
ALLOCATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Title:	Allocations Policy and Procedures
Purpose of Procedure:	To clarify the procedures and policy regarding allocations and mutual exchanges and ensure consistency in dealing with such applications.
Section:	Housing Management
Date:	April 2019
Review Date:	April 2022
Reference:	Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes; Charter Outcome 1 'Equalities': Charter Outcome 2 'Communication' Charter Outcome 4 'Quality of housing' Charter Outcome 7,8 and 9 'Housing Options' Charter Outcome 10 'Access to Social Housing'' Charter Outcome 11 'Tenancy Sustainment'

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Blairtummock Housing Association is a community based not-for-profit organisation operating in the communities of Blairtummock and Rogerfield within Easterhouse. The Association is run by an elected and voluntary Management Committee made up of local tenants and residents. Policies of the Association are agreed and approved by the Management Committee with the implementation of these policies the responsibility of staff.

The main aim of the Association is to provide good quality affordable accommodation and to allocate our houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in the greatest housing need, while at the same time, helping to maintain a balanced, stable and sustainable community.

2.0 BALANCED AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The Association believes a balanced and stable community is one which includes people with a wide range of life and employment experiences, ages and household types and a mix of tenure forms. A sustainable community is one in which people aspire to live and stay. Residents are free to enjoy their homes without nuisance, distress or fear and where residents identify with, and participate in the life of, the community. This gives the community the strength to welcome and support individuals or families in times of difficulty.

The Scottish Government in their 2012 'Affordable Rented Housing: creating flexibility for landlords and better outcomes for communities' document outline future legislative changes. The first and most important proposal in this document is to 'create more flexibility for social landlords to decide who should get priority for their housing'. The aim is that 'greater flexibility can give local communities more of a say in who is being housed' and allow 'allocations to be more responsive to local needs and demand for housing and also simpler and more transparent'. The Association believes this reviewed Allocation Policy achieves these aims.

The Association believes the main factors which contribute to the development of a sustainable balanced community are:

- 2.1 Residents have chosen, and applicants aspire, to live and stay within that community.
- 2.2 The community tries to meet the different needs, from serious housing need to aspirational need, of its current and future residents.
- 2.3 A socio-economic mix and balance of current and future residents and of tenure forms.
- 2.4 Community, social and family needs are encouraged and supported.

3.0 AIMS OF THE ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The aims of the Allocations Policy are:

- 3.1 To help create and maintain a balanced, stable and sustainable community while making the best use of available stock of housing.
- 3.2 To allocate our houses in an objective, fair, accountable and efficient manner by means of a published Allocations Policy that meets both legislation and good practice requirements.
- 3.3 To recognise and try to meet the different needs and aspirations of all groups of applicants and prospective applicants.
- 3.4 To minimise the turnover of housing and the time empty houses lie vacant.
- 3.5 To promote a range of housing options which offer applicants personalised housing advice and help in order to promote greater choice and reduce housing crisis and prevent homelessness.
- 3.6 To operate an Allocations Policy that is effective, efficient, easily understood and simple to administer.

The Management Committee believe each of these aims can be achieved through the operation of an open Housing List in which targets are set to rehouse different groups of applicants who are rehoused in date order.

4.0 SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER OUTCOMES

4.1 The following charter outcomes and standards are directly relevant to the Allocations Policy:

4.1.1 **Charter Outcome 1 ‘Equalities’:**

‘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’.

4.1.2 **Charter Outcome 2 ‘Communication’:**

‘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’.

4.1.3 **Charter Outcome 4 ‘Quality of housing’:**

‘tenants’ homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated; are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by December 2020.

4.1.4 **Charter Outcome 7,8 and 9 ‘Housing Options’:**

‘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’.

‘people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness’.

4.1.5 **Charter Outcome 10 ‘Access to Social Housing’:**

‘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’.

4.1.6 **Charter Outcome 11 ‘Tenancy Sustainment’:**

‘tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is

available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations’.

5.0 Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) Indicators

- 5.1 The following Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) Indicators are relevant to the Allocations Policy:
- 5.1.1 **Charter Indicator 18** 'Percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year'
 - 5.1.2 **Charter Indicator 20** 'Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year, by source of let'
 - 5.1.3 **Charter Indicator 21** 'Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year'
 - 5.1.4 **Charter Indicator 34** 'Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year'
 - 5.1.5 **Charter Indicator 35** 'Average length of time taken to re-let properties in the last year'
 - 5.1.6 **Charter Contextual Indicator C7** 'Number of lets during the reporting year, split between 'general needs' and 'supported housing'
 - 5.1.7 **Charter Contextual Indicator C8** 'The number of lets during the reporting year by source of let'
 - 5.1.8 **Charter Contextual Indicator C9** 'Types of tenancies granted for lets during the reporting year'
 - 5.1.9 **Charter Contextual Indicator C10** 'Housing Lists'
 - 5.1.10 **Charter Contextual Indicator C20** 'the number of self-contained properties void at the year end and of those, the number that have been void for more than six months'

6.0 ACCESS TO THE HOUSING LIST

- 6.1 The Association operates an open Housing List in which all applicants aged 16 years or over are entitled to be placed on the Housing List and have their application assessed.
- 6.2 Applicants on the Housing List will be placed in the most appropriate applicant group.

7.0 APPLICANT GROUPS

The Association has four different applicant groups on its Housing List:

7.1 HOMELESS & SERIOUS HOUSING NEED GROUP

7.1.1 **Section 5 Referrals** - the Association has a legal duty under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to comply with a request from Glasgow City Council to rehouse statutory homeless applicants. In meeting its duties under the Act the Association will also have regard to the 'Homelessness Duty Protocol for Glasgow' established between Glasgow City Council and Glasgow RSL's (Registered Social Landlords).

7.1.2 **Below Tolerable Standards** - living in unsatisfactory housing that is below tolerable standards as defined in Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 with further amendments in the Housing (Scotland) Acts 2001, 2006 and 2014.

7.1.3 **Serious Overcrowding** - overcrowding by 2 or more bedrooms

7.1.4 **Under-occupying** – under-occupying by 1 or more bedrooms

7.1.5 **Serious Medical or Health Needs** - medical or health needs which will **only** be alleviated by rehousing to a specific type of house.

7.1.6 **Serious Housing Issues** – applicants suffering harassment, antisocial behaviour, domestic abuse or relationship breakdown (BHA tenants/partners only) for which it is no longer safe or reasonable to remain in their current accommodation

7.1.7 **Kinship Cares** – long-term or permanent looked after children placed with kinship carers by the local authority. Can include non-looked after children with informal kinship carers with sufficient supporting evidence.

7.1.8 **Leaving Armed Forces / Ex-Service Personnel** – evidence such as Notice to Vacate or Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy Service Accommodation

7.2 BALANCED COMMUNITY GROUP:

7.2.1 **Employment** – in full-time or part-time work

7.2.2 **Training** – in full-time or part-time training

7.3.2 **Education** – in full-time or part-time education

7.3 SOCIAL, SUPPORT & LOCATION GROUP:

7.3.1 **Community Activity** – involved in any local community activity

7.3.2 **Voluntary Work** – involved in any local voluntary work

7.3.3 **Social Support** – provide or receive formal or informal support /care to or from someone living locally

7.3.4 **Location** - while not currently in employment, training or education, will be able to do so by moving into the area.

7.4 GENERAL HOUSING NEED GROUP:

7.4.1 **Overcrowding** - overcrowding by 1 bedroom

7.4.2 **Aspirational** - no other recognized housing need

7.4.3 **All Other Applicants** – applicants who do not qualify to be placed in any of the other 3 applicant groups.

7.5 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES_

- a. An exceptional let can be granted at the discretion of staff when the circumstances are so extreme or unusual that the Allocations Policy cannot adequately assess and prioritise the applicant.

8.0 Date of Application & Processing Timescale

- 8.1 The position on the list of each applicant group is based on length of time on the list through their date of application.
- 8.2 The Association recognises the personal, family and financial circumstances of applicants do change. For that reason an applicant will be removed from the list of an applicant group for which they no longer qualify and be placed on the list of another applicant group in which they have the best chance of being rehoused.
- 8.3 For reasons of fairness and transparency no applicant should either benefit or be penalised for a change in their circumstances. Their position on this new applicant group will therefore be based on original date of application.
- 8.4 Target timescale for processing applications is 10 days. Please see Allocations Procedure for details.

9.0 TARGET LETS & YEARLY LETTINGS PLAN

As made clear in Section 3 'Aims of the Allocation Policy' the Association wishes to help create and maintain a balanced, stable and sustainable community within Blairtummock and Rogerfield areas and to allocate our houses in an objective, fair and accountable manner.

The Management Committee believe the best way to achieve these aims is through a yearly Lettings Plan outlining the target lets of properties to each of the different applicant group. The yearly Lettings Plan is closely monitored and reviewed to ensure the policy is achieving its aims.

The current Lettings Plan for each applicant group is as follows:

- 9.1 Homeless & Serious Housing Need Group List (40%)
- 9.2 General Need Group List (25%)
- 9.3 Socio-Economic Balance Group List (25%)
- 9.4 Community, Social & Family Group List (10%)

10.0 SIZE OF HOUSE REQUIRED

Demand for our homes far exceeds the supply of available homes for let. With our homes to let a scarce resource, we wish to make best use of our stock and maximize the use of our houses. The following house size requirements are also in accordance with DWP's 'Social Sector Size Criteria Restrictions' more commonly referred to as the 'Bedroom Tax'.

10.1 Applicant and partner require 1 bedroom.

10.2 Each 2 persons of the same sex under 16 require 1 bedroom if age gap is less than 5 years

10.3 Each 2 persons of the same sex under 16 require 1 bedroom each if age gap is more than 5 years

10.4 Each 2 persons of different sex over 10 years old require 1 bedroom each.

10.5 Each person 16 and over requires 1 bedroom.

10.6 **Unborn Children**

Unborn children will be considered members of the household once official confirmation is received.

10.7 **Access to Children**

If the applicant has expressed a preference for an additional bedroom(s) on their application, applicants will be given the option to be placed on the 2 bedroom list. Applicants will be given a maximum of one additional bedroom only above the needs of the permanent household members. Although the applicant may have access to more than one child, the maximum one additional bedroom aims to strike a balance between the needs of the household while recognising the children are permanently housed elsewhere. Allowing applicants with access arrangements to be rehoused in larger properties is not best use of available stock given the small number of larger houses available together with the high

demand for such houses from households in which family members will make full use of all rooms permanently. See 10.12 regarding 'under-occupancy charge' implications, discussions and disclaimer the new tenant must sign.

10.8 Temporary Members of the Household

Applicants, who wish to include as members of the household anyone who requires being away for long periods of time, will require to provide confirmation their absence is only temporary and their permanent residence is with the household. If affected, see 10.12 for 'under-occupancy charge' implications, discussions & disclaimer the new tenant must sign.

10.9 Applicants Living Apart but Applying Separately

Applicants who currently live apart but wish to form a new household together will be assessed as one application. Based on each of their circumstances, the application will be placed on the queue with the best chance of rehousing.

10.10 Medical Conditions

In some circumstances the household may require separate bedrooms for household members who have medical conditions or other problems. If affected, the full implications of the 'Bedroom Tax' will be fully explained to the applicant who will sign a disclaimer to this effect.

10.11 Single People & Couples

If the applicant has expressed a preference for an additional bedroom(s) on their application, due to a shortage of 1 bedroom properties, single people and couples will be given the option to be placed on the 2 bedroom list. See 10.12 regarding 'under-occupancy charge' implications, discussions and disclaimer the new tenant must sign

10.12 Implications & Disclaimer

If given the option when being made an offer of rehousing, the full implications of the DWP's size criteria restrictions on housing benefit or universal credit resulting in an 'under-

occupancy charge' will be fully explained to all applicants. All applicants will be required to sign a disclaimer stating they still wish to accept a 2 bedroom home despite their requirement to pay an under-occupancy charge. All applicants will sign this disclaimer, and not just those who will require housing benefit or universal credit to help pay their rent from the start of the tenancy, so they are fully aware of this charge should there be any future change in their financial circumstances. This disclaimer will also make clear appropriate arrears action, which can include legal action resulting in eviction, will be taken against the applicant for any outstanding rent due including rent due as a result of the under-occupancy charge.

11 TENANCY REFERENCES

- 11.1 Only when considering offers of housing will staff request confirmation of identity and residency and other relevant confirmation e.g. employment or training if in socio-economic group or voluntary work or social support if in community, social and locational group.
- 11.2 When considering offers of housing staff will request a tenancy reference for all applicants who have held a tenancy within the previous 5 years.
- 11.3 Where the applicant has bought their own property, a reference may be requested from their lender. Should there be a charge applied by the lender for a reference this will be paid by the Association. Where a person has lived care of, a letter of confirmation may be requested from the person with whom they stayed.

12.0 OFFERS OF HOUSING

- 12.1 There are no limits on the number of offers of housing an applicant can receive.
- 12.2 In order to fully meet the needs of the applicant a full discussion following each refusal must take place to make sure their application is updated to reflect their actual wishes and requirements regarding type of house and location etc. This discussion should make clear to the applicant their prospects for rehousing and establish if the Association can in fact meet their wishes and requirements.

13.0 FAILURE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION OR ACCESS FOR HOUSE VISITS

- 13.1 At the initial application stage the Association does not require confirmation of identity or residency or any other relevant confirmation at this stage to be placed on the list.
- 13.2 To ensure an applicant is placed in the most appropriate applicant group or to clarify any other issue, a request may be made for the applicant to provide additional information at the application stage.
- 13.3 Confirmation of identity and residency and other relevant confirmation e.g. employment or training if in socio-economic group or voluntary work or social support if in community, social and locational group will be required when considering offers of rehousing.
- 13.4 A house visit to an applicant should be carried out when considering offers of rehousing. A house visit will not be required if we are in receipt of a satisfactory house visit report carried out by another landlord recently. An up to date house visit may be carried out if staff consider it necessary. A house visit will not be carried out if staff assess such a visit to be of little benefit e.g. applicant living in a c/o address for a short time.
- 13.5 Failure to provide requests for additional information or to allow access for house visits will result in the application being moved to an inactive status. The applicant will be contacted and advised that while their application still remains on the Housing List it they will not be actively considered for rehousing. Their application can be reconsidered when information is received or access allowed.

14.0 SUSPENDED APPLICATIONS

14.1 Statutory suspensions – New Applications

- 14.1.1 Statutory suspensions are discretionary. Waiting time may be applied to new applicants, once accepted onto the list, that they must remain on the list before being considered for offers or rehousing. Applicants suspended on this basis have a right to appeal to the Sheriff Court. We cannot suspend where a suspension has already been made on the same evidence or where there is a duty to house based on homelessness.
- 14.1.2 Applicants being suspended for statutory reasons can only be suspended on the following seven grounds set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014:
- 14.1.3 **Antisocial behaviour** – against another person in the locality of a house occupied by them, a course of conduct amounting to harassment or course of conduct against Association staff in the course of making an application
- 14.1.4 **Previous convictions** - using a house or allowing a house to be used for immoral or illegal purposes or an offence punishable by imprisonment which was committed in or in the locality of a house occupied by the applicant or person residing with the applicant
- 14.1.5 **Recovery of possession** - where there has been an order for recovery of possession under certain Housing Acts
- 14.1.6 **Abandoning or neglecting a property** – a previous tenancy of the applicant has been terminated by the landlord or an applicant's interest in a previous tenancy was terminated by the landlord. With regard to neglect a previous tenancy was terminated by the landlord on condition of the property or furniture
- 14.1.7 **Rent arrears or other tenancy debt** - where there is an outstanding liability for payment of rent or otherwise in relation to a house which is attributable to the applicant's tenancy. The

amount of outstanding liability is more than one month's rent payment or there is no appropriate repayment plan in place

14.1.8 Making a false statement in an application - Where an applicant has knowingly or recklessly made a false statement in their application form

14.1.9 Refusal of previous offers - Where an applicant has refused one or more offers of housing and the landlord considers the refusal of that number of offers to be unreasonable

14.2 Non-statutory Suspensions – Existing Applicants

14.2.1 Non-statutory suspensions are for applicants already on the Housing List. Applicants can be suspended from receiving offers of housing for a period of time. The Association may suspend existing applicants for the same seven reasons outlined at 14.4 to 14.10 above.

14.2.2 Other non-statutory suspensions may include where the responsibilities of an applicant who is a current tenant, in relation to their legal and/or contractual duties regarding their tenancy, are clearly not being adhered to:

- Poor condition of the tenants home with evidence of vandalism and examples of abuse over and above general wear and tear.
- Applicant not taking their turn of cleaning and keeping tidy their garden or other common areas such as landing and stairs.
- Not controlling pets etc.

14.2.3 Each application for suspension will be considered on its own merit with clear, reasonable and justifiable reasons for suspension. Each applicant suspended will be notified in writing together with details of why the suspension has been applied, length of time the suspension will be in force and what action can be taken to end the suspension. Details confirming their right of appeal and information on the Association's complaints procedure will also be included. Regular reviews of each suspended application will take place.

15.0 CANCELLED APPLICATIONS

The Association will only cancel and remove an application from the Housing List in the following circumstances:

- 15.1 The applicant has requested removal from the Housing List. The Association should endeavor to have written confirmation of this request.
- 15.2 The applicant has failed to respond to the periodic review of the Housing List.
- 15.3 Death of an applicant.

16.0 CLEARANCE CASES

- 16.1 If the Association has a clearance and demolition programme the allocation policy will be suspended.
- 16.2 All voids will in the first instance be offered to clearance cases.
- 16.3 All voids refused by clearance cases can be re-let under the normal allocations policy.

17.0 VULNERABLE TENANTS

- 17.1 Staff need to identify, discuss and agree with an applicant at the offer stage, any vulnerability or additional support needs. This information will be recorded. This information is y important to ensure all staff are fully aware of any vulnerability or support issues. Staff can then work closely with the tenant, family members, carers, friends, or other partner organisations, to ensure the most appropriate action is taken to keep the tenant in their home and avoid court action and eviction if at all possible.
- 17.2 For new tenants the pre-tenancy stage and sign up process is crucial to identify, discuss and record any vulnerability or support issues. Tenants however can become vulnerable or require additional support for many reasons during their tenancy. So all staff in contact with tenants have a role to play in identifying vulnerable tenants.

18.0 TENANCY SUSTAINMENT

The Association recognises that many of its tenancies are brought to an end by the tenant choosing to end the tenancy for positive reasons such as moving in with a partner, transferring to a more suitable larger or smaller home, buying their own home or relocating as a result of a new job. Tenancies also end for natural reasons such as a tenant passing away. So tenancy turnover does not reflect a failure of a tenancy.

Unfortunately, not all tenancies end through the choice of the tenant. Tenancy sustainment simply means keeping tenants in their home for as long as they wish to remain. As a result, this helps to reduce the number of failed tenancies and potential homelessness. A failed tenancy is when the tenancy ends for negative reasons and the tenant does not necessarily choose or wants the tenancy to end. This can happen for many reasons. For example, financial reasons, drugs or alcohol dependency issues, mental health issues or simply not being able to cope with managing their home. Shelter defines tenancy sustainment as *'preventing a tenancy from coming to a premature end by providing the necessary information, advice, and support for tenants to be able to maintain their tenancies'*. It is for these reasons meeting the aims of this policy are so important.

The Association will do all it possibly can to make sure tenants remain in their home and that potential homelessness is prevented. It is for this reason this policy and other policies emphasise working closely with the tenant and in partnership with others as being vital in successfully sustaining tenancies by keeping tenants in their home and preventing potential homelessness. As a result, different policies and procedures of the Association already include many tenancy sustainment measures:

18.1 Housing options & prospects for rehousing applicant interviews

18.2 House visits prior to offer of housing

18.3 Pre tenancy viewings and discussions

18.4 Establishing a good relationship with new tenants from the start

18.5 Identify, discuss and agree any support needs or vulnerability issues

18.6 Furniture provision information

18.7 Money and benefits advice

18.8 Simple and clear communication with tenants

18.9 Face to face or telephone personal contact

18.10 Tenancy visits

18.11 Partnership working

19.0. MUTUAL EXCHANGE

19.1 Tenants of Blairtummock Housing Association have the opportunity to exchange properties within the Association's area of operation or any of the following landlords:

- City Councils
- Housing Associations
- Housing Co-operatives

19.2 The aim of this policy and procedures is to clarify the procedure regarding mutual exchanges and ensure consistency in dealing with such applications.

19.3 Procedures

19.3.1 Once an enquiry has been received about a prospective mutual exchange each applicant must complete a Mutual Exchange Application Form (Appendix A) and also be given a copy of the conditions governing mutual exchanges (see section 3.0) they are required to sign and return with the Mutual Exchange Application form. A copy of the conditions should be returned to the applicant.

19.3.2 As soon as a request for a mutual exchange has been received, any waiting list application form should be suspended until the exchange has been approved or refused.

19.3.3 Applications would then be investigated usually by means of a home visit/office interview by the Housing Officer with the following checks being made:

- a) Rent Account
- b) House Size
- c) Family Size and Composition
- d) Length of Tenancy
- e) Home Visit

Where the mutual exchange involves a tenant of another landlord, a tenancy report would be requested (Appendix B). A

copy of the signed mandate at the back of the Mutual Exchange Application Form would also be required to enable the other landlord to release the information.

19.3.4 The Housing Officer would pass the mutual exchange forms and their recommendation to the Housing Manager for approval.

19.3.5 Once both applicants have been approved, they would be notified in writing and invited to the office to sign the necessary documents (Appendix C). Rent accounts should be paid in advance to ensure up to date at date of exchange taking place. Where an applicant has arrears, repayments should have been in place for minimum 12 weeks.

19.3.6 If the exchange is refused, a letter would be sent informing applicants of this, giving reasons for the refusal and providing an opportunity to call and discuss the matter (Appendix D) and also advising of the right to appeal.

19.4 **Conditions Governing Mutual Exchanges**

The application will be processed within 28 days where all relevant information has been provided. Each applicant will be notified in writing of the acceptance of the application.

19.4.1 **A copy of the signed conditions is given to each applicant**
- one copy for the Association and one copy for their retention.

19.4.2 It is necessary for both applicants on the exchange application to have a satisfactory rent account, and no debt outstanding to the Association. If an applicant is not a Blairtummock Housing Association tenant, a satisfactory tenancy report is required from the relevant landlord, including details of clear rent account.

19.4.3 It is necessary for both applicants wishing to exchange properties to state that it is their intention to occupy the prospective property for a minimum 12-month period.

19.4.4 No mutual exchange will be permitted where this causes overcrowding as determined by the allocation policy of Blairtummock Housing Association.

- 19.4.4 The Association will not permit a mutual exchange if the circumstances are not in conjunction with the Association's Allocation Policy.
- 19.4.5 The Association shall not incur any expense in connection with granting a mutual exchange out with normal repairs which are the responsibility of the Association. An inspection of the property will be undertaken on receipt of the mutual exchange application. Where repairs are required as a result of tenant negligence, the cost of such repairs must be paid by the tenant prior to the exchange being granted or the repair should be carried out by the tenant to a satisfactory standard.
- 19.4.6 Both applicants should be satisfied following inspection that the property to which they propose to exchange, is in an acceptable condition. Each applicant should ensure that all fixtures and fittings are intact, including approved additional fitments provided by the tenant.
- 19.4.7 Neither applicant should proceed with the exchange until they have received written confirmation from the landlord(s). Thereafter a date of entry will be agreed and the necessary paperwork will be completed.

19.5 **Mutual Exchange Noticeboard**

- 19.5.1 Information on mutual exchanges is displayed on the Notice Board in the reception area of the Association's offices.
- 19.5.2 Anyone wishing further information should note the relevant reference number and request further details from the Association's staff.
- 19.5.3 Mutual exchange requests will be reviewed annually.

20.0 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

To meet fully all the aims of this policy, the Management Committee strongly believe this can only be achieved by working in partnership with other statutory or voluntary organisation's. The main local partner organisation's under this policy we purchase or receive services from, refer tenants to and have regular contact and meetings with include:

- 20.1 To meet fully all the aims of this policy, the Management Committee believe this can only be achieved by working in partnership with other statutory or voluntary organisations. The main local partner organisations under this policy we purchase or receive services from, refer tenants to and have regular contact and meetings with include:
- 20.2 Glasgow City Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) – North East Community Homeless Service
- 20.3 HSCP Departments: Addiction Services, Children & Family Services, Mental Health Services, Adult Services, Older People Services, Physical Disability Services.
- 20.4 Loretto Care Support Service
- 20.5 Cordia – Home Care Services
- 20.6 Addaction – Alcohol and Drug Support Service
- 20.7 Greater Easterhouse Alcohol Awareness Project (GEAAP)
- 20.8 GENR8 (Action for Children) – Youth Homelessness & Tenancy Sustainment Project
- 20.9 Glasgow Advice Agency – Your home, Your Rights Project
- 20.10 Glasgow Works – Employment & Training Advice & Guidance
- 20.11 Peoples Gateway – Money Advice, Employment & Personal Development

21.0 BENCHMARKING

The Association is a member of Scottish Federation of Housing Associations & Easterhouse Housing & Regeneration Alliance (EHRA). The Association benchmarks against EHRA and ARC data published by the Scottish Housing Regulator each year. We also work together on a range of issues to continually improve not just the external services delivered to applicants, residents and tenants, but to also improve internal management processes and performance.

21.1 These benchmarking reports and results are also reported to the Management Committee on a quarterly and annual basis.

22.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Blairtummock Housing Association is committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all. The Rent Management Policy and Procedure in its operation will adhere to all parts of the Equality & Diversity Policy. There will be particular regard to the Equality Act 2010; the introduction of which saw previous discrimination legislation abolished and replaced with one single piece of legislation. This Act makes it unlawful for all types of discrimination against anyone with the following nine protected characteristics:

- 22.1 Age or social origin
- 22.2 Disability - including physical or mental impairment
- 22.3 Gender reassignment
- 22.4 Marriage or civil partnership
- 22.5 Pregnancy and maternity
- 22.6 Race – including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins
- 22.7 Religion or belief
- 22.8 Sex
- 22.9 Sexual Orientation

The Association wishes to ensure there are no barriers in accessing its services. Relevant documents can therefore be translated into a range of languages on request. We will also ensure that translation services are available for those who wish more detailed information and to assist those who wish to make personal enquiries. For anyone with visual impairment relevant documents can also, on request, be made available in larger print, on tape, in Braille or on any format required.

23.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

All aspects of the Allocation Policy and procedures adhere to the following Equality & Housing legislation:

23.1 Equality Act 2010

23.2 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

23.3 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

23.4 Housing (Scotland) Act 2014

23.5 Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003

23.6 Human Rights Act 1998

23.7 Data Protection Act 2018 (UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

23.8 Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981

23.9 Housing (Scotland) Act 1987

23.10 Housing (Scotland) Act 2006

23.11 The Children (Scotland) Act 1995

23.12 Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009

23.13 Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003

24.0 GUIDANCE AND GOOD PRACTICE

Every effort has been made to develop the policy with regards to the following guidance and good practice:

- 24.1 Social Housing Allocations in Scotland: A Practice Guide 2019 (Scottish Government, 2019)
- 24.2 A Scottish Housing Guide for People Leaving the Armed Forces & Ex-Service Personnel (Scottish Government, 2018)
- 24.3 Scottish Social Housing Charter Indicators & Technical Annex (Scottish Government, 2017)
- 24.4 The Legal Framework for Social Housing Allocations: Statutory Guidance for Social Landlords Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 (Scottish Government, 2016)
- 24.5 Affordable Rented Housing: creating flexibility for landlords and better outcomes for communities (Scottish Government, 2012)
- 24.6 Regulatory Standards in Governance and Financial Management (Scottish Government, 2012).
- 24.7 Suspending Applicants on Housing Registers (Chartered Institute of Housing, 2002)
- 24.8 Tenancy Sustainment – Not just The Latest Buzz Word! (Shelter, 2011)
- 24.9 Tenancy Sustainment in Scotland (Shelter, 2009)
- 24.10 Preventing Homelessness, Sustaining Tenancies (Shelter, 2009)
- 24.11 Regulatory Standards in Governance and Financial Management (Scottish Government, 2012).
- 24.12 Suspending Applicants on Housing Registers (Chartered Institute of Housing, 2002)
- 24.13 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 – Housing Lists and Allocations (Scottish Executive 2002)

25.0 GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Association will meet the standards outlined in 'Regulatory Standards in Governance and Financial Management' published by The Scottish Housing Regulator and its own 'Payments, Benefits and Corporate Accountability' policy. These cover the types of payments and benefits that landlords can make to their employees, committee members or close relative of employees or committee members. This includes any former employees or committee members within the previous 12 months. These are designed to make sure that none of the above either abuse their position or benefit in any way from their connections with the Association. They therefore play an important part in maintaining the Association's good reputation. The Association will aim to exercise at all times good governance and judgement and maintain high ethical standards of honesty, integrity and probity. There are however circumstances under which payments can be made and benefits granted and these are allowed in the following ways:

The Association may grant a tenancy, transfer of tenancy or mutual exchange to an employee, former employee, committee member or former committee member providing that the person:

- 25.1 Fully meets the Association's published allocations criteria
- 25.2 Has had no involvement in or influence over the process by which the Association has allocated the tenancy in question

There is a duty on all applicants to declare if they are related or connected to any staff or committee member in the appropriate section of the Housing Application Form.

Any application that falls under into this criteria being considered for a tenancy will be formally referred to the Management Committee for approval prior to any offer of housing being made. If necessary, a special meeting of the Management Committee will be called to avoid delay in an allocation that would result in rent loss. Any such allocation will be recorded.

- 25.3 A list of all current staff and committee members, including former staff and committee members in the previous twelve months, will be included along with the Housing Application Form and be on display in the reception area of the office.

26.0 PUBLICITY AND INFORMATION

The Association will publish and publicise its Allocation Policy and Housing List in the following ways:

- 26.1 At each policy review copies of the Allocations Policy shall be sent to The Scottish Housing Regulator, Glasgow City Council, HSCP local Councilors, EHRA landlords plus any other relevant local organisation's and venues that may become apparent.
- 26.2 Regular articles in the Associations newsletter.
- 26.3 Allocations Policy made available free of charge on request.
- 26.4 Allocations Information Summary Leaflet to be made easily available.
- 26.5 Allocations Policy made available on request in any of the ways outlined under the 'Equality and Diversity section.

Local press if and when required

27.0 ROLE OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

27.1 Staff will undertake the day to day operation of every aspect of the allocations process. The role of the Management Committee is to agree the policy, monitor its outcomes and review accordingly. The Management Committee will also consider any special cases or lets under the 'Good Governance' section.

28.0 DELEGATED AUTHORITY

28.1 The Management Committee has delegated the Housing Services Sub-Committee authority to monitor the allocation policy outcomes.

29.0 DECISION REVIEW

An applicant dissatisfied with any decision taken regarding their application or any part of the allocation process has the right to request a review of the decision. All applicants are advised of the review process which is as follows:

- 29.1. Applicant can request a review of the decision to the Housing Services Manager of the Association. Their review can be made in person by making an appointment or by phone, in writing or by email. The Housing Services Manager will provide a written response within 5 working days.
- 29.2. If the applicant does not agree or accept the decision of the Housing Services Manager, they have the right to make a final appeal to the Director of the Association. Their appeal can be made in person by making an appointment or by phone, in writing or by email. The Director will provide a written response within 5 working days.

30.0 COMPLAINTS

An applicant has the right to complain if they are unhappy. We value any complaint an applicant may have as this can help improve the service we provide. Applicants can make a comment, suggestion or complaint about various issues including the following:

- 30.1 Our standards of service or failure to provide a service.
- 30.2. Treatment or attitude by a staff member.
- 30.3. Dissatisfaction with our Allocations Policy.

Applicants are advised of the complaints process which is as follows:

- 30.4 Applicant can make a complaint to the Director of the Association. Their complaint can be made in person by making an appointment or by phone, in writing or by email. They can also fill out our complaint form. The Director will normally provide a written response within 5 working days or 20 working days if a detailed investigation is required.
- 30.5 If the applicant does not agree or accept the decision of the Director, they have a final right of complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The applicant is advised how they can complain to the SPSO.

31.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 31.1 Any information, including sensitive information, provided by an applicant or sought by the Association in assessment of an application will only be seen by staff directly involved. Information at all times will be treated with the strictest confidence.
- 31.2 Information which is required to reach Committee level, will be provided in a way that protects the identity of the applicant. The applicant's name and address shall not be used.
- 31.3 The Association will not divulge any details of any application to a third party without the applicant's written consent.

32.0 REVIEW OF HOUSING LIST

32.1 The Association will review all applications on the Housing List on a yearly basis or sooner if necessary.

33.0 MONITORING AND REPORTING

It is important for the Association through the Management Committee to establish whether the aims of the Allocations Policy are being met. Regular monitoring and reporting of the Housing List, allocations and rehousing outcomes, helps to establish whether or not these aims are being met. Reports, including details of actual performance against targets set, will therefore be provided to The Housing Services Sub-Committee on the following areas:

33.1 Quarterly

Allocations Report showing total lets in year so far by:

- Applicant group
- Ethnic origin
- Disability

Void/Lettings Report for total lets in quarter by:

- Size of house
- Void days (quarterly & cumulative figure for year)
- Rent loss (quarterly & cumulative figure for year)

33.2 Annually

- Number of applicants on Housing List by applicant group
- Number of applications received, suspended or cancelled
- Number of applications received by ethnic origin
- Number of applications received from those with a disability
- Number of houses available to rent with details of RTB sales throughout the year.

34.0 AUDIT TRAIL

34.1 An audit trail shall be maintained for every allocation to clearly show why any given let was made to that particular applicant.

35.0 REVIEW OF POLICY

35.1 This policy will be reviewed three years from date of approval.

APPENDIX

A

BLAIRTUMMOCK HOUSING ASSOCIATION

MUTUAL EXCHANGE APPLICATION FORM

PERSONAL DETAILS

Full Name:

.....

Address:

.....

(include flat position)

Tel No Mobile No:

Email Address

.....

HOUSEHOLD DETAILS

Please list below all household members who wish to be rehoused with you:

	Name	Sex	Date of Birth	Relationship to you
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Please list any members of your household who have a medical condition, giving a brief description of the condition:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please list any benefits you, or any member of your household receive, due to these medical conditions:

.....
.....
.....

Please provide name and address of the Blairtummock tenant you wish to exchange with:

.....
.....
.....

YOUR PRESENT ACCOMMODATION

Please indicate the type of accommodation you presently occupy:

Main Door/Cottage Type		Yes/No
Tenement Flat	Ground Floor	Yes/No
	1 st Floor	Yes/No
	2 nd Floor	Yes/No
	3rd Floor	Yes/No
Terraced Property	Mid	Yes/No
	End	Yes/No
Semi Detached		Yes/No

Other (please describe):

.....

What type of heating do you have?

.....

How many bedrooms do you have?

.....

Has your house been adapted in any way?
(If yes, please give details)

Yes/No

.....
.....
.....

Please state the name, address and telephone number of your present landlord:

.....
.....
.....

Date of Entry:

.....

Please state your reason(s) for this mutual exchange:

.....
.....
.....

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the information provided on this form is complete and accurate and I consent to Blairtummock Housing Association making such enquiries as necessary to confirm this. I have read and understand the conditions governing the exchange and agree to be bound by them. Should there be any breach of these conditions by either or both parties, we agree that this application will become null and void and that we may be required to return to our former address.

Signature: **Date:**.....

BLAIRTUMMOCK HOUSING ASSOCIATION

CONDITIONS GOVERNING MUTUAL EXCHANGES

The following conditions relate specifically to mutual exchange applications. It is important that you read these carefully and sign the form below to confirm your acceptance of these conditions.

Your application will be processed within 28 days. Each applicant will be notified in writing of the acceptance of the application.

- It is necessary for both applicants on the exchange application to have a clear rent account, and no debt outstanding to the Association. If an applicant is not a Blairtummock Housing Association tenant, a satisfactory tenancy report is required from the relevant landlord.
- It is necessary for both applicants wishing to exchange properties to state that it is their intention to occupy the prospective property for a minimum 12-month period.
- No mutual exchange will be permitted where this causes overcrowding as determined by the Allocation Policy of Blairtummock Housing Association.

The Association will permit a mutual exchange if the property will not be under occupied by more than one bedroom, as long as the tenant is moving from an equivalent size of property.

- Blairtummock Housing Association shall not incur any expense in connection with granting a mutual exchange outwith normal repairs which are the responsibility of the Association. An inspection of the property will be undertaken on receipt of the mutual exchange application and where repairs are required as a result of tenant negligence, the cost of such repairs must be paid by the tenant prior to the exchange being granted.
- Both applicants should be satisfied following inspection that the property to which they propose to exchange is in an acceptable condition. Each applicant should ensure that all fixture and

fittings are intact, including approved additional fitments provided by the tenant.

- Neither applicant should proceed with the exchange until they have received written confirmation from the landlord(s) concerned that the application has been approved. A date of entry after which time you may proceed with removal arrangements will be stipulated.

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX

B

**BLAIRTUMMOCK HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED
TENANCY REFERENCE REPORT**

Application Ref:		House Type & Size:		
Tenant's Name:		Address:		
Date of Entry:		Date of Leaving:		
Details of Tenant's Household				
	Name	Date of Birth	Sex	Relationship to Tenant
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
Details of any pets:				
How much is the monthly rent charge?				£
Does the tenant have any outstanding rent arrears?				YES / NO
If yes, please state how much				£
Does the tenant have any outstanding rechargeable repairs arrears?				YES / NO
If yes, please state how much?				£
Does the tenant currently have an arrangement to clear these arrears, which they are adhering to?				YES / NO
Has legal action ever been raised against the tenant?				YES / NO
If yes, please provide details:-				

P.T.O.

**BLAIRTUMMOCK HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED
TENANCY REFERENCE REPORT (cont'd)**

If applicable, are the garden / communal areas kept in a satisfactory condition?	YES / NO
Please give details:	
Has any action ever been taken against the tenant for breach of tenancy conditions / anti-social behaviour?	YES / NO
If YES, please give details:	
Overall, has the tenancy been conducted in a satisfactory manner?	YES / NO
Has the Tenant been experiencing any other problems in their current accommodation of which you are aware?	YES / NO
If YES, please give details:	

Signature:	Designation:
Date:	
Address of Authority:	
Telephone Number:	

TEL NO 0141-773-0202

Thank you for providing this information

APPENDIX

C

/ /ME3

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear

MUTUAL EXCHANGE

I refer to your recent application for a mutual exchange and I am now please to inform you that permission for this exchange has been granted.

In order that the necessary documents can be completed, please call into this office on _____ at _____ .

If this date or time is unsuitable please contact me to arrange an alternative appointment.

Yours sincerely

HOUSING

**APPENDIX
D**

/ /ME4

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear

MUTUAL EXCHANGE

I refer to your recent application for a mutual exchange and I now regret to inform you that permission for this exchange has been refused.

The reason(s) for this refusal is/are:

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please contact this office to arrange a suitable appointment.

You have the right to appeal this decision and should make this request, in writing and address it to Jacqui O'Rourke, Depute Director.

Yours sincerely

HOUSING