

MOLENDINAR PARK HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Allocations Policy

Date of Review: 17th March 2009

Date of Next Review: March 2014

1. INTRODUCTION

Molendinar Park Housing Association operates throughout the city of Glasgow. A Committee of Management, which currently consists of lay people with considerable experience in the housing association movement, people from relevant professional backgrounds, and tenants of the Association controls the Association. **The primary aim of the Association is to provide high quality affordable housing across all tenure forms which will enable potential tenants and owner occupiers to exercise the greatest possible choice in resolving their housing needs and to create sustainable balanced communities, as defined in Section 3 of this policy.**

2. GENERAL AIMS OF THE POLICY

The aims of the policy are to ensure that the Association's houses are allocated fairly and objectively with no discrimination on the grounds of marital status, race, religion, disability, sex or sexual orientation and **that housing is allocated on the basis of the housing need criteria, as defined in Appendix 1, of individual applicants and on the needs of the area in which the housing is available to ensure that balanced and stable communities are created and maintained.**

3. SUSTAINABLE BALANCED COMMUNITIES

The Association defines a stable balanced community as one that encompasses people with a wide range of life and employment experiences, of tenure forms and of ages and household types. A sustainable community is one in which people aspire to live; 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 thus giving the community the strength to absorb and support individuals in times of difficulty.

Factors which contribute to the development of a sustainable balanced community are:

- a) **That residents have chosen, and applicants aspire, to live within that community.**
- b) **That there is a socio-economic mix in addition to a variety of tenure forms.**
- c) **That the community covers a wide range of need, from aspirational need to acute need.**
- d) **That there exist appropriate community, social and family networks to bind the community together.**

4. ACCESS TO THE ASSOCIATION'S HOUSING STOCK

a) Direct Applications to the Association

Anyone may apply to the Association at any time for housing. Acceptance onto the list will only be restricted by the following criteria:

- i) The Association does not own property suitable for the applicant.
- ii) The applicant does not meet any of the eligibility criteria set out in Appendix 1.
- iii) The applicant has failed to conduct his/her current tenancy with another landlord in an acceptable manner. Where an applicant has rent arrears with another landlord they will be excluded only if they do not demonstrate a commitment to clearing such arrears through an arrangement with their landlord. A history of arrears, in itself, will not result in exclusion from the list provided such arrears have been cleared.
- iv) The applicant has a recent history of serious anti-social behaviour. For the avoidance of doubt, serious anti-social behaviour means behaviour which has caused significant distress or harm to others and includes verbal or physical abuse or threats to other residents, the Association's staff or others acting on behalf of the association; recent means within the previous 12 months. The Association will exclude applicants from the list where such behaviour is testified to by court action, police reports, another public sector landlord or an employee or agent of the Association. Applicants excluded on these grounds have the right to appeal to the Local Management Committee and the Management Committee only on the grounds that the testimony against them is inaccurate. Such applicants may reapply once they have no history of such behaviour in the preceding 12 months.

b) Nominations

The Association may enter into formal or informal agreements for nominations from:

Homes Link
HOMES
Key Housing Association
SAY Women
The Simon Community
Women's Aid
SAMH

And other special needs organisations as decided upon by the Management Committee from time to time. Nominations will normally be used to remedy any imbalance in the community resulting from direct applications to the Association. In the case of local authority nominations the requirements of the local housing strategy, in relation to clearance and such issues, will be taken account of.

c) Mutual Exchanges, Referrals and Transfers

Mutual Exchanges will be permitted between tenants of the Association and tenants of any housing association or local authority subject to the prior written consent of the Association being obtained and the Association being satisfied that the proposed incoming tenant has conducted their tenancy in an acceptable manner. **Mutual exchanges will not be permitted within the first year of the tenancy, or where it would result in overcrowding, except in exceptional circumstances and with the explicit consent of the Local Management Committee and Management Committee.**

Referrals through HA Homes will be accepted where such referrals meet the criteria defined by the Association.

Tenants of Molendinar Park Housing Association seeking a transfer will be assessed in one of two ways:

- Applicants whose housing is inappropriate or unsuitable
- Applicants who are seeking an aspirational move.

Applicants in the former case will be admitted to the list immediately. In the latter case applicants will be admitted to the list after they have been in their home for one year.

d) Relationship Breakdown

The Association will consider applications from tenants in the event of a breakdown of a relationship. Provided such tenants have been tenants of the Association for a minimum period of two years they will automatically be considered for rehousing. Where they have been tenants for less than two years the circumstances of the individual applicant will be taken into account before a decision is made. In both cases the manner in which they have conducted their tenancy will be taken into account. Normally the partner who will have custody of any dependent children will retain the existing tenancy.

5. ALLOCATIONS

a) Allocations Structure:

The Association will maintain lists, which reflect the elements of a sustainable balanced community. These are:

- i) **Acute Need**
This includes homelessness, racial harassment, harassment by neighbours, or others in the vicinity of the applicant's current accommodation, domestic violence, medical need and financial obstacles to appropriate housing.
- ii) **Socio-Economic Balance**
This includes those applicants with lower need criteria who aspire to live in the area and who possess socio-economic characteristics which are under-represented within the area. This category will be used to balance employment, educational, age and household type weaknesses.
- iii) **Community, Social and Family Need**
This category will include applicants who are involved in local community activity or voluntary work; applicants who will be enabled to enter, or remain in, training, education or employment by moving into the area; and applicants who require to receive support from, or provide support to, a relative who lives within the community.

Applicants accepted for housing by the Association based on the eligibility criteria set out in Appendix 1 will be placed on the most appropriate list.

The proportion offered to each category is set out in appendix 2 and will be monitored annually to ensure that the policy is achieving the objectives set out in Section 2.
- iv) **Section 5 Homelessness**
The Association aims to provide a sound basis for positive, partnership working with Glasgow City Council in relation to the prevention and alleviation of homelessness and an agreed proportion will be offered to this category.
- v) **Sensitive Allocation Procedures:**
Wherever possible the Association will advise applicant immediately prior to allocation of all suitable properties and allow them to choose which property best suits their needs and aspirations. On occasions, however, it

may be that certain properties which meet the criteria requested by the applicant are considered inappropriate by the Association due to house type, location or the existing socio-economic or age mix in the immediate vicinity. Where the Officer dealing with allocations considers it necessary to restrict offers for a particular property this can only be done after discussing the case with the Director.

As the Association seeks to provide applicants with as much choice as possible applicants may decline any offer of accommodation and this will not restrict in any way any future offers unless the applicant specifically requests not be offered a particular type of house.

6. APPEALS

Any applicant who believes that an inappropriate decision has been made in regard to their eligibility, the list on which they are placed, an offer made to them or any other matter may appeal to the Management Committee of the Association by writing to:

**The Secretary
Molendinar Park Housing Association
3 Graham Square
Glasgow G31 1AD**

Where a Local Management Committee is in operation the appeal will be dealt with by the Local Management Committee and their decision reported to the Management Committee.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information provided to, or sought by, the Association will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be accessible only to members of staff who require to use the information for the purpose obtained.

8. GENERAL CONDITIONS

The Association will maintain separate lists for each Local Management Committee area.

The Association will not normally allocate a flat to any tenant unless they have a clear rent account with their current public sector landlord or have reached an arrangement acceptable to their landlord.

The Association will not normally accept an application from anyone who has an outstanding debt of any nature to the Association unless arrangements to clear the debt suitable to both parties have made and are being adhered to.

The Association will not normally accept an application from anyone who has a recent history of serious anti-social behaviour. For the avoidance of doubt, serious anti-social behaviour means behaviour which has caused significant distress or harm to others and includes verbal or physical abuse or threats to other residents, staff or agents of the Association. The Association will exclude applicants from the list where such behaviour is testified to by court action, police reports, another public sector landlord or an employee or agent of the Association. Such applicants may reapply once they have no history of such behaviour in the preceding 12 months.

Size of Property to be Allocated

There is high demand for all properties therefore the Association will make the best use of our properties by allocating in the following way.

- 1 bedroom for each applicant or applicant and spouse/partner
- 1 bedroom per child but where the children are of the same sex it will allocate one bedroom per two children
- 1 bedroom each for any remaining adult member of the household unless they are part of a couple

The Association will allow under occupation by up to two bed spaces in certain circumstances.

Account will be taken of unborn children who will form part of the household

Over occupation will not be permitted.

9. IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

a) False Information

Any applicant knowingly or recklessly making a false statement in their application will have their application cancelled or, where a tenancy has been granted, will be subject to proceedings to recover possession of the house.

b) Inspection of Records

Applicants have the right to inspect records kept by the Association of the information given on their Application Form.

c) Complaints

Any applicant who has a complaint concerning their treatment under this policy should, in the first instance, contact the Officer of the Association with whom they have been dealing. If not satisfied the applicant should follow the procedures set out in the Association's Complaint Policy, a copy of which may be obtained by contacting the Association's offices.

10. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Association will review the success of its policy in creating and maintaining stable, balanced communities on a regular basis. Interim reviews will be carried out annually by means of a review of allocations with a major review every five years based on the results of Residents' Satisfaction Surveys.

Any changes to the Policy will be notified to residents by means of a Newsletter, which will also be sent to those on the Waiting List.

1. Health

The applicant suffers from a medical condition, which would be alleviated by a specific type of house. Such applicants would only be accepted onto the list where the Association owned such property.

2. Unsatisfactory Housing

The applicant currently resides in housing which is temporary or below accepted standards. Such applications will normally result from an agreement with GHA regarding local clearance and redevelopment.

3. Financial

The applicant requires to obtain less expensive accommodation than their current home. Such applications could result from mortgage repossession or obtaining low-paid employment or other factors of this nature.

4. Locational

The applicant wishes to obtain accommodation nearer to their place of work or study or to be nearer to family or other support structures.

5. Social

The applicant requires new accommodation as a result of non-housing issues relating to their current accommodation. Such applications may result from marital breakup or racial, or other, harassment, violence or anti-social behaviour by neighbours.

Any applicant satisfying one of the above need criteria will be accepted as eligible for housing by the Association. Thereafter their position on the list will be determined by the length of time they have been on the list. They will be removed from the list once they no longer qualify in respect of the need category which resulted in their admission to the list but may reapply if they meet other need categories. In this case they would return to the bottom of the relevant list.

a) Acute Need

This includes homelessness, racial harassment, harassment by neighbours, or others in the vicinity of the applicant's current accommodation, domestic violence and medical need.

About one third of allocations will be made to this category.

b) Socio-Economic Balance

This includes those applicants with lower need criteria who aspire to live in the area and who possess socio-economic characteristics, which are under-represented within the area. This category will be used to balance employment, educational, age and household type weaknesses.

About one third of allocations will be made to this category.

c) Community, Social and Family Need:

This category will include applicants who are involved in local community activity or voluntary work; applicants who will be enabled to enter, or remain in, training, education or employment by moving into the area; and applicants who require to receive support from, or provide support to, a relative who lives within the community.

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