



HILLHEAD HOUSING ASSOCIATION 2000

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

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The information in this document is available in other languages or in large print and also in Braille.

For details contact the Association on 0141 578 0200 or email: admin@hillheadhousing.org

本文件所載資料備有中文 (廣東話) 版本，也可以製作成錄音帶/光碟，以及利用特大字體和凸字印製，以供索取。

欲知有關詳情，請聯絡本協會，電話：0141 578 0200，或向我們發送電郵，電郵地址：admin@hillheadhousing.org

Tha am fiosrachadh anns an sgrìobhainn seo ri fhaotainn ann an Gàidhlig no air teip/CD, sa chlà mhòr agus cuideachd ann an Clò nan Dall. Airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, cuiribh fios dhan Chomann air 0141 578 0200 no cuiribh post-dealain gu: admin@hillheadhousing.org

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اس دستاویز میں درج معلومات اردو زبان یا آڈیو ٹیپ / سی ڈی، بڑی طباعت اور بریل میں بھی دستیاب ہیں۔
تفصیلات کے لئے ایسوسی ایشن سے ٹیلیفون نمبر 0141 578 0200 یا ای میل admin@hillheadhousing.org کے ذریعے رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Introduction

This policy sets out how we let any properties that become available. It explains how we match applicants to properties and how we will decide which applicants will be made an offer of rehousing.

The policy covers our general needs, adapted and wheelchair housing and applies to those on our housing list as well as current tenants who are looking for a housing transfer. The policy covers all our housing stock across Kirkintilloch and will include any new build developments coming off site.

Our aims

We aim to provide good-quality rented accommodation to people in housing need. As a housing association based within the community of Hillhead, we aim to be accessible to a diverse local demographic and to meet local housing need. The policy also allows us to respond to the needs of people who require to move to the area. We want to make sure our community is sustainable, accessible and balanced.

We will aim to:

1. Provide good quality affordable housing to households who have been assessed as being in need of housing.
2. Make best use of the housing which becomes available, including properties that have been adapted or are suitable for someone with mobility needs.
3. Give as much choice to applicants as reasonably possible.
4. Help create and maintain a balanced and sustainable community.
5. Work constructively with East Dunbartonshire Council to prevent and alleviate homelessness (see page 9).

We will do this by taking an approach to allocating homes which:

1. Is fair, open and transparent.
2. Takes a consistent approach to decision-making.

3. Promotes equality.

4. Treats all applicants with respect, including respecting the confidentiality of information given to us.

5. Complying with the law and good practice (e.g. guidance published by Scottish Government or the Scottish Housing Regulator).

Our policy is also compliant with the relevant Scottish and UK legislation, including all appropriate housing legislation. A full list of the relevant legislation is included at Appendix A.

As a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), we are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The SHR's statutory objective is to safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants, homeless households and other people who use services provided by social landlords. In developing our policy, we have taken account of good practice, including that developed by the Scottish Government (Social Housing Allocations in Scotland: A Practice Guide, February 2019) and the SHR.

The policy also takes account of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The SHR use the outcomes and standards in the Charter to assess the performance of social landlords. The key outcomes from the Charter that have been considered in the development of this policy are:

Outcome 1: Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Outcome 2: Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Outcome 7: People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them.

Outcome 8: Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.

Outcome 9: People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

Outcome 10: 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 their prospects of being housed.

Equal opportunities

We promote equal opportunities and in applying this policy we will aim not to discriminate against any individual, household or group on grounds of race, gender, sex, marital status/civil partnership, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, language, social origin, disability, age or other personal attribute. This means that:

When we are providing housing services and employing staff to provide these services, we will aim to provide equal opportunities for everyone and treat everyone fairly.
No person or group of people applying for housing will be treated less favourably than anyone else for any reason.
We will aim to identify and respond to the needs of disadvantaged groups by building close relationships with those groups.
To help us meet our commitment to equal opportunities, we will collect and monitor details of the protected characteristics of everyone applying for housing in an anonymised fashion.

We may offer a tenancy to employees, committee members, former employees, former committee members and close relatives of these people, but only in line with the SHR's Regulatory Standards, including 5.4 which states "Governing body members and staff declare and manage openly and appropriately any conflicts of interest and ensure they do not benefit improperly from their position". A question is included in the application form which requires the applicant to declare any relationship with a staff or Committee member. Any offers of this type are reviewed and approved by the Management Committee.

Our properties

We currently have 871 properties for rent but we have a relatively low turnover. This means that typically only around 40 properties become available every year. Our stock is a mixture of flats, cottage flats and houses. We have greater turnover in our flatted stock.

The size and type of our properties limits the number of families we can re-house. Of our homes, 18% have one bedroom, 47% have two bedrooms, 31% have three and 4% have 4 bedrooms. As a result, we can only very occasionally offer help to large families in housing need.

We have a very small number of fully wheelchair adapted properties within our stock, vacancies of this type are extremely rare.

Further information on our housing stock and on the number and type of properties that became available in the previous year can be found on our website at: <https://www.hillheadhousing.org/apply-for-a-home/>

Key Roles & Responsibilities

Area of Responsibility	Person(s) Responsible
Approval of the Allocations Policy; approving any staff, management committee or related persons allocations	Management Committee
Overall responsibility for the implementation of the Allocations Policy; double pointing medical cases; dealing with complaints & appeals; auditing the allocations process	Head of Housing Services
Administration of application forms and changes of circumstances; applicant queries & updates; initial points assessments; annual reviews	Customer Services Assistant/Housing Assistant
Double pointing; allocating empty properties; carrying out pre-tenancy checks	Housing Officers

Our internal allocations process document provides more detail on roles and responsibilities in relation to specific tasks.

Joining our housing list

Anyone aged 16 years or over is entitled to make a housing application and join our housing list. We give details of how to apply to us for housing on our website, in our office, on our social media and upon request. We give partner organisations, other social landlords and East Dunbartonshire Council regular updates on how to apply for housing with us.

All applications will be registered on the housing list. However, if an applicant is found to be ineligible to be actively considered for an offer of housing they will be notified in writing of the decision and their application will be suspended. They will not be eligible for an offer of housing until circumstances change and their application becomes active. The reasons why we may suspend an application are set out in Appendix B.

Please note that admission to the housing list does not automatically mean that someone has the right to be housed. The priority given to an applicant depends on their current housing situation and housing need. The Association will only accept completed applications that include the relevant identification and proof.

Size of property

Our properties vary considerably in terms of the mix of single and double bedrooms. We aim to make best use of the properties we have but also be as flexible as possible in taking what applicants would prefer into account. Our policy will be that:

- Couples or partners share one double bedroom.
- Heads of households and single parents have one single or double bedroom.
- Two children of the same sex under the age of 14 will share one double bedroom.
- Two children under the age of 8, regardless of their sex, will share one double bedroom.
- Children of different sexes will need a bedroom each once the eldest child reaches 8 years old, unless there is another child in the household of the same sex with whom they could share a double bedroom.
- No more than two people should share a bedroom.

The rules above will apply to children who are not biologically related.

These rules may not apply if there are certain medical or social reasons why it is impossible for household members to share a bedroom.

If any member of the applicant household is pregnant, from six months into the pregnancy we will reassess your housing need as needing an extra bedspace.

Custody, Access, Kinship Care, Fostering and Adoption

Due to the make up of our housing stock, when allocating properties that have 3 or more bedrooms we are generally only able to offer a bedroom to a child or children for whom the property will be their principal home. If joint custody arrangements are in place, and time is divided evenly between the parents or guardians, we will consider the household which receives child benefit payment to be the child's principal home.

We do have some capacity to offer 2 bedroom properties to households where the access arrangements are for less time.

We will consider kinship care arrangements in the same way.

Proof of custody, access and kinship care arrangements will be required.

Where someone has been approved to foster or adopt but does not have sufficient bedrooms to accommodate their new family, we will consider the child(ren) already part of the household and assess an application accordingly.

Choice of property types and locations

We want to work with applicants to create sustainable tenancies. Whilst an applicant will have full choice and flexibility over their preferences when they join our waiting list, we will provide information to assist in their decision making such as turnover information within certain streets or for certain property types.

We want to make sure that we only offer applicants a home they are interested in. We will ask applicants which areas and types of property they are interested in. We will only make offers which reflect those preferences.

Restricting the type of properties and the areas they are interested in may affect an applicant's chance of receiving an offer, particularly if they are not interested in property types where we have the highest number of lets becoming available. We will, if applicants wish to, discuss this when they submit their application form. Applicants will be able to change their preferences at any time.

Information required

Before we can assess your housing needs, we will need proof of your circumstances, this may include, for example, proof of any part-time custody arrangements with children, or proof if any members of your household are pregnant.

We will also ask all applicants for proof of your identity and proof of your current address (dated within six months).

We will not be able to assess your application until you have filled in all the appropriate forms and you have provided ID and proof of address.

We may visit you at your home to check your circumstances before we make you an offer of housing.

If an applicant has held a tenancy, a reference will be requested from the current and any previous landlords.

More information on support documents can be found at Appendix C.

Suspensions

You may be suspended from the housing list for a range of reasons. Full details are provided at Appendix B.

Change of circumstances

If your circumstances change while you are on our housing list, you should contact us so that we can review your housing needs. If you move house while you are on our list, you will need to make a new application. If your housing application is continuous and your housing need remains unmet you will retain your original date of application. We will consider your housing need to be met for the purposes of this clause if you have a tenancy and the property is not too big or too small for you, or if you have purchased a property.

If you are rehoused by us and choose to make a transfer application this will be treated as an entirely new application.

If you would rather not receive offers of housing for a period of time - for example because you are not well, and it is not a good time to consider moving - we can defer your application. You would remain on the list, but we would not make you any offers of housing until you contact us again and tell us you are actively interested in being rehoused.

Prioritising applicants

This section explains how we decide which applicants will be made an offer. Hillhead Housing Association operates a points-based assessment of housing need and we have developed our pointing system to reflect local needs and priorities whilst ensuring that we comply with all the necessary legislation and guidance.

The policy aims to meet housing needs that are noted in law plus those that are generally seen as good practice in Scotland and those which are relevant to our local community. These are;

- People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Overcrowding
- Underoccupation (living in accommodation which is bigger than you need)
- Substandard property condition

- Insecure accommodation
- Domestic abuse
- Other harassment or abuse
- Health and mobility needs
- Social, community or family support

Factors we cannot consider

There are certain factors which the law states we cannot consider when allocating housing. These are:

- Your age
- Whether you already live in East Dunbartonshire and the Hillhead area in particular.
- You or your family's income.
- Any housing debt you have now repaid.
- Any non-housing debt such as Council Tax arrears.
- Any housing debt which is not owed by you, such as rent arrears owed by your partner.
- Any rent arrears where the amount is no more than one month's rent, or where you have an arrangement in place to pay the arrears, and you have been keeping to the arrangement for at least three months and you are continuing to do so.

Our letting groups

Applicants who make a direct application to us and who already have a tenancy with us will be classed as a transfer applicant. All other direct applicants will be classed as housing list applicants.

We will also work with East Dunbartonshire Council in meeting the needs of statutorily homeless applicants. We do not make decisions about whether a household is statutorily homeless. This is the responsibility of East Dunbartonshire Council which then refers homeless households to us to be made an offer of housing.

We also accept nominations from East Dunbartonshire Council from their housing list.

Our letting targets

In order to further our aim of supporting sustainable and balanced communities, we aim to make lets to applicants from each of the three groups – transfer list applicants, housing list applicants and statutorily homeless applicants or housing list nominations referred to us by East Dunbartonshire Council.

We have an agreement with East Dunbartonshire Council that we will offer 45% of our lets to them. East Dunbartonshire Council decide whether to provide homeless referrals or nominations for any given vacancy. Beyond that we will set annual targets for the proportion of lets we aim to make to each group. The targets will be reviewed every year based on:

- Patterns of need and demand on our own transfer and waiting lists.
- Patterns of turnover within our own stock – including the types and sizes of properties which are becoming available for let.

Our targets will be published and will be available on our website. We will monitor our performance against these targets and will publish performance information on our website. This information will also form part of our performance reporting to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Pointing awards

All direct applications will be assessed and given points according to their current housing situation and personal circumstances. In assessing need we will consider the needs of everyone who would be moving – in other words of the whole household listed on the application.

The points that will be awarded are shown in the table below and the categories are explained later in this section. In some of the categories, only one award of points can be made. If more than one set of circumstances apply within such a category, the highest single award will be made to the applicant household.

Category	Other Information	Points
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Your home is too big or too small (one award only)	Overcrowding points are awarded if the home you are currently living in is not big enough for all the people living in it.	One bedroom short	40
		For every additional bedroom short	25
	You live in a social rented sector property and it is too big for all the people living in it.	One bedroom too many	40
		For every additional bedroom too many	25
Your accommodation is not secure	You have a definite date to lose your accommodation within 6 months		70
	You have been accepted as statutorily homeless		70
	You live in tied accommodation or supported accommodation and you have been told you will need to leave within the next 6 months		40
	You have no settled accommodation		40
You need to move for health or mobility reasons (one award only)	You or a member of your household is an emergency medical case and cannot leave hospital because your current property is no longer suitable and it would be dangerous to return home		200
	You or a member of your household has serious health or mobility difficulties, your current home is completely unsuitable and there is a need to be rehoused as a matter of urgency		70
	You or a member of your household have health or mobility difficulties, your current home is unsuitable and makes daily activities difficult		30
You need to move because of harassment or abuse (one award only)	You are in a life threatening situation and need to move immediately.		200
	You have been a victim of serious harassment or violence or domestic abuse and need to move as a matter of urgency.		70
	You have been a victim of harassment of domestic abuse and need to move.		40
Relationship breakdown	You have to leave the family home due to separation from a partner		20
Your home is in poor condition or lacks facilities	No inside toilet		15
	No bathroom or no hot water supply to bathroom		15
	No kitchen or no hot water supply to kitchen		15

	Lacking central heating	15
	Kitchen is not separate to sleeping area (bedsit)	15
	Unable to use one or more rooms due to condition/repair issue	15
You are sharing facilities with another household (one award only)		
	You are sharing facilities (kitchen, bathroom etc.) with people who are not going to be part of your household when you move	20
You want to move for social reasons	You want to move closer to someone who gives you regular support	20
	You want to move closer to someone to whom you give regular support	20
	You want to move closer to where you work or are in further education or training	20
	You want to move closer to a specialist school or specialist medical facility	20
	You want to move because there has been a recent death within your home	20
Amenities for children	You live in a common entry flat on the first floor or above	5
	You do not have exclusive use of a garden area	10
Management reasons	We have an urgent need to move you, for example, because your home needs urgent repairs	250

Further information on housing needs categories

Overcrowding

You will receive points for overcrowding if you have use of less bedrooms in your current home than we assess your household to need. You will be awarded points for every bedroom that you are short. If two or more members of your household are required to share a single bedroom, we will also consider this to equate to being a bedroom short.

The initial points will be awarded when one extra bedroom is required, and additional points are given for each extra bedroom that the household requires. For example, a household that needs one more bedroom would receive 40 points and a household requiring two more bedrooms would receive 65 points.

Points for overcrowding will not be awarded to any applicant who has moved into another household's accommodation (with no permission to reside) in the previous three years causing overcrowding. They will be eligible for sharing amenities points.

If an applicant is a permitted resident of a household and their family has naturally grown (e.g. they have become pregnant or a partner and their child has moved in), they will be awarded overcrowding points.

We will not award overcrowding points if you overcrowd your current property by moving people into your home who will not be part of your household when you move.

Under Occupation

You will receive points in this category only if you are a tenant in a social rented sector property and have more bedrooms than you require. Our own tenants would be eligible for this award, as would tenants of other housing associations or of a local authority.

The initial points will be awarded for having one extra bedroom. It will not matter if the bedroom is a single or a double bedroom. If you have two or more bedrooms than you need you will receive a further award. This means that a household that has one more bedroom than they require would receive 40 points and a household that has 2 more bedrooms than they require would receive 65 points.

If you are a housing list applicant, you will only receive under occupation points if you are looking to move to a smaller property and your household will fully occupy that smaller property.

If you are a transfer applicant (i.e. a tenant of Hillhead Housing Association), we would allow you to downsize to a property that is one bedroom larger than you actually need. This is to help free up the largest properties which are in very high demand. The points awarded would reflect your stated requirements. For example, if you are in a 3 bedroom house and you only need 1 bedroom the following would apply; if you are willing to move to a 2 bedroom property your application would have 40 points, if you are willing to move to a 1 bedroom property your application would have 65 points.

Your accommodation is not secure

Applicants can only receive one award of points in this category

This category covers situations where you may be at risk of losing your current home through no fault of your own or you do not have a home which you have a right to occupy or your accommodation is temporary. We will always encourage a household which may be eligible for insecurity points to make a homelessness application to East Dunbartonshire Council.

The usual route into housing for applicants who are statutorily homeless will be via Section 5 referrals from East Dunbartonshire Council.

You will receive points if you have been given a definite date to lose your accommodation and that date is within 6 months. Examples might include if you are living in a private rented property and your landlord has issued you with a legal Notice to Quit or Notice to Leave. Other examples might include that you are currently living in armed forces accommodation and have discharge papers from the armed forces and or are losing your home as a result of a mortgage repossession.

We will not award 'definite date to leave' points to applicants who live informally with friends or relatives and have been asked to leave. However, an applicant in these circumstances would be entitled to sharing facilities points (see below). If the applicant felt they may be threatened with homelessness, we would encourage the applicant to seek advice from East Dunbartonshire Council's Homelessness Team:

Kirkintilloch Community Hub
2-4 West High Street
Kirkintilloch
G66 1AD
0300 123 4510
homelessness@eastdunbarton.gov.uk

We will also award points to households living in tied accommodation (this is accommodation provided by an employer) or supported accommodation who have been given notice that they need to leave that accommodation within 6 months.

If you have no accommodation of your own (for example you do not own a property or do not have a private or social tenancy in the name of someone who is part of the household which will be moving) you could be awarded points for having no settled accommodation. No settled accommodation points would be awarded if you move frequently among relatives and friends.

We will not award no settled accommodation points to applicants who have stable housing and are continuing to live as part of a household they have been a member of for some time – an example might include a young person who continues to live with a parent but is otherwise adequately housed and is safe. However, an applicant in these circumstances would be entitled to sharing facilities points (see below).

Health or mobility reasons

Applicants can only receive one award of points in this category

We may award health or mobility points if your health or the health of a member of the household you will be moving with is affected by their current housing circumstances or if you are struggling in your current accommodation because of

mobility problems. If you or a member of your household has a mental health issue that is adversely affected by your housing circumstances, you may also be eligible to receive points under this category.

It is important to note that priority will not be given based on the existence of a health problem but based on whether a move could alleviate some of the problems being experienced as a result of the health or mobility problem.

If you think you may be eligible for health or mobility points you should fully complete the medical information section of the application form. If you are already on the list but your health has changed, and you think you may be entitled to priority you can submit updated medical information at any time.

The number of points awarded will depend on the extent to which any health or mobility issues are impacting on your day to day life and whether a move of home could help alleviate some or all of these problems.

If more than one member of your household has a health or mobility need, the needs of all the relevant members will be assessed and the points awarded will be equivalent to the highest level of need amongst household members. However, only one award will be made.

If you have been awarded health or mobility points we will only make an offer of rehousing which would address some or all of the problems you are having. If you tell us that you can only manage certain types of accommodation, and we award points on that basis, you cannot then choose to forgo those points to be considered for accommodation which does not meet your needs.

You need to move because of harassment or abuse

Applicants can only receive one award of points in this category. This category includes domestic abuse.

Harassment can take many forms including intimidating, threatening or aggressive behaviour, both verbal and physical, and can involve attacks on property as well as people. As per current Domestic Abuse legislation, 'abuse' covers a range of behaviours such as psychological and emotional abuse which have been perpetrated against both adults and/or children. Harassment is often premeditated and recurring.

You will be awarded points in this category if you or a member of the household who will be moving with you is being subjected to harassment or abuse and being rehoused will help to address the problem. The number of points awarded will depend on the seriousness of the harassment and the speed with which you need to move.

Our overriding principle where harassment or domestic abuse is alleged – and an applicant appears to be at risk – is that he/she should be believed. However, with the applicant's consent, we may ask agencies such as the Police or social services to confirm any involvement they have had. However, we will not require verification of harassment or domestic abuse from other agencies for an applicant to be given the appropriate priority. Each case will be dealt with sensitively and on its own merits.

Where a Hillhead HA tenant is eligible for an award of points under this category we will consider with them and other appropriate agencies whether rehousing in Hillhead (given the small size of the area) is safe or suitable. If victims need to move we will do all that we can to assist in supporting them, including to apply for alternative accommodation outwith Hillhead. We do not have emergency provision but will support tenants to contact Womens' Aid or any other appropriate support services. Where a new tenancy in Hillhead would solve or significantly alleviate the issue and there are no safety concerns the award will be 40 points.

If you have an award of points in this category and we make you two reasonable offers which meet your stated choices, these points may be removed.

Relationship breakdown

We will award points here regardless of tenure if your relationship with your partner has broken down and you need or wish to leave the home that you share with your partner. If you are the resident partner of a Hillhead tenant and we are aware that you are part of the household you will be registered as a transfer applicant, only where awarded points under this category. All applicants will retain points awarded in this category if they move in with family or friends on a temporary basis.

Your home is in poor condition or lacks facilities

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 requires landlords to give reasonable preference to applicants who are living in 'unsatisfactory housing conditions' where a person is living in a property which is deemed below tolerable standard (based on the existing statutory definition in s86 of the 1987 Act).

You may be eligible for points in this category if you are living in a property which is in poor condition or which lacks basic facilities and it can be demonstrated that the applicants' use of the property is restricted by the nature of this disrepair. For example, where there is evidence that at least one room cannot or should not be occupied as a result.

Tenants of registered social landlords, including Hillhead, and local authorities do not qualify for these points.

You will be awarded points if your home lacks an inside toilet or has no bathroom or kitchen.

You will also be awarded points if your home does not have central heating or if you have no hot water supply to the kitchen or bathroom. If you live in a privately rented property and do not have hot water or functioning central heating because of a fault (such as a broken boiler) we will expect you to report any faults to existing facilities to your landlord and seek to have them addressed. If the landlord intends to carry out remedial works within a reasonable timescale then points would not be awarded. If the faults are not addressed, we may consider awarding points in this category.

We will also award points if your main designated sleeping area is not separate from your kitchen, in other words if you live in a bedsit-style property. These points will not be available if someone is sleeping in a kitchen area because there are insufficient bedrooms for the number of people living in the property. In that case, overcrowding points would apply.

You are sharing facilities with another household

You can receive sharing facilities points if you are sharing a bathroom or kitchen with anyone who is not going to be rehoused with you. This could apply if you are living with parents, other relatives or friends, living with a former spouse or partner following a relationship breakdown or are living in hostel or bed and breakfast type accommodation.

You want to move for social reasons

You may be eligible for points if you want to move to the area or within the area for a number of social reasons.

Points may be available if you wish to move because you are providing support to, or are receiving support from, someone living in the Hillhead area. This could include if you provide day-to-day support which allows someone to continue living independently or if you need that support yourself and it can be provided by someone living in the Hillhead area. You cannot be awarded points for both giving and receiving support, only one award will be made. We will also consider situations when parents or guardians need assistance from friends or relatives to assist with childcare on a regular basis. Points will not be awarded where the existing distance between the accommodation of the giver and receiver of support is less than 5 miles.

We will also award you points if you work in the Kirkintilloch area or have a firm offer of employment in the area and wish to move closer to that work. We will award points if it would take you an hour or more to travel to work, further education or training from your current home using public transport.

We will award points if you want to move because there has been a recent death within your home. If you have these points and we make you two reasonable offers which meet your stated choices, these points will be removed.

Amenities for Children

These points will be awarded if your current housing circumstances do not provide these amenities and there is a child in your household aged under 14 whose principal home is with you.

Management reasons

Management reasons allows us to assist in urgent re-housing cases where the allocation policy would not otherwise allow us to act quickly enough. It is only used in exceptional circumstances, such as where there is a serious risk if someone remains in their current home or if we wish to re-house one of our tenants as a matter of urgency. This might be because we must carry out emergency repairs to a property.

A decision to award Management reasons points will always be approved by the Head of Housing Services or Director and reported to Management Committee.

Outcome of assessment

Once we have assessed your application, we will write to you to inform you of the outcome. If your application has been awarded points, we will tell you how many and for which of your needs. Please note that you can remain on our housing list if you do not have any identified need under our policy and you may still be eligible for an offer of housing.

Making best use of stock

We aim to make best use of the properties which become available for let. This means that when certain types of properties become available for let, we will aim to offer them to households who need a property of that particular type. We will aim to offer the property to the household with the highest number of points who also needs a property with the particular features available.

The best use approach will apply to all properties which have already been adapted to meet the needs of someone with mobility problems or a disability. We will normally only offer adapted properties and properties with wheelchair access to applicants who need the facilities they contain. We will accept direct referrals from Glasgow

Centre for Inclusive Living for these properties if no-one on our housing list or the EDC housing list has appropriate needs.

We will also consider best use if letting a non-adapted ground floor property which could meet the needs of someone with mobility issues or a disability.

We will generally take the same best use approach to the letting of any new stock. In particular, we reserve the right to make best use of such lets to address housing needs which we have otherwise been unable to meet, such as significant overcrowding amongst our own tenants.

One of our key aims of this policy is to help create and maintain a balanced and sustainable community. A balanced community is one in which there is not an over concentration of similar household types in respect of age, family composition, and life and employment experiences. In order to achieve making best use of stock, we do not bind ourselves to always select the applicant at the top of any queue, however we will not rehouse applicants who are not in need. The intention is to house applicants with a range of levels of need and a range of life experiences.

All allocations are double checked by a member of the Housing Services Team.

Making offers

When we are aware that a property is about to become available, we will decide whether it should be offered to EDC for nominations and homeless referrals, or to a transfer applicant or to a waiting list applicant. This decision will be made based on performance against the annual lettings plan, the size of the property and any other amenities. We aim to offer a range of properties to all three groups.

Where the property is to be offered to a waiting list or transfer applicant, we draw up a list of applicants whose needs match it, with the applicant with the highest number of points at the top. Where more than one applicant has the same number of points, we will then consider who has been on our housing list for longest.

We will contact applicants near the top of that list to review their application, see if they are still interested in that type of house and that their circumstances are still the same. Once the property is available, we will make an offer of housing to the applicant at the top of the list at that time, or if not selecting the top applicant, note clearly the bypass reason.

If the selected applicant does not wish to accept the offer, we will offer the property to the applicant who is next on the list and so on.

If any property has been offered and refused three times, we reserve the right to make an offer to an applicant who expressed a specific interest in a property of the relevant type or in the particular area. A decision to make such an offer will always be approved by the Head of Housing Services.

Number of offers

We want to make sure that applicants are made offers of housing that suit their needs and are in areas they want to live in. Applicants can choose the streets in which they are interested within Hillhead or our other areas of operation.

If we offer you two suitable properties that meet your needs and choices, and you refuse them both, we will ask you to review your choices for housing to make sure that any future offers are suitable. We will not make a further offer of housing until you participate in such a review either in person or over the phone. If, after this review, you refuse a further offer, we may suspend your application for 6 months. You would be informed of this in writing.

Mutual exchanges

We allow our tenants to exchange homes with another tenant (our tenant or another Registered Social Landlord's tenant) in certain circumstances. However, you must not exchange homes until you have our written permission and the landlord of the tenant you want to exchange with and signed the necessary legal paperwork.

If you are our tenant, you must let us know immediately when you find someone you would like to exchange homes with. We will consider your and the other tenant's rehousing needs. We will not refuse permission for the exchange to go ahead unreasonably. Our Assignations, etc. Policy sets out the conditions for granting an exchange and details the grounds for refusal. Copies of the Policy are available on request.

Marriage & Civil Partnerships

If a member of the household is the tenant's married partner or civil partner, they have certain rights under the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981 and the Civil Partnership Act 2004 respectively. Under the legislation they are classed as "non-entitled spouse" and "non-entitled partner", and their consent must be obtained before an internal transfer or mutual exchange can go ahead.

Referrals from other agencies

We may consider referrals from statutory or voluntary sector agencies who are seeking accommodation for a client (e.g. care leavers, veterans, etc.). This may include us assisting if someone needs to move on from specialist or supported accommodation. We manage any referrals of this type at a senior level and in consultation with the referring organisation. All aspects of this policy may not be applied in making any offer.

'Sitting Tenants' in properties being newly acquired by Hillhead HA

Should Hillhead HA acquire a new property through any type of government/local authority scheme, we will not apply this policy where we have to consider any sitting

tenant currently residing in that property. Those tenants would then become priority over all other applicants, with the exception of homeless referrals, for either remaining in the property or being rehoused to another property more suitable to their needs.

MAPPA arrangements

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

Local Lettings Initiatives

A Local Lettings Initiative can be a useful way of helping to create sustainable communities and there may be occasions when Hillhead Housing Association will develop and implement such an Initiative.

Any Initiative will apply only to a geographically defined area and any changes made to this policy will be designed to meet specific local aims. Any initiative will have clear outcomes and will be supported by evidence as to why it is required.

As part of the development process, we will consult with the local community and key external partners, including East Dunbartonshire Council. The Initiative will be compliant with all the relevant legislation, will be published in the same way as this policy and will include:

1. An explanation of why the Initiative is needed and the evidence that has been used to inform the decision to introduce it.
2. Clear and specific aims and objectives.
3. The time period for which the Initiative is expected to remain in place.
4. An effective monitoring framework to make sure the aim of the Initiative is being met and there are no unforeseen consequences. This will include criteria that will be used for deciding whether to curtail or extend the time period for which the Initiative will run. The Initiative will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is still required.

Confidentiality

We will keep any information you give us confidential. We will not discuss your application with anyone other than you (or your representative) unless you give us written instructions to do so.

Service standards and reporting

When we receive your application for housing, we will give you a receipt and a reference number within 5 working days.

We will tell you the outcome of the assessment of your application within 20 working days of receiving your application (as long as we have the proofs we need and your completed application form).

We will review your application every year. We will do this by contacting you to enquire whether you wish to remain on our list. You will be contacted on a minimum of two occasions and given no less than 7 days to respond on each occasion (although we may allow longer for responses). If you do not respond to this contact within the specified timeframe your application may be cancelled.

We will report regularly to our Management Committee on turnover, letting timescales, the types of applicants we are housing and the nature of our vacancies.

Every year, we will publish information on our letting performance.

We will consult fully with our customers about reviewing the allocation policy.

Translations and Interpreters

Our allocations policy can be made available in other formats and other languages where required.

We can also provide interpreters to engage with us about any aspect of our services or your application.

Appeals and Complaints

If you believe we have made an incorrect decision while assessing your application for housing, we have a clear procedure for dealing with appeals about decisions we make during the application and allocation process:

If you are unhappy about a decision made, you should first appeal to the Head of Housing Services. If you are still not satisfied, you can then appeal to the Director.

We also have a complaints policy which covers failures in our service and our standards of service delivery. You can get information leaflets explaining the

complaints policy from our office and it is also available on our website. If you have gone through the complaints procedure and you are still not happy, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman may take up the matter for you. Write to:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

DATA PROTECTION

Hillhead Housing Association will treat tenants' personal data in line with its obligations under the current General Data Protection Regulation and its own Privacy Statement. Information regarding how tenants' data will be used and the basis for processing data is provided in the Association's Privacy Notice.

Appendix A – Relevant Legislation and Regulation

The Allocations Policy has been developed to be legislatively compliant, with the following legislation of particular relevance:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 ("GDPR")
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995 as amended by Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended)
- Civil Partnership Act 2004

Appendix B – Suspending applications

There are circumstances where you will be entitled to stay on the housing list, but you may be suspended from receiving any offers of housing for a defined length of time.

The reasons why we may consider suspending an application, along with the maximum length of that suspension, are set out in the table below.

Suspension Reason	Period of Suspension
You owe us, or another landlord, a tenancy related debt such as rent or rechargeable repairs, and this debt is more than one month's rent.	Until you have kept to a repayment arrangement for three consecutive months or paid the balance in full (whichever is sooner).
You abandoned a social rented tenancy within the last three years.	Up to 12 months.
You have knowingly made a false or misleading statement on your housing application.	Up to 24 months.
You or a member of your applicant household have had an order for recovery of possession due to your actions or inactions within the last three years.	Up to 24 months.
You or a member of your applicant household have a proven history of anti-social behaviour or harassment. You or a member of your applicant household have a history of unacceptable behaviour towards Hillhead Housing Association staff.	Up to 36 months.
You or a member of your applicant household have been convicted of using a house or allowing it to be used for immoral or illegal purposes e.g. drug-dealing. You or a member of your applicant household has been convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment which was committed in, or in the locality of a house occupied by the person.	Up to 36 months.
You or a member of the applicant household have had court-ordered recovery of possession of previous tenancy due to the deterioration of the condition of a property or furniture	Up to 36 months.

provided for the tenant's use within the last three years.	
There is damage or unauthorised alterations in your property or you have not kept your tenancy in the condition set out in your tenancy agreement.	Until you have rectified the damage or restored the property to a satisfactory condition.
You have refused two or more reasonable offers, as per the Number of Offers section of this policy.	Up to 6 months.

We will consider your circumstances before deciding whether and how long to suspend your application for. We will aim to keep the use and length of suspensions to a minimum. If we suspend your application, we will confirm this to you in writing, and advise how long the suspension will last. We will tell you what you need to do before we review or remove the suspension.

If you believe our decision to suspend your application is unreasonable, you should follow the appeals procedure set out in this policy (see page 22).

Appendix C – Support Documents

Circumstances	Proof Required
All applicants: Access to Waiting List	<p>All necessary information completed on application form.</p> <p>Proof of identity and proof of current address for all persons who will be part of the new household.</p>
All applicants: Assessment of Application	<p>Details of address history for five years, including Landlord name and contact details (if applicable) are required.</p> <p>If applicant has held a tenancy, a reference will be requested from the current and any previous Landlords.</p>
Homeless – definite date to lose your accommodation within six months	Notice To Quit, Decree, Discharge papers or document confirming end of sub-let or other formal lease arrangement.
Homeless – Statutorily homeless	Evidence of decision letter from Local Authority.
Homeless – Tied/Supported Accommodation	Proof of notice to leave accommodation within 6 months.
Homeless – No settled accommodation	Document which demonstrates no settled accommodation such as letter from local authority homelessness team, DWP letter which shows no fixed abode, or any other relevant document.
Medical condition	Full information completed within the relevant section of your application form detailing how a move could alleviate some of the problems being experienced as a result of the health or mobility problem. For more complex medical conditions where a specific property type is required, we may require additional support information from a healthcare or support provider to better understand your specific housing requirements.
Harassment/Abuse	Domestic abuse and harassment can be difficult to evidence and so we will

	not require proof of this. With the applicant's consent, we may ask agencies such as the Police or social services to confirm any involvement they have had.
Social Reasons – Move for work, education or training	Proof/offer of employment, proof/offer of educational placement, proof/offer of training placement.
Social Reasons – Move for specialist school or medical care	Proof of school placement or ongoing care within a specific medical establishment.
No hot water or functioning central heating because of a fault which has been reported to the landlord	Proof of report and/or correspondence with landlord.
Access Arrangements	Letter from child's main carer or confirmation of legal custody agreement.
Pregnancy	MATB1 certificate, maternity appointment letter or evidence from a healthcare professional.
Additional bedroom required for carer or due to medical condition	Proof of receipt of Carer's Allowance and/or evidence from a healthcare professional.