopping, medical, child care, domestic, help with maintaining a tenancy).
7.7 You need to move home to be closer to your place of work	<b>5</b>	You work, or have received an offer of employment, in the Castlemilk area (G45 postcode area). You currently live more than 5 miles from your place of work.
7.8 You live in, but no longer need, a property which has been specially designed or adapted for a person using a wheelchair.	<b>35</b>	