

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Reidvale Housing Association is a community based housing association operating in the South Dennistoun area of the east end of Glasgow with the aim of providing good quality, affordable, rented accommodation for those in housing need whilst promoting a balanced community.
- 1.2 The Association is controlled by a Management Committee of local residents who are unpaid volunteers. Responsibility for the content of this policy rests with the Committee. Responsibility for all aspects of its implementation, however, rests with the Association's staff.
- 1.3 The Association owns around 913 properties within the area shown on the enclosed map (see Appendix 1). The majority consist of rehabilitated tenemental flats with a smaller proportion of new build properties.
- 1.4 More than half of the Association's properties are one apartment and two apartment in size. This also limits our ability to provide suitable housing to meet the needs of all applicants.
- 1.5 This policy was agreed by the Association's Management Committee on 27th March 2013.

2. GENERAL AIMS OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 As a community based organisation, formed to retain and rebuild a community, the Association is seeking to balance community needs against those of individual applicants. We aim to achieve this by:
 - ◆ Allocating housing fairly and objectively.
 - ◆ Allocating homes to people who are living in unsatisfactory housing.
 - ◆ Ensuring that access to the allocations process is open at all times to all sections of the community
 - ◆ Making the best use of available houses and using the allocations process to assist in the creation of and maintenance of balanced, stable communities.
 - ◆ Ensuring a proportion of houses are allocated to existing tenants with a wish to move to alternative accommodation.
 - ◆ Liaising effectively with Glasgow City Council and other relevant agencies to ensure that a proportion of its stock is allocated to applicants nominated by these various agencies.

- 2.2 Reidvale Housing Association is an equal opportunities organisation. We abide by the terms of the Equality Act 2010 which incorporates all of the main pieces of discrimination legislation. No person or group of persons applying for housing will be treated less favourably than any other persons or group of persons because of their sex, marital status, family circumstances, race or national origins, disability, age, religion, political orientation or sexual orientation.
- 2.3 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 does not restrict or prohibit payments or benefits to governing body members and employees. However, in dealing with the granting of tenancies to current or former employees or Committee Members or their close relatives the Association will abide by clear procedures based on good practice guidance published by the Scottish Housing Regulator. By doing so we aim to ensure transparency, honesty and propriety with all aspects of the allocations process.

3. ACCESS TO THE WAITING LIST

- 3.1 The Association will accept applications from persons aged 16 years or over. In the case of accommodation within our sheltered housing complex, applicants must be aged 60 years or over. A separate policy exists for the allocation of such properties.
- 3.2 The Association operates an 'Active' and an 'Inactive' housing list system. Allocations will only be made from the Active housing lists. The Inactive lists effectively act as 'holding' lists for applicants who do not presently meet the required eligibility criteria.
- 3.3 Acceptance onto the Association's active housing list will be on the basis of unsatisfactory housing. Thereafter, applicants will be placed on one of the following lists:

'A' List - access to this list will be open to all applicants.

'B' List - access to this list will be open to applicants who possess economic or social characteristics which are under represented within the community.

'C' List - access to this list will be open to applicants who require to move to the Reidvale area to receive or provide support from a relative. Applications will also be considered from those who are making a positive contribution to the community i.e. regular/voluntary community activity or who are in full/part time further education.

Details of the criteria for acceptance onto these lists is contained in Appendices 2A, 2B and 2C.

- 3.4 Whilst there is continuous opportunity for applicants to apply and be assessed, due to the demand on our waiting list we will not be able to rehouse all applicants. Applicants will be advised accordingly at the time of their application.
- 3.5 The Association will place applicants on the list where they are most likely to be housed in the shortest timescale.

Transfer Applicants

- 3.6 Tenants of Reidvale Housing Association seeking a transfer will be assessed in one of two ways:
- ◆ Applicants whose housing is inappropriate or unsuitable for them.
 - ◆ Applicants who are seeking an aspirational move must have resided in their present home for at least three years before they can be admitted on to the list and will have their application dealt with in date order. The exception to this is where a tenant's home has a recess kitchen. In such cases tenants will be eligible for access to the Aspirational List where they have resided in their home for at least 2 years.

Relationship Breakdown

- 3.7 We will consider all applicants in the event of the breakdown of a relationship in accordance with our Relationship Breakdown Policy provided that such applicants have held a tenancy for one year. The applicant would be placed on the Association's 'C' List.

Sheltered List

- 3.8 The Association has a small number of sheltered accommodation flats. All applicants must be aged 60 years or over. A separate sheltered housing list is maintained due to the specialist nature of this type of accommodation.

Adapted Properties

- 3.9 The Association has a small number of adapted properties which are suitable for people with mobility problems. Allocation of these properties will be made to applicants who can benefit from the facilities provided.

Glasgow City Council Homeless Persons Referrals

- 3.10 In addition to accepting direct applications, Schedule 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty upon the Association to comply with requests from Glasgow City Council to rehouse homeless people.

The Association carries out this statutory duty in accordance with the terms of the Homelessness Duty Protocol for Glasgow, which was developed through discussions between representatives of Glasgow City Council, the Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations.

Referrals

- 3.11 The Association has referral arrangements with a number of organisations listed in Appendix 3. Such arrangements are subject to a specific quota of lets.

Mutual Exchanges

- 3.12 We recognise that people often need to move from one area to another. We provide assistance to tenants who wish to exchange with a tenant of another social landlord in terms of our mutual exchange procedures.

Quotas

- 3.13 To ensure reasonable opportunities regarding allocations the Association will adopt quota targets. Under this policy the Association will endeavour to ensure that, over a period of a year, allocations will be made in the following proportions:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Direct Applications: | 51% |
| Homeless Persons Referrals by Glasgow City Council: | 19% |
| Reidvale HA Transfer List (inc. Aspirational 5%) | 27% |
| Referrals from Outside Agencies | 3% |

The Association also uses the following quotas for the A, B and C lists:

A List - 33%

B list - 33%

C List - 33%

4. CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH AN APPLICATION MAY BE REMOVED OR SUSPENDED

Removal From The Housing List

4.1 The Association will only remove an applicant from the Association's Housing List system for the following reasons:

- ◆ Applicant requests in writing to have their application removed from the list
- ◆ Applicant failed to respond to the periodic review of the Housing List
- ◆ Death of the applicant.

Suspension From The Active Housing List

4.2 There are a number of circumstances under which it may be deemed necessary to suspend an applicant from the active housing list and place them on the inactive list. After the expiry of all suspension periods the applicant will be transferred over to the Active List, with the effective date of application becoming the first date thereafter of full compliance with all other qualifying criteria.

Details of the circumstances under which an applicant will be suspended from the active housing list are given below:

- ◆ where an applicant has provided false or misleading information or withheld relevant information the Association will ask the applicant if he/she wishes to remain on the active housing list. If so, he/she will be asked to complete an updated form to ensure that we have a full and accurate statement of the applicant's past and present housing circumstances. The application will be placed on the inactive list until the updated form is received. Upon receipt the application will then be placed at the bottom of the relevant housing list.
- ◆ applicants who owe rent arrears or any other tenancy related debt will not be eligible to be admitted or remain on the active list unless the following criteria applies:
 - the amount outstanding must amount to not more than one month's rent
 - there is a repayment arrangement in place
 - payments have been made in accordance with the agreement for the past 3 months
 - the applicant is continuing to make such payments.

- ◆ Where an applicant has previously had their own secure accommodation and has lost it as a result of being evicted their application will be suspended for a period of 3 years from the date of the eviction. This will be dependent on evidence of a change in behaviour, such as a new tenancy report or no further anti-social misdemeanours.
- ◆ Where an applicant has previously had their own secure accommodation and has lost it as a result of the property being recovered by the landlord through abandonment procedures the application will be suspended for a period of 3 years from the date the former property was recovered.
- ◆ Where an applicant or member of his/her household has a record of serious anti-social behaviour they will be suspended from the Active List for a period of 3 years.

Anti-social behaviour in this context can include:

- Relevant criminal convictions
 - ASBO served on a member of household
 - Fire raising
 - Harassment/threats/verbal abuse to a neighbour/member of staff/tradesmen, etc
 - Damage or wilful neglect of property within the neighbourhood
 - Serious noise nuisance
- ◆ Other anti-social behaviour (eg. Where a Notice of Proceedings or ABC/UBN has had to be served on the applicant or member of household) will result in a suspension for 6 months at a time. Before the suspension is lifted there needs to be evidence of a change in behaviour which must involve the eradication of ongoing complaints.
- 4.3 It is a strict requirement that staff must have appropriate evidence regarding anti-social behaviour which merits any suspension of an applicant and the applicant will be advised of the reason for the suspension. In making the decision to suspend and the period of suspension the Association will take account of:
- the nature, frequency and duration of the conduct
 - the extent to which the conduct is the consequence of acts or omissions of people other than the tenant
 - the effect which the conduct is having on other people
 - any alternative action taken by the landlord to address the conduct.
- 4.4 In all cases where the Association is suspending an applicant appropriate advice and assistance will be given as to what steps can be taken by the applicant to have the suspension reviewed. All applicants will also be informed of their right of appeal against the Association's decision to suspend their application.

- 4.5 The decision to suspend will be taken by staff at an Allocations Team Meeting which will involve at least 3 officers and the details of this will be recorded on the applicant's application form.

5. HOME VISITS

- 5.1 All applicants accepted on to the list will be visited prior to an allocation being made. The purpose of the home visit will be to ascertain the applicants' circumstances. Where it is not geographically possible to carry out a home visit a statement from the tenant's landlord will be obtained.

6. SIZE OF PROPERTY TO BE ALLOCATED

- 6.1 The majority of the Association's properties are 2 apartments therefore we would intend to maximise the use of our flats by allocating in the following way:

- ◆ 1 bedroom for each applicant or applicant and spouse/partner
- ◆ 1 bedroom for each 2 children of same sex under 16 years of age
- ◆ 1 bedroom for 2 children of different sex under 8 years of age
- ◆ 1 bedroom each for 2 children of different sex where one is 8 years of age or older.
- ◆ 1 bedroom each for any remaining member of the household
- ◆ account will be taken of unborn children who will form part of the household

7. NUMBER OF OFFERS

- 7.1 The Association will make a maximum of two offers of accommodation to applicants on the basis of their current position on the Housing List. Applicants will only be offered properties which match their stated preferences. The Association will endeavour to maximise choice and so, wherever possible, an applicant will be made the offer of two void flats at the same time.

- 7.2 Where applicants have refused two offers of accommodation, whether made separately or simultaneously, they will be asked if they wish to reapply to the Active Housing List. The applicant's effective date of application will then become the date when the applicant has confirmed that he/she wishes to be readmitted on to the Active Housing List.

8. APPEALS

8.1 The Association has a clear procedure for dealing with appeals arising from decisions made in the allocations process. If any applicant is unhappy regarding any decision made in relation to the allocations policy then the process of appeal is:

- Housing Manager
- Housing Services Sub-Committee
- Appeals Committee

8.2 Applicants should note that the Appeals Committee consists exclusively of Management Committee members who were not involved in the original decision at the sub-committee level.

8.3 Applications will be cancelled or suspended in writing stating clearly the grounds on which the decision has been made. If an applicant is aggrieved by any decision to cancel or suspend his/her application, he/she should notify the Association in accordance with the Appeals Procedure detailed in this section.

9. FALSE INFORMATION

9.1 Any applicant knowingly or recklessly making a material false statement in their application may have their application put to the bottom of the relevant list or where a tenancy has been granted, proceedings to recover possession of the house may be instituted.

10. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

10.1 Applicants have the right to inspect the records kept by the Association of the information given on the application form. Where applications are stored on computer, the applicant has the right under the Data Protection Act 1998 to see any information stored about him or her on computer. The Association will respond, under the terms of the Act, to any requests made in writing.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

11.1 Confidentiality regarding an applicant's personal circumstances will be respected at all times. Members of staff who are related to, or have a close connection to, an applicant will declare the fact and have no involvement in the allocations process.

12. COMPLAINTS

12.1 Any applicant who is unhappy about the way his/her application has been dealt with should notify the Housing Officer with whom they have been dealing with. If following this they still feel aggrieved, they should follow the formal Complaints Policy, a copy of which is available from the Association's office.

13. MONITORING, REPORTING AND REVIEW

- 13.1 The Association undertakes to monitor the outcomes of its Allocations Policy on an ongoing basis in order to assess whether the stated objectives are being achieved.
- 13.2 The Housing Services Sub-Committee will be presented with monthly performance reports on the allocations processes. In addition the sub-committee will carry out a comprehensive annual review of the outcomes of this policy including analysis of the demand from the various sources for our stock.
- 13.3 By monitoring performance against objectives in this way, the annual review will establish whether the policy is being effectively put into practice and to establish whether the policy itself requires amendment.
- 13.4 The Association undertakes to carry out a comprehensive review of all aspects of this policy at least every three years. The review will take account of legislative changes, new policy guidance, best practice advice and the views of service users.

14. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 14.1 Further copies of this Allocations Policy are available on request from the Association. This Allocations Policy and all related policies/information leaflets will be made available in other forms such as large print, audio tape, Braille or translation into relevant languages.

Anyone requiring further information on this or any other Association policy should contact our office at 13 Whitevale Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow G31 1QW.

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APPENDIX 1

AREA OF OPERATION

(MAP SHOWING WHERE ASSOCIATION'S PROPERTIES ARE LOCATED)

Eligibility for the 'A' List

"A" LIST

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| CATEGORY 1: | HOMELESS |
| CATEGORY 2: | UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING |
| CATEGORY 3: | MEDICAL |
| CATEGORY 4: | ASPIRATIONAL |

An applicant's position on the list will be determined by the length of time they have been on the list.

CATEGORY 1: HOMELESS

1(a) Statutory Homeless

Applicants who are homeless under the terms of the current Housing Act. Applicants must have a priority need and should not have made themselves "intentionally" homeless.

(b) No Security of Tenure

E.G. Lodgers, caravan dwellers or those living in tied accommodation.

(c) Insecure Tenancy

E.G. Sub-tenants, tenants of private landlords, those in temporary furnished accommodation.

CATEGORY 2: UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING

(a) Condition of Property

Where the applicants' accommodation is below tolerable standard;

Or in need of repair and improvement;

Or property which requires upgrading.

(b) Overcrowding

Applicants whose present accommodation is considered to be overcrowded as set out in Section 6 of this policy.

(c) Lacking Amenities

ie. A fixed bath or shower; a piped supply of hot water; an inside w.c. for the exclusive use of the applicant; adequate cooking facilities; central heating.

(d) Sharing Amenities

ie. Applicants who do not have their own home and who are sharing the following:

bath/shower, w.c., living area, kitchen area.

(e) Social Factors

i.e. Applicants who have a serious social problem such as racial harassment or domestic abuse which can only be resolved by moving to alternative accommodation.

CATEGORY 3: MEDICAL

Where the present accommodation is worsening an applicant's medical condition.

CATEGORY 4: ASPIRATIONAL

Where applicants aspire to obtain a Reidvale Housing Association tenancy but do not qualify for access to any of the other lists. This list represents the lowest form of priority within the housing list system.

Eligibility for the 'B' List

Access to this list is open to applicants who possess economic or social characteristics which are under represented within the community.

Applicants will be accepted on to this list on the basis of the eligibility criteria detailed below. An applicant's position on the list will be determined by the length of time they have been on the list.

(i) Employment

Applicants must have been working for at least the previous year in part time or full time paid employment or where it can be demonstrated that moving to Reidvale would make it easier for the applicant to take up/remain in employment.

(ii) Socio-Economic Imbalances Within the Area

Currently, young single people and people of pensionable age are over-represented in the community. In order to redress this current imbalance in age/household types, applications from couples where at least one partner is aged between 30 to 60 years of age will qualify for this list.

Eligibility for the 'C' List

Access to this list is open to applicants who require to move to the Reidvale area to receive or provide support from a relative. Applications will also be considered from those who are making a positive contribution to the community i.e. regular/voluntary community activity or are in full /part time education.

Applicants will be accepted on to this list on the basis of eligibility criteria detailed below. An applicant's position on the list will be determined by the length of time they have been on the list.

(i) Applicants Residing c/o Reidvale Resident

Applicants who are presently residing c/o Reidvale resident, with the written consent of the Association where appropriate and are seeking their own flat. Applicants must have resided at their present address for a minimum of one year.

(ii) Family Support

Where it can be demonstrated that it would be beneficial for an applicant to move to Reidvale to enable the applicant to receive support from, or provide support to, a relative in Reidvale. Access will usually be restricted to immediate family relations - parent, child and brother/sister.

It is only possible for a Reidvale resident to nominate one family member under this criteria.

In seeking to create and sustain social, community and family networks the Association will adopt a broad interpretation of social support.

It is a requirement that the Reidvale resident must have resided in the community for at least one year.

(iii) Applicants Involved in Local Voluntary/Community Activity

Applicants who provide or organize some form of regular voluntary/community activity for at least the previous year eg. running youth club, etc.

Each case will be decided on its own merits.

(iv) Further Full / Part Time Education

Where it can be demonstrated that moving to Reidvale would make it easier for the applicant to take up/remain in a course of full or part time further education.

(V) Relationship Breakdown

The Association recognises that relationships breakdown can be a major cause of homelessness.

We will respond sympathetically to requests from parties who are subject to any relationship breakdown.

Applicants must have resided within the property for a minimum period of 1 year.

An applicant's position on the list will be determined by the length of time they have been on the list.

REFERRAL AGENCIES

The Association accepts referrals from the following organisations:

| Name of Organisation | Client Group |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Key Housing Association | People with learning difficulties |
| Social Work Services | Vulnerable persons |