

Readers may note that some information within these documents have been omitted / redacted.

Some information has been omitted / redacted as disclosure may prejudice the commercial interests of Irvine Housing Association trading as Riverside Scotland.

We recognise that the commercial sensitivity of information may decline over time and the harm arising from disclosure may be outweighed by the public interest in openness and transparency. We commit to review the redaction of any such information from time to time.

Some information has been redacted as it contains personal data which identifies an individual. Disclosure of this information would place Irvine Housing Association t/a Riverside Scotland in breach of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Board Meeting Agenda
241st Meeting: Thursday 25 March 2021
At 5.30 p.m. by MS Teams video conference

AGENDA

		Data Class
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Previous Minutes – Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Thursday 29 January 2021.	Public
4.	Matters Arising	
5.	Substantive Business	
5.1	Covid-19 Pandemic Update	Public
5.2	Corporate Plan 2020/23 Update Report and Corporate Risk Schedule	Internal
5.3	Recruitment of Chair	Internal
5.4	Re-branding	Confidential
5.5	Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy	Public
5.6	Donations Policy	Public
5.7	Factoring Policy	Public
5.8	Policy Review Updates	Public
5.9	Progress Reports on Development Projects	Internal
5.10	Capital Investment Programme 2021/22	Confidential
5.11	Repairs Options Appraisal	Restricted
5.12	Chair's Action Procedure	Confidential
5.13	Succession Planning (To follow)	Internal
5.14	Operational Performance Report	Public
5.15	Financial Performance Report	Restricted
5.16	Colleague Engagement Survey	Confidential

5.17	MD Report	Public
6.	Minutes/Updates: a) Unconfirmed Audit & Risk Committee Meeting – 8 March 2021 b) Confirmed Group Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting – 7 January 2021 c) Group Board Core Brief – January 2021	Confidential Confidential Confidential
7.	Disclosure	
8.	Any Other Business	
9.	Date of Next Meeting – 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 20 May 2021 – Board Meeting via MS Teams video conference	

PH / db
18/3/2021

Date:	25 th March 2021
Subject:	COVID-19 Pandemic Update
Author:	Paul Hillard
Sponsor:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – SHR Covid-19 Reports for January and February 2021
Action:	Information
Data Class:	Public

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report provides an update to Board members of the Association's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the consequent 'lockdown' measures.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that Board note and comment on the contents of this Report.

1 Background

- 1.1 The UK Government announced initial lockdown measures on 16th March 2020 with a request for people and businesses to maximise working from home. Further, more significant 'lockdown' measures were announced on 23rd March 2020.
- 1.2 Previous COVID-19 Pandemic Update Reports to Board have detailed the services being offered to customers, and issues relating to ways of working, colleague welfare and responding to the SHR.
- 1.3 The full lockdown measures and the stay at home order, in place since 26th December 2020, remain in effect. At the time of writing this Report the most recent Scottish Government announcement suggested that, subject to continued reduction in infection rates and other related measures, that the stay at home order would be lifted on 5th April 2021, followed by a return to a tiered system of lockdown measures from 26th April 2021.

2 Delivery of Services

- 2.1 As reported to the board at the January meeting, the current lockdown measures are resulting in restrictions to the Association's services.
- 2.2 The key elements of the current service being offered by the Association are set out below:
 - 2.2.1 Repairs – the Association has reverted to an emergency repairs only service.
 - 2.2.2 Safety checks – Landlord compliance safety checks are being carried out. This included gas safety inspections and enforcement action is now being undertaken. The processes for enforcement are taking account of cases where Covid-19 self-isolation or shielding by customers is in place. There is, once again, some resistance from customers to gas safety visits, however, at present with remain 100% compliant.

- 2.2.3 Void Properties – are being inspected and works carried out to make them available to let. Safe working practices and additional cleaning means that there is an increase in void turn round times.
- 2.2.4 Lettings – are being carried out in accordance with normal policies. New mutual exchanges are not currently being processed.
- 2.2.5 Estate Inspections – are being carried out by the Estate Caretakers, where possible, from within their cars.
- 2.2.6 Landscape Maintenance – a full service is in place.
- 2.2.7 Arrears Recovery– arrears recovery remains a priority with contact with customers being through telephone/email and text. The no evictions legislation is expected to be extended beyond the current March deadline.
- 2.2.8 Tenancy Sustainability - the team is prioritising work assisting new universal credit claimants through the process.
- 2.2.9 Responding to Anti-Social Behaviour – We have sought to continue to respond to this through telephone contact with tenants.
- 2.2.10 Major Repairs – external major repairs contracts are continuing, however, those for internal works have been postponed. This has meant that a boiler replacement and kitchen renewal programme intended to run between January and March has had to be postponed.
- 2.2.11 Development – the Association has been able to start on site with its most recent development in Dundonald on 8th March. Both the on-site and in factory elements of the process are able to proceed within the existing restrictions.

3 Customer Communications and Feedback

- 3.1 We are maintaining communications to customers through the website, social media, and dedicated telephone line, about the services we are able to offer.
- 3.2 While overall customer satisfaction levels are remaining broadly stable, related feedback is indicating some frustrations from customers about the restricted service we are offering.

4 Use of the Office

- 4.1 Use of the office is being kept to an absolute minimum, with use being restricted to essential administrative functions, checking mail, scanning and printing to ensure business continuity and occasional visits by assets colleagues as part of the void management process.

5 Recommencement of Services

- 5.1 An easing of lockdown restrictions to Tier 3, or below, in the local authority areas where we operate will allow the recommencement of more services – notably a return to a full response repairs service and the recommencement of major repairs programmes. It will also allow greater direct face to face contact, albeit socially distanced, between the Association’s staff and customers. This is expected from 26th

April, however, we are working with our contractors to ensure we are ready to respond if this date is moved forward.

6 Colleague Welfare

- 6.1 The results of the Colleague Engagement survey, carried out during early February, have been very positive. (These are reported elsewhere on the agenda of this meeting). It is noteworthy, however, that the lowest scoring questions related to colleagues mental health and wellbeing.
- 6.2 The Management Team are continuing to give priority to support colleague well-being. We are taking an approach of continuing with much more frequent team meetings, usually weekly, and ensuring that there is regular contact between colleagues. We have also actively encouraged colleagues to take annual leave during this period.
- 6.3 This has been supported by a range of Riverside-wide initiatives and resources to support wellbeing, including on-line activities and national workshops and events.

7 Scottish Housing Regulator

- 7.1 The SHR's Covid-19 Returns for January and February are attached as Appendix 1.

8 Risks

- 8.1 A COVID-19 specific Risk Schedule has been developed and shared with the Audit and Risk Committee. It is available to Board members on request.

9 Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Board members note and comment on this Report.

Landlord:
[Definitions](#)
Month:

Please submit this return within one week of the end of the calendar month

Please tell us your staff absence level on the last day of the month:

Total number of staff (FTE)	<input type="text" value="32.93"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
Total number absent (FTE)	<input type="text" value="1"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>

Percentage of staff absent	<input type="text" value="3.0%"/>
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Number of staff placed on furlough (FTE)	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Gross rent arrears	<input type="text" value="£502,076.20"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
Total rent due	<input type="text"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>

Gross rent arrears (%)	<input type="text" value="4.46%"/>
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Empty homes (arose during the reporting month)	<input type="text" value="12"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Empty homes (last day of reporting month)	<input type="text" value="7"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Number of lets to homeless (SST)	<input type="text" value="4"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Number of lets to homeless (short SST)	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Number leased to relevant local authority	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Number of lets to others	<input type="text" value="8"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Total lets and leased (during reporting month)	<input type="text" value="12"/>
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Cash balances as at last day of the month	<input type="text"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Number of court actions initiated and properties recovered during the reporting month:

Total number of court actions initiated	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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The number of properties recovered having obtained decree for non-payment of rent	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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The number of properties recovered having obtained decree for anti-social behaviour	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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The number of properties recovered having obtained decree for other reasons	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Number of Notice of Proceedings issued during the reporting month for:

Rent arrears	<input type="text" value="8"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Antisocial behaviour / criminal activity	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Other reasons	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Landlord:
[Definitions](#)
Month:

Please submit this return within one week of the end of the calendar month

Please tell us your staff absence level on the last day of the month:

Total number of staff (FTE)	<input type="text" value="32.93"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
Total number absent (FTE)	<input type="text" value="1"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>

Percentage of staff absent	<input type="text" value="3.0%"/>
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Number of staff placed on furlough (FTE)	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Gross rent arrears	<input type="text" value=""/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
Total rent due	<input type="text" value=""/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>

Gross rent arrears (%)	<input type="text" value="4.55%"/>
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Empty Homes (last day of previous reporting month)	<input type="text" value="7"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Empty homes (arose during the reporting month)	<input type="text" value="14"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Empty homes (last day of reporting month)	<input type="text" value="9"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Number of lets to homeless (SST)	<input type="text" value="4"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
Number of lets to homeless (short SST)	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>

Number leased to relevant local authority	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Number of lets to others	<input type="text" value="8"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
Total lets and leased (during reporting month)	<input type="text" value="12"/>		

Balance	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Cash balances as at last day of the month	<input type="text" value=""/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Number of court actions initiated and properties recovered during the reporting month:

Total number of court actions initiated	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
The number of properties recovered having obtained decree for non-payment of rent	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>

The number of properties recovered having obtained decree for anti-social behaviour	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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The number of properties recovered having obtained decree for other reasons	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Number of Notice of Proceedings issued during the reporting month for:

Rent arrears	<input type="text" value="6"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
Antisocial behaviour / criminal activity	<input type="text" value="1"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>

Other reasons	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Comments:	<input type="text"/>
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Date:	25 March 2020
Subject:	Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy
Author:	Morag Hutchinson
Sponsor:	Paul Hillard
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy
Action:	Decision
Data Class:	Public

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting in September 2018, Board agreed a framework that specified what approval process would be followed for all Policies. The Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy was included within the “Group Policy” section of the framework.

The Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy was last adopted by IHA Board in August 2019. We have recently been made aware that a review was undertaken in March 2020. The changes made at that time were predominantly cosmetic and the revised policy which is included at appendix 1 is being presented to Board for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to agree to adopt The Riverside Group Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy.



Transforming **lives**
Revitalising **neighbourhoods**



POLICY:	ANTI-BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION
Ref No:	N/A
Date Approved:	18 March 2020
Approved By:	Group Board [Approved on 18 March 2020 at Group Audit Committee]
Applicable to:	All employees, directors, board members officers, agency workers, seconded workers, volunteers, interns, involved tenants, agents, suppliers, contractors, external consultants, third-party representatives and business partners, sponsors, or any other person associated with us, wherever located of TRGL and any of its Affiliates/Subsidiaries.
Lead Director:	Director of Governance and General Counsel
In Consultation with:	Director of Internal Audit & Risk
Associated Procedures:	Board & Committee Member Code of Conduct Employee Code of Conduct Whistleblowing procedure Fraud response plan Procurement policy Procurement manual
Associated Leaflet/s:	Not applicable
Review Date:	January 2023



Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy

Date: March 2020

1.

Definitions/description of general issues surrounding the policy subject

Bribery is offering, promising, giving or accepting any financial or other advantage, to induce the recipient or any other person to act improperly in the performance of their functions, or to reward them for acting improperly, or where the recipient would act improperly by accepting the advantage.

An **advantage** includes money, gifts, loans, fees, hospitality, services, discounts, and the award of a contract or anything else of value.

A person acts **improperly** where they act illegally, unethically, or contrary to an expectation of good faith or impartiality, or where they abuse a position of trust. The improper acts may be in relation to any business or professional activities, public functions, acts in the course of employment, or other activities by or on behalf of any organisation of any kind.

Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power or position for private gain.

2.

Summarised Policy Statement

Riverside is committed to conducting our work in accordance with the highest standards of ethics. We take a zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and are committed to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships wherever we operate and implementing and enforcing effective systems to counter bribery and corruption.. The reputation of the Group and of the sector depends on all of us acting in accordance with sound ethical principles, and we will do our utmost to ensure that this good reputation is protected.

We will uphold all laws relevant to countering bribery and corruption and we remain bound by UK laws, including the Bribery Act 2010, in respect of our conduct both at home and abroad.

3.

Policy Statement- what you must do to comply

The purpose of this policy is to:

- set out our responsibilities, and of those working for us, in observing and upholding our position on bribery and corruption; and
- provide information and guidance to those working for us on how to recognise and deal with bribery and corruption issues.

It is a criminal offence to offer, promise, give, request, or accept a bribe. Individuals found guilty can be punished by up to ten years' imprisonment and/or a fine. As an employer if we fail to prevent bribery we can face an unlimited fine, exclusion from tendering for public contracts, and damage to our reputation. We therefore take our legal responsibilities very seriously.

In this policy, **'third party'** means any individual or organisation who comes into contact with Riverside for business purposes, and includes people and organisations such as

tenants, residents, applicants, customers, suppliers, joint venture partners, contractors, business contacts, agents, advisers, and government and public bodies, including their advisors, representatives and officials, politicians and political parties.

Any employee who breaches this policy will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal for gross misconduct. Any board or committee member or involved resident who breaches this policy may be removed from office.

We will not deal with prospective partners or other third parties where we suspect them of bribery or corruption, and we will seek to terminate arrangements in the event of unethical behaviour.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

Legal and regulatory context and framework, including relevance to Scotland

Bribery Act 2010;

Fraud Act 2006;

Companies Acts 1985 and 2006;

Value Added Tax Act 1994;

Criminal Justice Act 1993;

Customs and Excise Management Act 1979;

Theft Acts 1968 & 1978;

Criminal Law Act 1977;

Prevention of Corruption Act 1906;

Public Bodies Corrupt Practices Act 1889;

Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the financial interests of the European Communities;

Homes and Communities Agency's Regulatory Framework;

National Housing Federation's "Excellence in governance" Code for members;

National Housing Federation's "Code of conduct";

Criminal Finances Act;

Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework;

SFHA's Interim Model Code of Conduct; and such additional legislation/regulations implemented in relation to anti-corruption and bribery from time to time.

Group Board must agree any changes to this policy statement.

4.	<p>Who is responsible for the policy?</p> <p>The board of directors has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under our control comply with it.</p> <p>The compliance manager has primary and day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy, monitoring its use and effectiveness, dealing with any queries about it, and auditing internal control systems and procedures to ensure they are effective in countering bribery and corruption.</p> <p>Management at all levels are responsible for ensuring those reporting to them understand and comply with this policy and are given adequate and regular training on it; in particular the Head of Procurement.</p>
5.	<p>Standards – what you must not do</p> <p>The prevention, detection and reporting of bribery and other forms of corruption are the responsibility of all those working for us or under our control. All those to whom this policy applies are required to avoid any activity that might lead to, or suggest, a breach of this policy.</p> <p>All those to whom this policy applies must ensure that they read, understand and comply with it.</p> <p>The Riverside Board & Committee Member Code of Conduct and the Employee Code of Conduct set out clear provisions relating to matters such as conflicts of interest, use of suppliers, gifts and hospitality, and donations.</p> <p>It is not acceptable for those to whom this policy applies (or someone on their behalf) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality with the expectation or hope that a function will be performed improperly or an improper advantage will be received, or to reward an improper advantage already given; • give or accept a gift or hospitality during any negotiations or tender process, if this could be perceived as intended or likely to influence the outcome; • accept a payment, gift or hospitality from a third party that they know or suspect is offered with the expectation that they/we will provide an improper advantage for them or anyone else in return; • accept hospitality from a third party that is unduly lavish or extravagant under the circumstances which might lead to a breach of this policy; • offer or accept a gift to or from government officials or representatives, or politicians or political parties outside the ordinary course of business without the prior approval of your manager;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • threaten or retaliate against another worker who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy; or • engage in any other activity that might lead to a breach of this policy.
6.	<p>Facilitation payments and kickbacks</p> <p>We do not make, and will not accept, facilitation payments or "kickbacks" of any kind.</p> <p>Facilitation payments, also known as "back-handers" or "grease payments", are typically small, unofficial payments made to secure or expedite a routine or necessary action (for example by a government official). They are not common in the UK, but are common in some other jurisdictions.</p> <p>Kickbacks are typically payments made in return for a business favour or advantage.</p> <p>You must avoid any activity that might lead to a facilitation payment or kickback being made or accepted by us or on our behalf, or that might suggest that such a payment will be made or accepted. If you are asked to make a payment on our behalf, you should always be mindful of what the payment is for and whether the amount requested is proportionate to the goods or services provided. You should always ask for a receipt which details the reason for the payment. If you have any suspicions, concerns or queries regarding a payment, you should raise these with your manager.</p>
7.	<p>Record Keeping</p> <p>We must keep financial records and have appropriate internal controls in place which will evidence the business reason for making payments to third parties.</p> <p>You must declare and keep a written record of all hospitality or gifts given or received, which will be subject to managerial review.</p> <p>You must submit all expenses claims relating to hospitality, gifts or payments to third parties in accordance with our expenses policy and record the reason for expenditure.</p> <p>All accounts, invoices, and other records relating to dealings with third parties including suppliers and customers should be prepared with strict accuracy and completeness. Accounts must not be kept "off-book" to facilitate or conceal improper payments.</p>
8.	<p>Performance reporting: standards and requirements</p>

	<p>Those to whom this policy applies must declare all matters required under the applicable code of conduct in accordance with its requirements and make such declarations as and when they occur.</p> <p>Riverside will seek to ensure that its consultants, contractors, suppliers, joint venture partners and agents have anti-bribery and corruption policies and procedures in place that are consistent with the Group’s own.</p> <p>Those to whom this policy applies must notify a manager as soon as possible if they believe or suspect that a conflict with this policy has occurred, or may occur in the future. They are encouraged to raise concerns about any issue or suspicion of bribery or corruption at the earliest possible stage.</p> <p>Employees, contractors, board members, tenants and other persons connected with the Group may raise concerns in accordance with the Group’s Whistleblowing procedure.</p> <p>If they are offered a bribe, or are asked to make one, or if they believe or suspect that any bribery, corruption or other breach of this policy has occurred or may occur, they must notify their manager or report it in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy as soon as possible.</p> <p>If they are unsure about whether a particular act constitutes bribery or corruption, they should raise it with their manager or the Riverside Director of Governance and General Counsel.</p> <p>All potential instances of actual or attempted bribery must be reported and will be investigated. Any incidents of actual or attempted bribery and/or corruption are reported to the Group Audit Committee. They may result in disciplinary, civil or criminal action where substantiated. In the case of Riverside’s consultants, contractors, suppliers, joint venture partners and agents, this may result in contracts being terminated and of organisations being prevented from working with the Group in the future.</p> <p>The Corporate Audit Team maintains the register of fraud, losses and irregularities.</p> <p>The Company Secretary maintains a register of interests and also registers of gifts and hospitality in respect of employees and board members.</p> <p>Reporting incidents where the ABC Policy cannot be followed</p> <p>Where the ABC Policy cannot be followed due to personal safety being threatened; such incidents must be reported in the first instance to the Lead Director of this ABC Policy, as soon as you are out of physical danger, who shall then assess whether the incident requires documenting with the Corporate Audit Team/Company Secretary.</p>
9.	Protection

	<p>Individuals who refuse to accept or offer a bribe, or who raise concerns or report another's wrongdoing, are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support anyone who raises genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.</p> <p>We are committed to ensuring no one suffers any detrimental treatment as a result of refusing to take part in bribery or corruption, or because of reporting in good faith their suspicion that an actual or potential bribery or other corruption offence has taken place, or may take place in the future. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Director of Governance and General Counsel immediately. If the matter is not remedied, and you are an employee, you should raise it formally using Riverside's Grievance Procedure.</p>
10.	<p>Implementation</p> <p>Key measures designed to eliminate the risk of bribery include procurement, finance and recruitment measures as well as procedures to ensure fair access to services.</p> <p>The Group's approach to anti-bribery and corruption follows the six principles set out in guidance from the Ministry of Justice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportionality. The Group's anti-bribery and corruption arrangements are focussed on those areas where the risk is greatest ie procurement and growth. • Top level commitment. The Group is committed to conducting our work in accordance with the highest standards of ethics. The overall policy statement was approved by the Group Board; who has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations, and that those under the group Board's control comply with it. • Risk assessment. Periodic assessments of the bribery risks faced by the Group will be carried out. • Due diligence. The Group's procurement arrangements emphasise the importance of appropriate due diligence before engaging contractors or suppliers. Top management scrutiny is required before entering into any joint ventures, mergers or partnership arrangements. • Communication. The initial rollout of the anti-bribery and corruption arrangements is supported by ongoing training. Training on this policy forms part of the induction process for all individuals who work for us, and regular training will be provided as necessary. Our zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption must be communicated to all suppliers, contractors and business partners at the outset of our business relationship with them and as appropriate thereafter.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and review. The Group’s arrangements are subject to ongoing audit. Registers of gifts, hospitality and conflicts of interests are reviewed by the Group Chief Executive on a regular basis. Any incidents of actual or attempted bribery are reported to the Group Audit Committee and investigated. <p>Any allegation of fraud or bribery will be investigated under the procedures set out in the fraud response plan.</p>						
11.	<p>Impact Assessment</p> <p>This policy has been equality impact assessed and has been judged to be fair and in line with Riverside’s commitment to Equality and Diversity which states that Riverside is committed to equality and strives to be fair in its dealings with all people, communities and organisations with which it has relationships and take into account the diverse nature of their culture and backgrounds.</p> <p>This policy complies with Riverside’s commitment to ensuring that no person or group of people will be treated less favourably than another person or group of people and will develop and deliver services that actively take into account the :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nine Protected Characteristics of age, gender, transgender, disability, racial ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexuality, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy. social and economic factors leading to disadvantage or exclusion including but not exclusively such things as employment status, caring responsibilities, being HIV positive or having AIDS, having reading or writing difficulties, leaving care, having unrelated criminal convictions, being without English as a language and appearance. Human Rights Act 1998. 						
12.	<p>Risk Appetite</p> <p><i>Risk Appetite and Thresholds</i></p> <p><i>Each policy should have risk appetite statements and risk thresholds that convert the risk statement into measurable metrics that can be used to manage RHG business day to day.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Risk appetite statement – is the amount and type of risk that RHG is willing to take in order to meet its strategic objectives</i> <i>Risk threshold – is the level beyond which RHG does not want to tolerate the risk</i> <i>Risk indicators – key indicators that the risk is being controlled effectively. These should be monitored at least quarterly, to ensure the risk is being managed and is within appetite.</i> <table border="1" data-bbox="411 1776 1366 2056"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="411 1776 703 1816"><i>Risk Appetite</i></th> <th data-bbox="703 1776 1078 1816"><i>Risk Thresholds</i></th> <th data-bbox="1078 1776 1366 1816"><i>Risk Indicators</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="411 1816 703 2056"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We have a zero tolerance policy in respect of bribery and</i> </td> <td data-bbox="703 1816 1078 2056"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Staff Training – 98% of staff trained.</i> <i>Zero reported incidents in relation to bribery/corruption.</i> </td> <td data-bbox="1078 1816 1366 2056"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Number of anti-bribery and corruption incidents</i> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>Risk Appetite</i>	<i>Risk Thresholds</i>	<i>Risk Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We have a zero tolerance policy in respect of bribery and</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Staff Training – 98% of staff trained.</i> <i>Zero reported incidents in relation to bribery/corruption.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Number of anti-bribery and corruption incidents</i>
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	<p><i>corruption and seek to avoid bribery and corruption across TRGL.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We seek to minimise our risks to the greatest extent possible by providing training to the business on anti-bribery and corruption.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p><i>reported within TRGL.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Number of breaches to anti-bribery and corruption legislation.</i> <i>Breaches of gifts and hospitality thresholds.</i> <i>Training on e-learning module (98% threshold).</i>
13.	<p>Advice/Questions</p> <p>If you are seeking advice in relation to anything in relation to this ABC Policy please contact Sara Shanab, Director of Governance and General Counsel.</p>		

Date:	25 March 2021
Subject:	Donations Policy
Author:	Paul Hillard
Sponsor:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Donations Policy
Action:	Decision
Data Class:	Public

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Association's new Rules require for the Association to have an appropriate Donations Policy in place.

The Association's solicitors have reviewed Group's Donations Policy and proposed amendments to take account of Scottish law requirements which have been agreed by Group and incorporated in the Policy presented.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to consider and agree the adoption of Group's revised Donations Policy.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Board, at its Special Board Meeting in June 2020, considered proposed Rule Changes. At this meeting, the Board noted and discussed the requirement for the Association to have in place an appropriate Donations Policy.
- 1.2 A Group-wide Donations Policy was developed by Group last year and its proposed adoption was considered by Board at its August 2020 Meeting. The Board deferred adoption of the Policy, pending clarification regarding to the legal and regulatory definition of fraud, and also if any specific stipulations required by Scottish law should be included within the Policy.
- 1.3 The Association's proposed Rule Changes were approved by Shareholders at the Special General Meeting in September 2020, which contained the following Rules in relation to donations:
 - 55. "... the Board may exercise the following powers:
h) *accept donations in support of the activities of the Association.*"
 - 78. b) *"The Board shall set and review periodically its policy for the donation of funds to charities. Such donations must further the objects of the Association and the Board shall report to the members of such donations."*
- 1.4 The previously presented Donations Policy has since been reviewed by the Association's solicitors and proposed amendments have been considered and agreed by Group. The revised Donations Policy is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration.

- 1.5 Having an appropriate Donations Policy in place, gives the Board and Staff clarity about the types of donations that the Association can give and receive, the associated decision-making processes and the information recording requirements for such donations. It also highlights the importance of ensuring that donations align with Group-wide values.
- 1.6 Further to approval of the Policy by Board, the Association will develop a procedure to ensure that details of all donations given and received are recorded in the Donations Register. Board's reporting requirement to members on all donations given, will also all be incorporated within this procedure.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Board is asked to consider and agree the adoption of Group's revised Donations Policy.



Transforming **lives**
Revitalising **neighbourhoods**



POLICY:	Donations Policy
Ref No:	
Date Approved:	
Approved By:	Executive Directors Meeting
Applicable to:	All employees, directors, board members officers, agency workers, seconded workers, volunteers, interns, involved tenants, agents, suppliers, contractors, external consultants, third-party representatives and business partners, sponsors, or any other person associated with us, wherever located of TRGL and any of its Affiliates/Subsidiaries.
Lead Director:	Director of Governance and General Counsel
In Consultation with:	Director of Internal Audit & Risk
Associated Procedures:	Board & Committee Member Code of Conduct Employee Code of Conduct
Associated Leaflet/s:	Not applicable
Review Date:	January 2023

Policy Reference:

Policy Version:

1.0



1. Purpose

- 1.1. The Riverside Group Limited (“**TRGL**”) supports and welcomes fundraising efforts to provide additional support to customers. From time to time, TRGL makes donations to reputable organisations that align with its values and ethos.
- 1.2. A fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure all donations paid or received on behalf of TRGL are consistent with TRGL code of conducts and ethical standards for both staff and board.
- 1.3. We have a duty to comply with prevailing legal and regulatory requirements. In the United Kingdom, the applicable laws and regulations include, but are not limited to:
 - The Fraud Act 2006 if applicable (England and Wales);
 - The Bribery Act 2010

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy sets out basic guiding principles to follow in relation to paying, receiving and handling donations. It applies to all parts of TRGL, including all subsidiaries and business streams and employees at all levels must comply with the requirements of this policy.
- 2.2. The policy aims to:
 - provide guidance and clarity on what type of donations TRGL can pay out or receive; and
 - highlight the reputational importance of ensuring donations align with TRGL’s values.

Policy Reference:		Policy Version:	1.0
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3. Principles

Types of donation

- 3.1. Types of donation, paid or received, can broadly be classified into two categories:
- Monetary donations: e.g. fundraising activities, bequests from wills, etc.
 - Non-financial donations: e.g. food, clothing, equipment, gift vouchers, etc.
- 3.2. Grants are deemed to be outside the scope of this policy.

General

- 3.3. Before commencing fundraising activities, any new fundraising activity should be reported to and approved by an Executive Director (or in the case of Irvine Housing Association the Irvine HA Managing Director). We should make it clear to donors how their donations will be used. If raising money for third parties, permission from that third party should be sought.
- 3.4. All fundraising materials issued by or on behalf of Irvine HA must include its Scottish charity number, full name and a reference to the fact that it is a charity. Irvine HA's complaints handling procedures should provide for fundraising complaints and all Irvine HA staff involved in any fundraising activity must be aware of such procedures.
- 3.5. Under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, Irvine HA has control over those who fundraise on its behalf. If Irvine HA engages a third party to carry out fundraising activities on its behalf, there must be a written agreement in place before any fundraising is carried out, which meets the requirements of the Charities and Benevolent Fundraising (Scotland) Regulations 2009.
- 3.6. Irvine HA's board is responsible for ensuring that any fundraising carried out by, or on behalf of, Irvine HA complies with all relevant laws and does not put Irvine HA or its reputation at unnecessary risk. This is in line with Board members' statutory duty under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 to act in the best interests of the charity and requires them to ensure that all funds raised are properly accounted for and donations are only spent on the purposes for which they were raised.
- 3.7. The donor or recipient of any donation must align with TRGL's values.
- 3.8. Donations must not be intended as an inducement either for the commercial benefit of TRGL or any third party with a business connection to TRGL.
- 3.9. A donations register of all donations received and made should be maintained. Data protection legislation must be complied with when using or collecting personal information from donors, including when advertising any fundraising activities by email or letter.
- 3.10. All monetary donations must be recorded in TRGL's financial systems.

Donations received

- 3.11. Donations must not be accepted from political parties or groups.

Policy Reference:		Policy Version:	1.0
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3.12. An acknowledgement receipt should be submitted to the donor, acknowledging the nature, value and date of donations received (monetary or non-monetary), with a copy receipt retained for audit purposes.

3.13. All donations should only be used for the approved purposes for which they were received.

Donations made by TRGL

3.14. TRGL is a charity and any donations, whilst rare, must be an effective way of using its resources to further its charitable purposes.

3.15. Donations must not be given to political parties or groups.

3.16. Monetary donations paid out should be in line with approved budgets.

3.17. All monetary donations made should be approved as follows:

- £1,000 or greater: approved by TRGL board.
- Less than £1,000: approved by an Executive Director or the Chief Executive.

Donations made by Irvine HA

3.18. Irvine HA is a charity and any donations made must further its charitable purposes.

3.19. Alongside Irvine HA's social housing-specific charitable purposes, donations may be made for any other purpose of object permitted under Section 24 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, which is charitable.

3.20. Monetary donations by Irvine HA should be approved as follows:

- £1,000 or greater: approved by Irvine HA board.
- Less than £1,000: approved by the Irvine HA Managing Director.

4. Further Information & Support

4.1. Further to the guidance set out in this policy, if in any doubt about the legitimacy of collecting, paying or handling donations on behalf of TRGL, please consult with your Senior Manager before proceeding.

Policy Reference:

Policy Version:

1.0



5. Roles and Responsibilities

Policy Owner

- writes the policy and ensures it remains up to date
- reviews the policy periodically, and in the event of significant change (e.g. legislative, regulatory, organisational, operational etc.)
- seeks approval / re-approval from the Policy Sponsor and relevant governance committee
- communicates the policy
- provides and/ delivers training as required
- ensures related guidance is aligned to the policy
- monitors compliance with the policy, including our legal and ethical obligations

Senior Managers

- ensure the policy is implemented
- ensure that staff within their area are appropriately trained
- ensure that impacted process owners undertake process reviews and make any necessary process changes to ensure alignment with this policy

Employees

- comply with the requirements of this policy



6. Risk Thresholds

Risk Appetite	Risk Thresholds	Risk Indicators
TRGL has no appetite to make or receive donations which might have an adverse reputational impact.	Zero instances of breach of the provisions of this Policy.	None. Donations register review

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

7.1. TRGL is committed to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. We strive to be fair in our dealings with all people, communities and organisations, taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and background and actively promoting inclusion. This policy aligns with TRGL’s [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment, which assessed the impact as neutral.



Date:	11 th March 2021
Subject:	Factoring Policy
Author:	Heather Anderson
Sponsor:	Paul Hillard
Appendices:	Yes
Action:	Approval
Data Class:	Public

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Association's current Factoring Policy was approved in 2015 and has been reviewed over the past month to ensure it continues to reflect statutory requirements and Good Practice guidance. The Association is a registered Property Factor for just over 800 privately owned properties, the majority of which are located across the Pennyburn estate in Kilwinning. The Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011 sets out three main requirements for Property Factors:

- Property Factors must be formally registered on the Scottish Government's Property Factor portal.
- They must comply with the Scottish Government's agreed Code of Conduct for Property Factors which sets out minimum standards of practice.
- They must comply with a new route of redress for owners via the Homeowner Housing Panel where an owner feels their Factor has failed to adhere to the above Code of Conduct.

The Association's original policy was based on the above legislative requirements. There has been no changes to the legislation since this time and there are no significant changes needed to the Association's existing policy or practices. The review has, however, highlighted the need to make the following amendments to ensure the continued improvement of the service:

- Set out more clearly in the Factoring Policy and associated Written Statement of Services issued to each owner, how essential Health and Safety communal repairs and maintenance will be addressed, and any additional works beyond the core factoring services.
- Amend the quarterly invoices to owners to include their current account balance.
- Implement a standard recovery process for outstanding arrears on owner accounts.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Board approves the revised Factoring Policy attached to this report as Appendix 1.

1 Background

As above.

2. Next Steps

Following approval by Board an updated Written Statement of Services will be issued to every factored owner and changes made to the quarterly invoices in conjunction with the central Rent and Service Charge Team. A standardised debt recovery process will be developed and implemented in conjunction with the Income Collection service. The revised Factoring Policy will be publicised on the Association's website.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that Board approves the revised Factoring Policy attached to this report as Appendix 1.



PROPERTY FACTORING POLICY

Date of Implementation: March 2021

1.0 Introduction

The requirement for Irvine Housing Association (“the Association”) to have a robust property factoring policy, arises from the increasing number of mixed-tenure developments, where the Association retains responsibility for the management, maintenance and repair of common areas of shared facilities and amenities. Examples of common areas, shared facilities and amenities include, without limitation, external walls and roofs of flatted developments, entrance foyers, communal landscaped areas and playgrounds.

The Head of Service Delivery retains overall responsibility for the delivery of an efficient and effective factoring service, with specific functioning being devolved to the relevant post-holders within the Association.

In the event of a conflict or inconsistency between this Policy and any Title Deeds or Deeds of Condition relative to a particular property or properties, the relevant Title Deeds or Deeds of Condition shall take precedence over the terms of this Poli

2.0 Policy Objectives

The Factoring Policy has several clear objectives, affecting both internal and external stakeholders.

These objectives are outlined as follows:

2.1 Financial Management

In order to exercise prudent financial management, the Association will, where cost effective or deemed appropriate to do so, seek to recover all sums due from the owners of privately owned properties. The introduction of a successful factoring service will reduce the financial burden experienced by the Association in maintaining communal areas.

2.2 Legal & Regulatory Compliance

Property Title Deeds and Deeds of Conditions relative to individual estates, will outline the process for the factoring of common areas and shared facilities.

The [Property Factors \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#) aims to protect homeowners by providing minimum standards for property factors. All provisions of the Act came into force on 1 October 2012 and apply to all residential property and land managers whether they are private sector businesses, local authorities or housing associations.

The Act has three main elements:

1. A [compulsory register](#) of all property factors operating in Scotland

2. A [code of conduct](#) that sets out minimum standards of practice with which all registered property factors must comply
3. A new route for redress: the [Homeowner Housing Panel](#). Homeowners will be able to apply to the panel if they believe that their factor has failed to comply with the code of conduct or otherwise failed to carry out their factoring duties.

The **Scottish Government's Social Housing Charter** came into force in April 2012. The Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that owners can expect from the property management services they receive from social landlords.

2.3 Customer Service

By actively encouraging input and feedback from all customers, it is anticipated that this will assist the Association in increased levels of service delivery satisfaction.

2.4 Life Cycle Maintenance

By recovering sums due from property owners, the Association will be able to maintain common areas and shared facilities in a pro-active manner, ensuring their continued future use.

3.0 Core Factoring Services To Be Provided

The obligation of our factoring services will be laid out in the Title Deeds or Deeds of Condition attached to the ownership of each home. Although the services provided will vary on each development, the anticipated scope of factoring services is likely to include:

- Arrange and administer the maintenance of any communal and amenity areas.
- Organise and administer day-to-day items of common repair and maintenance, for which owners are jointly responsible.
- Enter into contracts on behalf of the owners for the supply of goods and services.
- Where the Deeds require a common building insurance policy to be in effect, the Association will be responsible for sourcing the appropriate cover and administering the policy. In addition to the requirements for building insurance, it may be necessary to insure common areas such as shared car parking or landscaped areas.

- Handle correspondence and enquiries from individual owners, or their solicitors, in relation to matters arising from the day-to-day management of the development.
- Identification and implementation of planned works schedules required throughout the lifecycle of the development (eg. gutter cleaning and common area painting work).
- Meet contractors, representatives from insurance companies and local authorities.
- Correctly apportion, recharge and provide regular budgetary information to owners, on all costs associated with the management of the development's communal services.

4.0 Works Out-with Core Services

4.1 Improvement Works

The Association may carry out improvement works outwith the core services detailed above, if these are requested and agreed by all owners within the factored area. The cost of such works will be notified to all owners prior to the works taking place and divided accordingly as per individual owner Title Deeds. Irvine Housing Association will consult with homeowners and seek their individual agreement where individual bills for a specific project are estimated to be in excess of £150. It may be necessary under some circumstances to collect costs in advance to ensure a project can go ahead. Alternatively costs may be invoiced at set stages throughout the contract. This would be agreed with homeowners before any work commences.

4.2 Essential Health and Safety and Urgent Works

If essential Health and Safety or urgent repair works are required, Irvine Housing Association will endeavour to seek agreement from owners and consult with them prior to the works taking place. However, in some circumstances there may be insufficient time to consult fully with owners due to the urgent nature of the repair/works. In these situations the Association will arrange for these works to be carried out and will provide owners with the detail and cost of the works, individual recharge amounts, and why it was deemed urgent or essential, retrospectively in writing.

4.3 Planned and Cyclical Maintenance

The Association has in place cyclical planned maintenance programmes to ensure continued investment in our housing stock. These programmes may apply to communal works within our mixed tenure flatted developments, such as security door replacement or communal door, roof, and window renewal. The Association is required to carry out these maintenance programmes to ensure our housing stock complies with Scottish Government standards, such as the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. In these cases, all owners within the block will be notified of the detail and proposed costs in writing prior to the works taking place. An individual owner's contribution to

these works will reflect their individual property Title Deeds. If responsibilities are not set out in Title Deeds, the Association will refer to the Tenement (Scotland) Act 2004, and associated Tenement Management Scheme, which sets out that common repairs and maintenance works can progress if the majority of owners within the block give consent. In cases where the majority owner is the Association, we will ensure that costs to owners are minimised as far as possible, and that owners are notified of the details and costs of the works and provided with evidence of best value.

4.4 Quality of Works

In carrying out their obligations as factors, the Association is dedicated to operating the service using reasonable skill and care.

The Association retains a comprehensive list of preferred contractors, capable of carrying out a variety of trades. This list is tendered on a regular basis in accordance with the Association's Procurement Policy to ensure value for money is achieved, for the Association and the owners of the occupied properties. Contractors' performance is regularly monitored by the Association's maintenance staff to ensure that the quality of work is of a high standard and represents value for money. A list of contractors is available for inspection at the Association's offices.

All common areas and shared facilities will formally be inspected on a regular and agreed basis by the Association's staff and its representatives. By undertaking a programme of inspections, it will be possible to identify maintenance issues and monitor the delivery of the services being provided. The programme may be updated when inspection reveals a more rapid deterioration or it may be deferred should the fabric or component be wearing better than expected.

5.0 Recovery of Costs

Invoices and budget information will be issued to owners in accordance with the terms of the relevant Title Deeds and / or Deeds of Condition. The information provided to owners, will typically detail costs incurred/to be incurred under the following headings:

1. Buildings insurance premium.
2. Common landscaping maintenance.
3. Common area cleaning.
4. Communal area electricity and lighting costs.
5. One off repairs.
6. Factoring fee.
7. Any other outlays incurred by the Association on behalf of the owners.

A management fee will be charged for the provision of the factoring service, e.g.

1. staff time in inspecting and organising repairs, tendering, writing to owners, calling and attending meetings and maintaining adequate records.
2. administering the common buildings insurance policy, making claims, etc.

3. printing, postage and delivery of letters and newsletters.
4. Issuing invoices, maintaining accounts, monitoring and recovery of arrears.
5. liaising with solicitors in sales and re-sales and providing relevant information.
6. advertising for, maintaining and monitoring an approved contractors list

The Association will annually assess the costs of the management fee to ensure that the charges cover the expenditure incurred.

Invoices will be issued quarterly in July, October, January and April and prompt payment will be expected. However, in cases of genuine difficulty, or where the cost incurred is fairly substantial, the Association may authorise payment arrangements to suit individual circumstances.

The Association will offer various methods of paying factoring charges to suit individual preference, e.g., direct debit, cheque, standing order, debit card or allpay card. Owners may also pay more frequently than quarterly if they prefer.

All charges raised will be fully transparent. Should any owner be dissatisfied with the level of transparency demonstrated, further reasonable cost information may be requested from the Association.

Owners' liability in respect of the costs of common repairs and maintenance work will be determined in accordance with the terms of individual Title Deeds or Deeds of Condition. Should owners fail to meet their financial responsibilities, not only can it affect the progress of repairs, it can ultimately place an additional financial burden on neighbouring owners. Hence, the Association will actively pursue outstanding debts in a vigorous manner and will progress legal action where required.

Costs will be recharged on a pro-rata basis to all properties liable to pay a share of the upkeep, e.g. grass cutting, delimiting and general maintenance of common areas. The cost of the electrical supply for common services, e.g. stair-lighting will be recovered at cost on a pro-rata basis. This will apply to other common services such as, close-cleaning, controlled door entry systems, etc.

The Association will at all times seek to ensure that arrears are minimised and that outstanding debts are recovered. Accounts that remain unpaid may be subject to an additional recovery fee plus any legal fees incurred in recovering the debt.

From time-to-time it might be necessary to collect payment in advance of certain work being undertaken. In such instances, the Association will consult with the owners prior to instructing the work.

6.0 Insurance

Where the Title Deeds or Deeds of Conditions so require, the Association will arrange adequate buildings insurance to cover the reinstatement or repair of the common parts

forming part of the building, including site clearance charges and professional fees, in the event of fire, storm, flood or other insured perils. Cover will be arranged via a major insurance company, on terms which demonstrate best value in the Association's insurance tender exercises carried out from time to time and which will enable owners to benefit from economies of scale.

7.0 Change of Ownership

In the event of the property being sold, it is the owners responsibility to advise the factor of this. The seller's solicitor is legally obliged to provide contact details for the new owner and will generally liaise with the Association in reconciling the account.

8.0 Complaints Procedures

The Association undertake to deal with any complaint received, in a professional and timely manner and in keeping with the Association's complaints procedure.

By maintaining clear channels of communications, it is the intention of the Association to ensure that all matters of concern are addressed at the earliest possible opportunity.

Any owner wishing to make a complaint regarding any aspect of the factoring service will be provided with a copy of the Association's complaints procedure.

If any complaint remains unresolved the homeowner can take their claim to the The Homeowner Housing Panel . This is a new resolution panel which will look at any disputes an owner may have. Before making an application to the panel, homeowners just first notify their factor in writing and allow the factor an opportunity to resolve the matter.

9.0 Policy Review and Consultation

The Association will review the Factoring Policy on a regular basis and in response to new legislation, operational or organisational changes or industry best practice, which may affect content.

Date:	16th March 2020
Subject:	Policy Review Updates - Various
Author:	Heather Anderson
Sponsor:	Paul Hillard
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Void Management Policy Appendix 2 - Repairs and Maintenance Policy Appendix 3 - Rent Setting Policy Appendix 4 - Dumfries and Galloway Common Allocations Policy
Action:	Information
Data Class:	Public

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a result of the Covid pandemic, there are a number of policies which are now overdue for review, as per the Association's policy review schedule. In the past month the following policies have been reviewed to determine if any updates are needed:

- Void Management Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Rent Setting Policy
- Dumfries and Galloway Common Allocations Policy

For each policy, current practice and approach was reviewed against any changes in legislation, good practice, or service developments. Following this review it was concluded that no significant changes are needed to any of the above policies at the current time. The policy documents have been updated to reflect minor changes to job titles and review dates, and a copy of each policy is attached to this report as Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4 for information.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to note the review that has taken place of the above policies.

1 Background

As above.

2 Next steps

The Association will publicise the updated policies on our website and replace the previous versions.

3 Recommendations

Board is asked to note the review that has taken place of the Void Management, Repairs and Maintenance, Rent Setting, and D&G Common Allocations policies, and the updated policy documents attached to this report as Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4.



Void Management Policy

Effective Date: March 2021



Policy Statement

This policy reflects the Association's Corporate Plan 2020/23 which is to 'improve the quality of service delivered to our customers' and provide quality and sustainable homes.

Policy Aims

The Association is committed to the effective management of empty homes to maximize use of available housing stock and rental income, and to the creation of sustainable tenancies and neighbourhoods. Through our void management process we will aim to:

- Minimise the period that properties are vacant through performance management and efficient repair and re-letting procedures.
- Review all housing applications on a regular basis to ensure that information is kept up to date and applicants who no longer require housing are removed from the waiting list.
- Pre-allocate new build properties and re-lets (where the tenant has given Notice) as far as possible.
- Publish and regularly review our 'Safe, Clean and Clear' letting standard in consultation with customers.
- Ensure all properties meet the 'Safe, Clean and Clear' standard at point of let.
- Carry out all health and safety checks quickly and efficiently and to a high standard.
- Take every effort to allocate vacant adapted properties to applicants who have a need for this type of accommodation.
- React promptly, effectively and legally when properties have been abandoned.
- Implement an 'options appraisal' process where vacant properties require extensive repair work and there is no or little demand for the property.
- Ensure the security and safety of empty properties using cost effective methods appropriate to the level of assessed risk.

Policy Scope

This policy sets out how the Association will ensure the efficient management and letting of vacant properties which is a key function of the Association, both in terms of the efficient use of resources and ensuring they cause no security or nuisance problems for neighbours.

Quick turnover, i.e. the interval between the departure of one tenant and the arrival of the next, is highly desirable, but this must be balanced by the need to meet customer aspirations, let properties to an acceptable and safe standard, and the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods.

Legal and Regulatory Context

The Association will adhere to the following legislation and regulations when managing void properties:

- The Gas Safety Regulations 1998 which places a legal requirement on landlords to maintain gas installations within a properties in a safe condition (excludes installations or gas appliances fitted by the tenant).
- EU Directive 2002/91/EC (EPBD) which requires that an assessment of energy

performance is carried out and Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are issued to all new lettings.

- The Consumer Protection Act 1987 affects all persons who let property in the course of their business as it defines them as 'suppliers' i.e. supplying goods to tenants.
- British Standard 7671:2008 – Requirements for Electrical Installations which place an obligation on the Association to ensure all electrical circuits within the property are in a safe full operational condition.
- The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994: the General Product Safety Regulations 2005: the Plugs and Sockets etc. (Safety) Regulations 1994 which impose a duty on landlords to ensure that all electrical equipment supplied by them is safe for use by tenants.

The Association will also meet the requirements of:

- The Scottish Housing Regulator's Performance Standards
- Scottish Housing Quality Standards.
- Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Energy Performance of Buildings (Scotland) Regulations 2008

Our Void Standard

All vacant properties will meet our 'Safe, Clean and Clear' standard. This means that our properties will be in following condition at point of let:

- Compliant with the Tolerable Standard, as defined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- Clean kitchen and bathroom fittings.
- Operational windows and doors.
- Appropriate and up to date safety certification for gas and electrical installations.
- Fully operational water system including taps and stop cock valves.
- Safe to use doors, stair treads, floorboards, banisters and ancillary joinery fittings.
- Substantially intact plasterwork to walls and ceilings.
- Reasonable decorative order.
- Fit for purpose rainwater goods.
- Clear and safe to use access to the property.
- Removal of all internal and external belongings left by the former tenant.

Tenants who have carried out qualifying improvements will be eligible to claim compensation at the end of their tenancy in accordance with the Compensation for Improvement Scheme introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Void Repair Timescales

To ensure rent loss during any void period is minimized, the Association has in place agreed timescales for void repairs completions with contractors. These timescales in working days are defined as follows:

- One day void: Immediate re-let, 'Safe, Clean and Clear' only.
- Three day void: 'Safe, Clean and Clear and Enhancement works.
- Five day void; Extent of work cannot be undertaken within three days.
- Ten day void: Extent of work cannot be undertaken in 5 days.

Performance Reporting

Effective void management is key to minimizing rent loss, maximizing income to the Association and achieving positive outcomes for tenants.

Key performance indicators relating to void management will be recorded and monitored on a monthly basis. KPIs will change over time but will include some or all of the following:

- % of stock void and available for letting.
- Average re-let time in days.
- Void rent loss
- % of voids completed with target timescales.
- Tenant satisfaction with quality of the property at point of let.

In addition to key performance monitoring, regular contract monitoring meetings are held with all our external contractors to discuss performance against contractual obligations and quality of services.

Implementation

The void management process runs parallel to the process of allocating our properties to minimise the void period. Key parts of the process are as follows:

- Tenants will be advised of their obligations in terms of giving Notice to terminate a tenancy at the pre allocation and let day interviews.
- Tenants will be held to 28 days' notice unless an earlier mutually agreeable date can be found. Tenants may be charged additional rent if the keys are handed in late and the termination date will be amended accordingly.
- When a tenant gives notice to terminate a pre-termination inspection will be arranged and works ordered.
- Any work that can be carried out whilst the outgoing tenant is still in occupation, or after the new tenant has moved in will be identified and arranged.
- Identified staff will be given specific responsibility to ensure the effective processing of void properties and will receive appropriate training.

Equalities

This void management policy will be applied to all vacant properties and new and outgoing tenants irrespective of: race, gender, sexuality, age, culture, income, disability or belief. To ensure accessibility, services will, therefore, be tailored to meet customers' individual needs and information will be available in a wide variety of formats.

Contractors are required to demonstrate their commitment to promoting equality and diversity by ensuring they have equality and diversity policies in place and are able to deliver services in ways that are appropriate to their requirements.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains reflective of relevant legislation, guidance and good practice.



Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Effective Date: March 2021



Policy Statement

Irvine's Repairs and Maintenance Policy is to provide customers with homes that are in good condition, affordable, energy efficient, secure and comfortable. The primary aim of the policy is to maximise the lettable life of the property within the constraints of the available financial resources.

Policy Aims

The policy reflects Irvine's Corporate Plan 2020/23 which is 'to provide a reliable and high quality repairs service' to maintain quality and sustainable homes.

Irvine aims to provide its customers with homes that are in good condition, affordable, energy efficient, secure, and comfortable and that offer value for money.

It is acknowledged that maintenance of their homes is one of the most important services a customer receives. Also that having assets that are in good condition and well maintained is important to the financial strength of the business.

Irvine will, therefore, aim to provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to our tenants homes, factored properties, garages and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements 'right first time'.

Irvine will aim to adopt a prudent, planned approach to maintenance which demonstrates an appropriate balance of planned and responsive repairs and value for money. In doing so, Irvine will extend the useful life and use of its sustainable assets and provide a customer focused efficient maintenance service.

Irvine will NOT be liable for the repair of any items, if the repair is necessary because of an act of damage, neglect, misuse or any accidental damage by the tenant, his/her family or visitors to their home. Reinstatement work made necessary by unsatisfactory or unauthorised tenant improvements or alterations will also be assessed as rechargeable. (Refer to separate Recharge Policy)

Irvine will meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of occupants in their homes.

Policy Scope

This policy establishes processes and standards for both the responsive repair and planned investment in the Association's property assets to ensure our housing stock is maintained to the highest standards achievable.

In carrying out our repairs and maintenance responsibilities the Association will meet legal and contractual obligations both as a landlord and as a Factor through a comprehensive approach to asset management.

This policy covers the following aspects of repairs and maintenance services that include the following:

- Responsive Repair
- Gas Safety and Electrical testing
- Planned and cyclical maintenance and investment
- Change of use
- Disposal and Demolition
- Estate Management
- Aids and Adaptations
- Health and Safety
- New Build

Legal and Regulatory Requirements

There is an extensive legislative and contractual framework within which repair and maintenance activities operate and the Association strives to meet these standards at all times. In delivering our obligations we will adhere to:

- The Scottish Housing Regulator Performance Standards.
- The Scottish Housing Quality Standards
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Environmental Health Protection Act 1990
- Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2004
- Tenements Scotland Act 2004
- Procurement Regulations
- Right to Repair

Maintaining property also requires the Association to adhere to the following:

- Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (Regulation 4, 2002)
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Control of Legionella Regulations
- Current Building Standards
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Gas Safety regulations 1994
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Town and Country Planning Act (Scotland) 1997
- Current Fire Safety legislation

Performance Standards

To meet our repairs and maintenance objectives the Association will:

- Place customer requirements at the forefront of the service and regularly consult and involve customers in decision making processes.
- Offer an appointment service for routine repairs.
- Undertake responsive repairs in accordance with published priorities.
- Set clear performance targets that are regularly monitored.
- Publish repairs timescales.
- Carry out quality maintenance checks to monitor the standard of workmanship.
- Provide customers with a range of opportunities to feedback their views on the service.
- Implement compliant procurement processes to appoint contractors which prioritises best value and quality.
- Recharge customers for repairs which they or visitors to their property have caused (refer to Recharge Policy).
- Ensure that properties are maintained to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, (SHQS).
- Meet the standards of design and quality that applied when the home was built, and were required as a condition of publically funded grant assistance.
- Ensure a programme is in place for all properties to meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing from March 2020 (ESSH).

Performance Monitoring

Asset Management

- Monitoring progress of capital investment programmes and compliance with SHQS and ESSH.
- Monitoring of customer satisfaction survey responses in relation to planned investment works including adaptations.
- Budget monitoring of capital projects to minimize over or under spends.

Responsive Repairs

Contractor performance will be monitored on a monthly basis and the key performance indicators reported to Board monthly. A full Regional Report covering all operational performance related to Asset Management and Responsive Repairs will be produced on a quarterly basis. This report will include the following:

- Customer satisfaction
- Complaints
- Repairs completed within published timescales.
- Gas and electrical safety compliance.
- First Time Fix repairs.

Repairs and maintenance performance information will also be published through the Annual Return on the Charter landlord report.

Change of Property Use

Where housing stock has been assessed as no longer fit for purpose based on investment requirements and lack of demand an options appraisal process will be implemented to determine if the property could be re-modelled or upgraded to meet the needs of a different client group such as supported or adapted accommodation.

Stock Disposals and Demolition

Where an options appraisal has been carried out for a property that is no longer fit for purpose, and it is uneconomical to repair or re-model, demolition of the property or disposal on the open market will be considered.

Planned and Cyclical Maintenance

Planned and cyclical investment and maintenance programmes will be developed based on the following factors:

- Stock condition survey results and component life cycles for every property.
- Achieving efficiencies through 'packaging' of works on a geographical basis.
- Using an estimated 5 yearly cycle for external painting.
- Ensuring all gas serviced appliances are serviced on an annual basis.
- Servicing mechanical and engineering products (i.e stairlifts, lifts): fire alarms, emergency lighting systems, together with the control of Legionella will be undertake on a frequency consistent with statutory requirements or industry standards.
- Asbestos inspections.
- Fire Risk Assessments.

Responsive Repairs

Responsive repairs will be undertaken in accordance with the priorities published to our tenants and will be subject to performance monitoring on a monthly basis. The timescales for responsive repairs are as follows:

- P0 – **Health & Safety** – : Fire, gas leak; boiler fumes leak; water mains leak within property (or flat above); no power; burst radiator (not a minor leak); insecure property; blocked or broken WC (if only one in property); community alarm failure; smoke alarm failure; health & safety related matters.

Target Response Time: 4 hrs.

- P1 – **Emergency Repair**: Water leak; part power failure; leaking radiator (not a major leak); no hot water; faulty drainage; common stair lighting failure; major rain penetration through roof; safety related matters.

Target Response Time: 12 hrs

- P2 – (Urgent Priority), 5 working days (7 calendar) – General Works
- P15 – (Urgent Priority), 3 working days (5 calendar) – Gas

Appointable Repairs: All other non-Health & Safety and Emergency Repairs will normally be completed **within 28 working days**.

Responsive maintenance is carried out on an ad hoc daily basis to make safe or repair items which have failed unexpectedly.

Right to Repair

Right to repair covers a number of defined repairs identified under legislation, which if not completed within the target timescales allows the tenant to seek an alternative contractor and compensation may be payable for non-completion of the works. Our Right to Repair leaflet provides further information on applicable repairs and is available on our website.

Equality and Diversity

The Association's services are available to everyone who needs them, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, age, culture, income, disability or belief. To ensure accessibility, services will, therefore, be tailored to meet customers' individual needs and information will be available in a wide variety of formats.

Tenants who are particularly vulnerable due to age, disability or some other factor are identified and given a priority if their health or life is at risk from a failure of heating, power, water, or security.

Contractors are required to demonstrate their commitment to promoting equality and diversity by ensuring they have equality and diversity policies in place and are able to deliver repairs to all residents in ways that are appropriate to their requirements.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains reflective of relevant legislation, guidance and good practice.



Irvine
Housing
in Association with you

Rent Setting Policy

Date Effective: March 2021



Registered Scottish Charity No: SC042551

Purpose

The aim of the rent policy is to provide a set of principles to guide the setting and varying of rents (in residential properties) which meet legal, regulatory and best practice requirements.

The policy aims to balance the Association's need to maintain financial viability and well maintained, energy efficient homes; with the need to ensure that our rents remain affordable to our customers, many of whom have a low income.

The policy applies to all social tenancies and in particular:

- Scottish Secure Tenancies
- Short Scottish Secure Tenancies

The policy does not cover:

- Rents on non-residential properties
- Garages
- Service charges
- Properties leased to an organisation or let as supported accommodation

The policy is designed to clearly explain how Irvine Housing Association sets its rents. The policy sits alongside the Riverside Group's Rent Framework, which provides the context and framework for the setting and varying of rents across the Group in both England and Scotland, and the statutory and regulatory expectations that are applicable to us as a registered social landlord.

1. Guiding Principles

Irvine Housing Association will set and vary rents at levels which are designed to be affordable for tenants in our customer base, whilst maintaining sufficient income to ensure viability and deliver our charitable objectives. Rent setting will comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

The desired outcomes are:

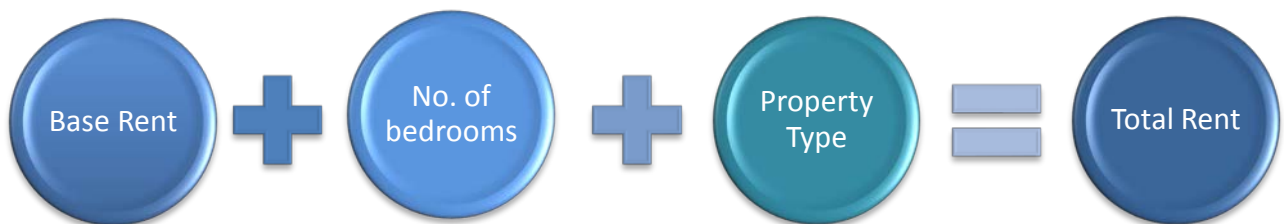
- **Legal and regulatory:** Both policy and practice will be within the law and will meet the standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- **Contractual compliance:** The setting and varying of rents must be consistent with the relevant clauses in the applicable tenancy agreements or leases, as well as any obligations arising from stock transfer and merger agreements.
- **Affordability:** Rents must be set at levels which:
 - are below market levels,
 - ensure low income, working households, have sufficient income to live on without creating undue dependence on benefits to meet housing costs.

- take account of the operation of the benefit system by ensuring that benefits will cover eligible housing costs for the majority of households entitled to state support.
- **Viability:** Rents will be set and varied to ensure the rental income stream is sufficient to support financial viability and allow the delivery of our charitable objectives.
- **Consultation:** This policy has been carefully developed over a period of time, to allow us to provide our customers with a number of opportunities to engage with us and shape the principles of our new rent setting policy, using a variety of methods to encourage participation and feedback.
- **Promotion of Equality:** This policy will be applied equally to all tenants regardless of their ethnic or social grouping. It will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the groups with protected characteristics in relation to equality of opportunity.

This policy conforms to our Equality Diversity & Inclusion policy and has been subject to an Equality Impact Analysis.

2. Rent Structure

The new structure uses the following formula:



The base rent was calculated using the lower quartile weighted average of all of the Association’s current rents, to ensure that the final rent would be affordable.

Properties with two bedrooms or more have a supplementary charge added to the base rent for each additional bedroom. Likewise, all properties except flats (tenements and four-in-a-block) carry an additional charge to reflect the relative demand for each property type.

Below are three worked examples using a notional base rent of £100 per week:

- A one bedroom flat £100 + £0 + £0 = £100
- A two bedroom bungalow £100 + £10 + £5 = £115
- A three bedroom terrace £100 + £15 + £7.50 = £122.50

3. Variations to the policy

For new build properties, we will apply the same policy, but take account of the funding rules pertinent to the scheme, and also the benefits to the tenant of occupying a new build property. This may result in a new build supplement being applied to the rent for the first 10 years of the property's life.

Where it is evident from verified statistical information that specific property types or properties within a specific designated area have a rent charge that is not in keeping with local market drivers, the Board will be asked to decide if the rent should be varied. A variation of this nature could be achieved through the use of a Local Lettings Initiative.

4. Annual Rent Setting

The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement makes provision for an increase in rent and service charges, following a period of consultation and the appropriate notification of the increase to the tenant. A rent increase should not usually occur more than once in a 12 month period.

Each year a rent increase proposal is put forward based on the business plan, which is updated annually, to ensure that it meets the needs of the business. This proposal forms the basis of an annual consultation with customers, the outcome of which the Board considers along with the business plan when deciding what increase to apply.

Tenants moving into properties let after the Board have made their decision, will, wherever possible, be charged the rent and service charge for the forthcoming year to avoid a change to their rent and service charge early in their tenancy.

5. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required, for example, if there is a change to the legislation or regulatory requirements.



Common Allocation Policy



Name of Policy	Common Allocation Policy
Date review approved:	22 nd August 2017
Implemented:	4 th September 2017
Date of next formal review:	August 2020

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Homes4D&G Common Allocation Policy has been developed as part of the Dumfries and Galloway Common Housing Register (referred to in this policy as “CHR”). The CHR is a computer based single waiting list which four social landlords use to register applicants for housing. It is designed to make it easier and quicker for you to apply for housing by filling in only one application form. Each of the Homes4D&G landlords will use this form to register you on the waiting list and share your details with the other landlords.

This Common Allocation Policy was developed by Homes4D&G, which is a partnership between Dumfries and Galloway Council and four Registered Social Landlords working in Dumfries and Galloway. They are:

- Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership (DGHP);
- Home Scotland;
- Irvine Housing Association; and
- Cunninghame Housing Association – currently has no housing stock in D&G, however new build accommodation will be available 2018/19

Loreburn Housing Association, one of the original RSL partners, left the Homes4D&G Partnership on 9th October, 2017.

As it no longer owns or manages any social housing, the role of Dumfries and Galloway Council is to provide leadership in the way the Common Allocation Policy is developed and managed by Homes 4 D&G partners, and to ensure that the policy is a good fit to local strategy on housing, homelessness and social care.

Homes4D&G partners are referred to as “we” or “the partners” throughout this document. This Common Allocation Policy tells you:

- how to apply for social housing with any Homes4D&G landlord;
- how we will assess your application based on the extent and nature of the housing need you are in; and
- how we allocate available homes to meet the needs of housing applicants on the Common Housing Register.

The Common Allocation Policy uses a group plus points system to allocate properties which become available to meet housing need.

The Common Allocation Policy was developed in consultation with housing applicants, tenants, Homes4D&G partners and other stakeholders including the Council’s Housing and Social Work Services and NHS Dumfries and Galloway. The Common Allocation Policy is designed to meet the legal and regulatory standards that guide how Homes 4 D&G partners should work.

There are not enough affordable homes in Dumfries and Galloway to help everyone who applies for housing in the area.

We therefore want to make sure that the Common Allocation Policy allows us to assess the needs of each applicant and to allocate homes in a fair and consistent way, so that available properties are let to those in greatest need.

We also want to make sure that if you apply for housing you can access advice and information on all the housing options available to you, so that you can make informed choices and maximise your opportunities of finding the right home.

1.2 Legal Requirements & Good Practice

All Homes 4 D&G partner landlords are registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator as Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). RSLs are independent housing organisations. As the organisation responsible for statutory homelessness services, Dumfries and Galloway Council is also regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

This policy was developed in line with good practice from the Scottish Government, the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and the Chartered Institute of Housing. By taking account of good practice, we have made sure that our policy is fair and gives reasonable preference to those in housing need. This policy is also compliant with, and takes account of, the following Scottish and UK legislation on housing:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987;
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001;
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006;
- Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003; and
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993.

In addition, the policy protects the rights of individual applicants by meeting the legal requirements set out in:

- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Data Protection Act 1998;
- Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981;
- Children Scotland Act 1995;
- Civil Partnership Act 2004;
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
- Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005;
- Equality Act 2010; and
- Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

Appendix 1 provides more information on the rights of housing applicants and how the policy should be managed to meet the requirements of the legislation set out above.

1.3 The Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Housing Regulator uses the outcomes and standards in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) to assess the performance of social landlords. The outcomes and standards that have been considered in the development of the Common Allocation Policy are outlined below:

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;

Outcomes 7, 8 and 9 reflect landlords' duties to provide information and advice to people looking for housing or those at risk of becoming homeless. These duties include helping tenants and people on housing lists to review their options to move within the social housing sector or to another sector.

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.

Outcome 10 covers what social landlords can do to make it easy for people to apply for the widest choice of social housing that is available and suitable and that meets their needs. It includes actions that social landlords can take on their own and in partnership with others, for example through Common Housing Registers or mutual exchange schemes, or through local information and advice schemes.

1.4 Customer Service Standards

Homes4D&G partners want to ensure that all applicants are satisfied with the quality of service they receive throughout the housing application and allocation process. As partners, we are committed to:

- delivering our services in a fair, open and accountable way;
- treating all of our customers equally and with courtesy and respect;
- recognising your individual needs when we communicate with you;
- being efficient, effective and timely when dealing with housing applications and allocations;

- ensuring that it is easy for you to communicate with us and to ask questions about any application or allocation decision that might affect you;
- providing information and advice that is accurate, useful and available to all;
- taking both your needs and aspirations into account and offering honest and realistic advice on housing options;
- handling the personal information you give us with due care, treating it as confidential; and
- seeking your written consent if we need to get any further information about your needs or circumstances.

1.5 Common Allocation Policy Statement

The purpose of this Common Allocation Policy is to set out a framework to allocate the limited number of homes that become available each year in a consistent way. Our guiding principles are:

1. To allow easy access to social housing within Dumfries and Galloway;
2. To ensure a consistent approach to assessing housing need;
3. To allocate all properties fairly based on housing need priority;
4. To take into account your needs and preferences; and
5. To ensure we meet all our legal obligations.

1.6 Our Policy Objectives

Homes4D&G partners have agreed seven policy objectives that set out clearly what we want the Common Allocation Policy to achieve. These objectives will guide how we will operate the policy and how we will measure if it works effectively. The objectives are:

1. To identify and prioritise people in housing need whilst making best use of housing stock

Because we do not have enough housing to meet the needs of every housing applicant in Dumfries & Galloway, our common allocation policy is based on a clear framework where we prioritise people who are in most need of housing. This framework meets the legal responsibilities placed upon us when we are allocating housing (as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and 2001). The legislation identifies specific groups that we must give reasonable preference to including:

- People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness (including those at risk of harassment or abuse);
- People living in overcrowded housing;
- People living under unsatisfactory housing conditions, e.g. people whose homes are unsuitable because they are below the tolerable standard or because the physical layout is unsuitable for health or disability reasons;

2. To respond quickly to people in acute and urgent housing need

In order to deal with emergency situations and to prevent a housing crisis whenever possible, the policy will give priority for early rehousing to those who have an urgent or acute housing need. These circumstances could include urgent rehousing to enable someone to leave hospital or an emergency homelessness case.

3. To provide support to those who need help to find and keep a home

As partners, we are committed to making sure that you will have the opportunity to access the help and support you need to find a suitable property and to live in your new home independently and successfully.

We will work in partnership with agencies such as the NHS, Social Work Services and other support providers to ensure that support needs are identified and an appropriate support package put in place.

4. To build and maintain sustainable communities

The policy aims to build and maintain sustainable communities where people will choose to live. By doing this, we hope to reduce tenancy failures, avoid empty homes and improve the way we manage our homes.

5. To prevent and respond to homelessness

As partners, we are firmly committed to preventing homelessness and to responding quickly to resolve homelessness where it occurs. We will be proactive in providing suitable housing in a reasonable timescale to those experiencing homelessness.

6. To provide high quality housing advice and information

We want to make sure that you have enough information and advice about your housing options to make informed decisions when you are applying for housing. Partners are committed to providing easily accessible, high quality housing advice and information to all applicants, in order to make it as easy as possible to find a suitable home in Dumfries & Galloway.

7. To develop a housing options approach to meeting the needs of housing applicants

As partners, we are committed to doing all we can to help you apply for housing and provide advice and practical assistance to meet your individual housing needs.

2 APPLYING FOR HOUSING

2.1 Who Can Apply

Any person who is aged 16 or more can make an application for housing on the Common Housing Register in Dumfries & Galloway. This does not mean, however, that every applicant has an automatic right to receive an offer of housing. Section 7.1 explains how we prioritise applications to meet our legal responsibilities in a fair and consistent way.

In order to be admitted to the CHR, all applicants are asked to complete a housing application form. This can be obtained by contacting any of our housing offices:

- in person;
- by phone;
- by post; or
- by downloading an application form, from our websites.

The contact details for each partner can be found in Section 12 of this policy. Our information leaflet “Helping You Find a Home” explains what information we need from you when completing your application for housing. By completing an application we can gather information on your personal and housing circumstances, as well as your preferences on where you would like to live and the type of property you would like to live in. Staff from each partner organisation will be available to provide assistance with completing your application form if you ask for help. Information and advice which recognises your individual needs will also be available to help you make informed choices that maximise your opportunities for rehousing.

In line with our commitment to make services easily and equally accessible to all housing applicants, we can also provide an interpreter service if you are hearing or visually impaired or if your first language is not English.

In order to assess an application properly, it is important for us to have accurate and up to date information on your circumstances. You must keep your application up to date by notifying us of any change as soon as it occurs.

If an applicant deliberately provides false or misleading information they will be suspended from the CHR. Any offers of housing that have been made will be withdrawn. If a tenancy is granted on the basis of false information, partners could take action to end the tenancy.

2.2 Admission to the Common Housing Register

Our target for assessing completed application forms is **ten** working days from the date that you submit the form. You will then be sent written confirmation of your housing application details including the number of points you have been awarded.

If you do not give us enough information you may have your assessment delayed. This is because we cannot process your application or award all the points you may qualify for until we receive all the relevant information.

If required, we may request additional information from you to assess your application. However, we will not ask you to provide information where there is a significant financial cost attached to obtaining it.

2.3 Housing Groups

The Common Allocation Policy is based on a group plus points scheme. This means that you will be placed in the group that is most relevant to your circumstances and, where applicable, awarded points based on your current living arrangements.

When we register your application for housing we will assess your circumstances in accordance with this policy and place your application into one of the following housing groups:

Groups	Who this category covers	How we decide who has priority for re-housing
Homeless	This group includes applicants who have been assessed as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unintentionally homeless and in priority need (under Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and 2001 Act); threatened with homelessness; and/or vulnerable and in urgent housing need 	These applications are held in date order because of the exceptionally urgent circumstances involved Applications will be held according to the date of their initial homeless presentation
Transfer Applicants	Tenants of Homes4D&G partner landlords (RSLs) living in Dumfries & Galloway who apply to move to an alternative property	These applications will be held in order of the number of points awarded under the Homes4D&G point system
Waiting List	All other housing applicants who do not qualify in one of the other groups	Full details of the points scoring system is available in Appendix 2
Extenuating Circumstances	Cases identified by one of the partner landlords and approved by Homes4D&G Board	These applications are held in date order by the date the decision was made to award this priority

2.4 Annual Lettings Plan

The Annual Lettings Plan sets out in advance how Homes4D&G partners intend to allocate homes in a way that meet the objectives of the Common Allocation Policy. This is to ensure that housing is allocated to those in greatest housing need and to make the best use of the housing stock that becomes available. We will publish a target for the number of housing allocations we intend to make to each group every year. This target will be used to help us measure our performance and to make sure we are open and accountable about the way we meet the needs of each group of housing applicants.

The Annual Lettings Plan will be prepared by Dumfries & Galloway Council and agreed by Homes 4 D&G partners. The Annual Lettings Plan will set out a percentage target for each of the three housing groups. This target will be set by considering:

- our legal responsibilities to those in urgent or acute need (such as homeless applicants or those that we need to give reasonable preference to);
- our policy objectives which include:
 - making the best use of the housing stock that become available;
 - creating balanced and sustainable communities;
 - promoting tenancy sustainment; and
- the profile of housing stock that normally becomes available based on recent turnover patterns by house size, type and area.

The targets set for 2017/18 reflect strategic and statutory priorities rather than historic trends. This is because the Common Allocation Policy operates in a different way to the previous policies and procedures of individual partners. The agreed targets for the 2017/18 Annual Lettings Plan are as follows:

Group 1	Homeless Group	40%
Group 2	Transfer	Each RSL to determine their own % lets to each group totaling 50%
Group 3	Waiting list	
	Priority Cases	10%

There will be a separate Annual Lettings Plan for any new build development projects. The agreed targets for the 2017/18 New Build Annual Lettings Plan are as follows:

Group 1	Homeless Group	25%
Group 2	Transfer	Each RSL to determine their own % lets to each group totaling 65%
Group 3	Waiting list	
	Priority Cases	10%

Homes4D&G partners will work collaboratively to monitor the outcomes of all partners' lettings against the targets set in the Annual Lettings Plan. Our performance against the plan will be published on the Homes4D&G website on a quarterly basis.

There will be a process of review in March of each year, led by the Council, to propose any changes to Annual Lettings Plan targets. This review will analyse the number of applicants who need and demand housing across Dumfries & Galloway in comparison to the supply of housing available. We will make sure that we can continue to meet applicant housing needs and that the policy is capable of delivering its objectives based on the targets we set. The Common Allocation Policy will be updated annually to reflect any changes to the Annual Lettings Plan targets.

Where particular pockets of low demand or other local issues are evidenced, a Local Lettings Initiative can be introduced which varies the % targets for each priority housing group. Local Lettings Initiatives will be agreed through the CHR Project Group. More information on Local Lettings Initiatives can be found in Section 9.2.

2.5 Our Commitment to Housing Options

Homes4D&G partners are committed to developing a proactive Housing Options Service across Dumfries & Galloway. Our vision for housing options is that if you are seeking housing you will receive effective, consistent and proactive advice and assistance to prevent homelessness, sustain existing housing and access suitable accommodation.

Housing Options:-

- is a process which starts with advice when someone approaches services with a housing problem;
- looks at individual options and choices in the widest sense;
- prioritises early action and explores all tenure options;
- acknowledges that support and assistance can cover personal circumstances; and
- encourages partnership working with other services to assist households from an early stage to avoid housing crisis.

2.6 Our Commitment to Providing Quality Information & Advice

Homes4D&G partners are committed to providing you with good quality information and advice on housing options in the Dumfries & Galloway area, and will help you get access to independent advice and information if you need it.

We have a team of trained customer advisors who can give you advice on how to apply for housing by contacting Homes4 D&G. Our advisors will make sure that you have enough information and advice about your housing options to make the right decision. When you are applying for housing, we will give you information on:

- how to apply for housing and how we will deal with your application;
- how long it will take to process and decide on your application;
- what proof you must provide with your application;
- your realistic chances of being offered a house in the area you want; and

- your other housing options and where to get more advice.

However, if you need to speak to one of our advisors about your housing circumstances in person or to a specific Homes4D&G landlord, we will arrange a confidential housing options interview with a trained member of staff. Our customer advisors will treat you sensitively and fairly. You can ask for information, advice and support with your housing options at any time. If you want, you can have a relative, friend or adviser with you at the meeting. Meetings will be held in private rooms wherever possible and all information will be held confidentially.

Only a small number of homes become available for housing applicants across Dumfries & Galloway each year.

This means that not everyone who applies for housing will get an offer of housing. Some applicants, especially those who choose more popular areas and house types, may wait a long time before they get an offer of housing.

You will get good quality housing information and advice from our customer advisors and the advice we give you will be realistic. We will give you information about where we have housing, how long it takes to get housing and whether we are able to provide the housing you need. You can get information about alternative housing options such as owner-occupation and opportunities for renting in the private rented sector.

We will make sure that you have clear information on your rights to make a housing application and to have your housing needs fully assessed as a result of this application. Although we will give you realistic advice to maximise your opportunities for finding the right home for you, we will never discourage you from making a housing application if this is what you want to do.

We will make sure that we give you clear information and advice in a format which meets your needs. All written information will be simple, easy to understand and in plain English. If you need us to, we can also give you information and advice in different languages and formats (for example, in large print or in Braille).

2.7 Our Commitment to Providing Support when You Need It

If you have support needs (for example, if you need help managing your tenancy) you must tell us when you apply. Telling us about your housing and support needs helps us to understand your circumstances and lets us give you better advice on your housing options.

We want to make sure that you can move into your home and live in it safely, whilst making sure you do not break any conditions of your tenancy. If you have a support need and we offer you a property, we will make sure where possible that the support you need is in place before you move in.

If you are unintentionally homeless and apply to Dumfries & Galloway Council for help, the Council has a legal responsibility to make sure that a support assessment is carried out where there is a reason to believe that you need housing support (Section 32B of the 1987 Act amended by Housing (Scotland) Act 2010). The Housing Support Services Regulations 2012 set out the type of assistance the Council must make available if you have support needs including:

- advising or assisting a person with personal budgeting, debt counselling or in dealing with welfare benefit claims;
- assisting a person to engage with individuals, professionals or other agencies with an interest in that person's welfare;
- advising or assisting a person in understanding and managing their tenancy rights and responsibilities; and
- advising or assisting a person in settling into a new tenancy.

3. TYPES OF HOUSING AND AREAS WHERE YOU WANT TO LIVE

3.1 Applicant Choice

When you make an application for housing you will be able to choose:

- the Homes4D&G partner(s) that you would prefer to be your landlord(s);
- the areas that you would most like to live in; and
- the property types that you would most like to live in.

We will not put any limits on the number of areas that you can choose, however your choices of property type and location may be affected by specific issues or circumstances. Examples of where your choices could be restricted include:

- if you have a medical recommendation/requirement for a specific type of property;
- if an anti-social behaviour order may prohibit you from accessing a particular area; and
- the availability of the remaining housing stock in the area.

We will provide you with clear information about the stock held by all four Homes4D&G partners, so that you can make informed choices when selecting your preferred areas that maximise your opportunities for rehousing.

Not every Homes4D&G partner has sheltered, amenity or adapted housing within their stock. We will make sure this information is clear when you are making application choices.

3.2 House Size (Number of Bedrooms)

We will register your application on the housing list according to the type and size of property that you require. This helps us to make sure that each property is let to an applicant that will make the best use of the stock that becomes available.

We will work out the number of bedrooms that you require using the following criteria, based on who will be living permanently with you in the household:-

- no more than two people should have to share a bedroom;
- one bedroom for couples/partners;
- one bedroom for single adults/single parents;
- one bedroom for two children of different sex up to 8 years old;
- one bedroom for two children of the same sex up to 12 years old; and
- one bedroom for each child of 12 years or over.

We will make common sense exceptions to these rules, depending on individual circumstances. For example:-

- if you require an additional bedroom on medical grounds;
- if you provide foster care, or have been pre-approved to provide foster care or to adopt children;

- if you have access to children who do not reside with you on a full time basis;
- if you, or a member of your household, is pregnant and can provide us with proof of pregnancy from someone independent like a doctor or midwife.
- If there is waiting list pressure for certain size of property in certain areas

We will ask you to provide further information in support of your application, if you require larger accommodation than we would normally allocate within the Common Allocation Policy.

Please note that our size criteria for allocating homes are not based on the regulations set by the Department for Work and Pensions. This means that you may not get housing benefit to cover any additional bedrooms if you are offered or apply for, if this is more than you require. Regulations set by the Department for Work and Pensions state that each of the following are entitled to one bedroom:

- a couple;
- anyone aged 16 or over;
- any two children under 10 years of age; and
- any two children of the same sex under 16 years of age.

As part of our commitment to providing quality advice and information, prior to making any offer of a tenancy; we will notify you if you will be under-occupying the property and therefore liable for the under occupation charge. This will allow you to make an informed choice about whether you want to proceed with the tenancy.

3.3 Sheltered Housing

Sheltered housing properties allow older people to retain a high degree of independence within their home. You can make an application for sheltered housing if:-

- you are over 60;
- you have a current medical, social, safety or particular housing need that could be met by sheltered housing; or
- sheltered housing would benefit you in the future

If you live alone or as part of a couple, you are eligible to make an application for sheltered housing. In the case of couples, only one of the applicants needs to meet the criteria listed above.

Sheltered housing is not restricted to over 60's and Homes 4 D&G partners recognise that, in some cases, there are people of all ages who would benefit from this type of housing. If you make an application for sheltered housing, the Homes 4 D&G Registration Team will assess whether this housing is suitable for you.

3.4 Adapted Property

Adapted properties include houses purposely built for disabled people as well as homes that have been significantly adapted.

If you require a specifically adapted property because you have a particular health need or a disability, we will make a referral to D&G Council Occupational Therapist to make sure that a full needs assessment is undertaken.

When allocating adapted housing, the applicant's suitability for the property will be the determining factor so it is important that we fully understand the type of property you need.

There may be instances where it is not possible to find a suitable applicant for a particular adapted property. In these circumstances, it may be necessary to remove the adaptation in order to re-let the property.

It can be also be difficult to find properties to suit every need and applicants who require specifically adapted accommodation may have a long time to wait. Applicants should consider all other housing options and not just rely on social housing being able to meet this need.

4. HOMELESS GROUP

Our policy objective to “*prevent and respond to homelessness*” means that we will target our resources to try and prevent homeless situations before they arise. We want to provide you with good quality information and advice on the range of housing and support options available to help you make informed choices and good decisions about how to meet your housing needs.

If you believe that you may be at risk of losing your home, you should contact Dumfries & Galloway Council or one of our Homes4D&G customer advisors as soon as possible to discuss your housing options. This means that our housing advisors can give you advice on the range of housing options in your area, as well as giving you guidance on support available to help you continue to live in your current home. The contact details you need are listed in Section 12 and 13 of this policy.

However, after reviewing your housing options, you may decide the best option for you is to apply for alternative housing under the Council’s homeless assessment procedures. If the Council finds that you are ‘unintentionally homeless’, it means that you are homeless through no fault of your own and because of your circumstances, you will be offered accommodation by one of the Homes4D&G partners. If this is the case, your application will be placed into the Homeless Needs Group. If you are in this group, we will prioritise your application based on the date which you applied for a homelessness assessment.

At least 40% of all our housing allocations are made to this group. The 40% target we have set for the Homeless Group in the Annual Lettings Plan reflects the legal responsibilities that we have to meeting the needs of homeless applicants, as well as our policy objective ‘*to respond to homelessness when it occurs*’.

More information about the rights of homelessness applicants as set out in Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the legal responsibilities held by Homes4D&G partners is available in Appendix 1 to this policy.

In responding to homeless referrals, we will offer accommodation that meets the needs of the applicant as soon as a suitable property becomes available. If more than one homeless applicant has an equal need for a property, we will offer the property in date order, based on the date of the homeless application.

We will take positive action to make sure that homeless applicants are treated fairly when we make an offer of rehousing. We will do this by:-

- working with the Council and the applicant, to clearly identify the needs of the household (for example, in relation to the size of the house; its closeness to support networks and/or places of employment or education; as well as considering any medical, support or social needs);
- matching our offer, as far as we possibly can, to the applicant’s needs and preferences;
- making further offers, if the Council upholds an appeal about the suitability of the original offer; and

- monitoring the housing outcomes for homeless applicants to ensure that they are receiving equal access to all of our house types and locations.

If your application qualifies to be registered in the Homelessness Needs Group we will make you one reasonable offer of accommodation.

If you refuse the offer we make, this will normally result in priority being withdrawn and your application will be removed from the Homelessness Needs Group. You will be entitled to register in one of the other housing groups, for example Waiting List or Transfer List where your needs will be considered under the point scheme.

5. WAITING LIST AND TRANSFER APPLICANTS

Most applicants will be placed in one of these groups:-

Waiting list applicants are applicants who want to move into the social housing sector. This group also includes applicants who are tenants of one of the Homes4D&G partners but do not currently live in Dumfries & Galloway.

Transfer applicants are current tenants of Homes4D&G landlords who live in Dumfries and Galloway and want to move to a new home.

The housing needs of applicants in the Waiting List or Transfer List Groups will be fully assessed and we will award points depending on your personal circumstances and current housing situation. The full Homes4D&G point system is shown in Appendix 2.

If applicants in either the Waiting List or Transfer List groups share the same number of points, applications will be prioritised based on date of application. This means that if two applicants have the same number of points, the applicant who registered first will be given greater priority, if a suitable property becomes available.

Waiting List and Transfer Applicant Points Categories

When you apply for housing, you receive a certain number of points based on your current housing circumstances. We award points for eight main reasons including:-

- overcrowding;
- under-occupation;
- below tolerable standard;
- insecure tenure;
- medical needs;
- sharing facilities;
- providing or receiving help to live independently; and
- living in flats.

Within the points system, you can usually receive points in every category that applies to you. For example, if you are in an overcrowded property or you are sharing facilities with someone who is not part of your household you would receive points for all of these circumstances. We will assess whether you qualify for these points using the detailed guidelines set out below.

5.1.1. Overcrowding

You will receive points for overcrowding if you have fewer bedrooms in your current home than we assess your household to need. You will be awarded points for every bedroom that you have too short. We will work out the number of bedrooms you need using the following criteria:-

- no more than two people should have to share a bedroom;

- one bedroom for couples/partners;
- one bedroom for single adults/single parents;
- one bedroom for two children of different sex up to 8 years old;
- one bedroom for two children of the same sex up to 12 years old; and
- one bedroom for each child of 12 years or over.

If you have a box room in your current accommodation, we will count this as a bedroom if the room has a window and there is space to fit and use a single bed, a small wardrobe and a small chest of drawers.

If you wish to be considered for the same size of accommodation that you are currently residing in, we will not award overcrowding points to your application.

Equally, we will not award overcrowding points to your application if you overcrowd your current property by moving people into your home that will not be part of your household when you move.

5.1.2. Under-Occupation

We will award points to your application for under-occupation if

- Your accommodation is too large for your current requirements and you want to downsize. If you wish to be considered for the same size of accommodation that you are currently residing in, we will not award under-occupation points to your application.

5.1.3. Below Tolerable Standard

We will award points to your housing application if your property is significantly below the tolerable standard. This means the condition of your home falls below the minimum standard set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the 2001 and 2006 Housing (Scotland) Acts. It means that your accommodation is not in a good enough condition for you to live in (for example, if your property has no hot or cold running water, mains electricity or it is structurally unstable).

The tolerable standard consists of a set of criteria covering the parts of a property which are essential to its functioning as a healthy, comfortable and safe home. The tolerable standard focuses on the building itself, and does not extend to internal decoration, heating systems or other amenities in the house. The tolerable standard applies to houses of all tenures, which means that it applies in private sector housing as well as social housing.

A house meets the tolerable standard if it:

- is structurally stable;
- is substantially free from rising or penetrating damp;
- has satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and for heating;
- has satisfactory thermal insulation;
- has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water available within the house;

- has a sink provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water within the house;
- has a water closet or waterless closet available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the house and suitably located within the house;
- has a fixed bath or shower and a wash-hand basin, each provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water and suitably located within the house;
- has an effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water;
- in the case of a house having a supply of electricity, complies with the relevant requirements in relation to the electrical installations for the purposes of that supply:
 - “the electrical installation” is the electrical wiring and associated components and fittings, but excludes equipment and appliances;
 - “the relevant requirements” are that the electrical installation is adequate and safe to use
- has satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food within the house; and
- has satisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings.

A property is below the tolerable standard if it fails to meet any one of the elements of the tolerable standard, as defined above. If your current accommodation is in very poor condition you must tell us when you make an application for housing. We will then contact you and arrange for a property inspection to be carried out so that we can assess whether or not the property fails the standard. If it does, we will add points to your housing application.

5.1.4. Living in Accommodation which is Not Secure

This category covers situations where we will add points to your housing application if you are at risk of losing your current accommodation through no fault of your own, i.e. you are not at risk of losing your home as a result your behaviour (e.g. breaching the terms of your tenancy agreement, failing to pay your rent or mortgage, anti-social behaviour). There are three levels of points that can be awarded under this category as follows:

- Short Assured Tenancy: you will be awarded points if you currently live in private rented sector accommodation and have a Short Assured Tenancy;
- Notice to Quit: you will be awarded points if you have been served with a valid Notice to Quit from your landlord to end a Short Assured Tenancy, through no fault of your own (e.g. your landlord wants to sell the property);
- Tied tenancy: you will be awarded points if you currently live in accommodation provided by your employers and you require to leave this as a result of retirement or redundancy.
- You are no fixed abode (NFA)
- You are living in a caravan

5.1.5. Medical Priority

If your health or the health of someone in your household is affected by your current accommodation, you will be asked to complete a 'Medical Housing Assessment Form' which will be assessed by the Homes 4 D&G Registration Team.

We will add points to your application if this assessment confirms that your current home is unsuitable, the extent to which your home is unsuitable and whether the property could reasonably be adapted to meet your needs.

The focus of the medical housing assessment is not on the health condition itself, but on the way it affects how your home environment inhibits your ability to carry out activities of daily living e.g. you may have been diagnosed with a serious illness or condition, but you can live independently in your current home.

You can apply for medical points at any time throughout the duration of your application. Once assessed, a decision will be made to award any relevant level of points and if appropriate a recommendation for specific housing types or adaptations. Points can be awarded at three levels – low, medium or high, depending on the degree of unsuitability of current housing.

Medical Housing Assessment Forms can be obtained by contacting Homes4D&G by telephone; at any of the partner RSL offices, or by downloading a form from the Homes4D&G website. (Contact details are listed in Section 12 and 13).

In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to carry out adaptations to your existing home. We will advise you where we feel this is the case. There are different options available if you rent from one of the Homes4D&G partners. There is a summary of how you would apply to each partner for consideration for equipment and/or adaptations on the Homes4D&G website.

If you are a tenant of a private sector landlord, you also have a right to adapt your home if it is unsuitable for your needs. You should contact the Occupational Therapy Service in Dumfries & Galloway Council to ask for advice and practical assistance on installing equipment and adaptations to the property.

Equally, if you own your property and it is unsuitable for your needs you should contact the Occupational Therapy Service in Dumfries & Galloway Council, to ask for advice and practical assistance on installing equipment and adaptations to the property.

Dumfries and Galloway Council produces an annual Scheme of Assistance that sets out how it provides support to property owners and private tenants to assist them to keep their homes in good condition and suitable to meet their current needs. This includes the following projects that are aimed at supporting people to live independently for as long as possible:

- Care and Repair – provides grants, and practical support, for housing adaptations to help people living with disabilities
- Small Repairs and Home Support Service – provides practical assistance with home security, smoke alarms, small repairs, falls prevention, minor adaptations etc.

- Food Train Extra - provides assistance with day to day jobs such as light bulb changing, freezer defrosting, bed changing etc.
- Dementia Friendly Design – provides minor adaptations to the home to help people suffering with dementia

If you wish to make further enquiries regarding these services and to discuss eligibility, contact details are available at section 15 (page 47) of this document.

5.1.6. Sharing Facilities

Where we assess there is a housing need, we will award points to your housing application if you have to share amenities with someone who would not be moving with you to your new home. Sharing facilities means:

- bathroom
- kitchen; or
- living-room.

5.1.7. Providing or Receiving Help to live independently

We will award points to your housing application if you need to move to provide help to a person to help them to live independently.

We will also award points to your application if you need to move so that you can receive help from a person to help you to live independently in your new home.

When we are considering whether to award points to your application, we may ask you to provide a letter from the person receiving or providing help, explaining your reason for moving and that you need to live in close proximity to them.

5.1.8. Living in Flats

We will award points to your housing application if you have a child in your household aged under 12 and you currently live in a flat or maisonette which has a communal entrance and no dedicated garden space.

6. Priority Points Categories

These points are designed to meet urgent housing need as quickly and successfully as possible and can be awarded to Waiting List and Transfer List applicants. The Homes4D&G team will carry out further checks to confirm the circumstances before priority points are awarded. If you qualify, these points will be awarded in addition to any other points you qualify for. If you refuse 2 reasonable offers these priority points will be removed and your application suspended for 12 months.

Priority points can be awarded for:

- looked after & accommodated children;
- people at risk of/experiencing domestic abuse;
- people at risk of/experiencing serious harassment;
- armed forces personnel leaving active service;
- people who require to leave home as a result of regeneration activity;
- witness protection cases;
- people who are confirmed as bed blocking because they cannot return to their current home

Priority points will be reviewed every 3 months and if circumstances have changed and applicants no longer qualify for priority points these will be removed.

6.1. Looked After & Accommodated Children (Young People Leaving Care)

We want to ensure that young care leavers do not become homeless. We will work with colleagues from Dumfries and Galloway Council Social Work Services to ensure that the young person is ready to manage their own accommodation. We will seek to identify the accommodation which will provide the best possible outcome for the young person. Dumfries and Galloway Council Social Work Services will use a “pathway plan” to set out the needs of each young person leaving care. The plan is intended to help the young person leaving care to develop the skills they need to maintain their tenancy.

We will take account of existing support networks and recognise the progress, attainments and abilities of the young person when considering re-housing options.

More information on how we will work is available in Appendix 3: Looked After Children Protocol.

6.2. Domestic Abuse

We will provide assistance with re-housing for people experiencing domestic abuse, whether the abuse you are experiencing is physical, financial, sexual or emotional;

- whether you are male or female;
- your age;
- whether you do or do not have children; and
- whether you already live in Dumfries and Galloway, or are seeking to move or

return to the area to escape the abuse.

We will normally adopt a position of belief if you tell us that you are experiencing abuse. We will not insist that you should provide evidence of the abuse you have experienced. We will treat you and any children and/or young people in your household who may have been affected by the abuse, with sensitivity and understanding at all times.

Any enquiries that we carry out will be performed with care and sensitivity. In doing this, we will always aim to ensure that the safety of your household is not jeopardised in any way. We will also aim to identify housing options that consider the best interests of your household including access to family and support networks.

If you feel it is unsafe to remain in your own home we will secure temporary emergency accommodation for your household from Dumfries and Galloway Council.

6.3. Serious Harassment

Harassment at or near your home is a serious problem. It may include physical attacks and/or damage to your property; as well as verbal abuse and other types of behaviour that could cause harm or make you feel distressed or threatened. Serious harassment also includes hate crimes, where you may be subject to harm or abuse as a result of your gender, racial origin, sexuality, age, disability or other personal factors.

If you, or a member of your household are being abused or harassed and it means you cannot stay in your home, you must tell us when you make an application for housing. If at any stage you feel that it is unsafe for you to remain in your current accommodation, you can apply to Dumfries & Galloway Council for a homelessness assessment. If you need to leave your home urgently in order to keep you safe from harassment, the Council will provide you with temporary accommodation.

If you do not need to leave home urgently but are subject to harm or distress as a result of serious harassment; we will investigate your circumstances to assess whether to award priority points. During our investigation we will contact other agencies, which may include Dumfries & Galloway Council's Community Safety Team, your current landlord and/or Police Scotland to gather information and evidence to support this assessment. If we do not find evidence that you are subject to harm as a result of serious harassment at or near your home you will not qualify for the priority points.

In dealing with serious harassment, we will assess your case individually and discuss a range of appropriate options with you. This might include taking action against those responsible for the harassment, considering mediation/conciliation services, or looking at rehousing options.

We will also signpost you to other sources of support and advice, including voluntary and community organisations that specialise in supporting victims of crime or harassment.

6.4. Armed Forces Personnel

We aim to assist personnel who have recently left or who are due to leave the armed forces to meet their housing need as quickly and easily as possible.

If you apply for housing with us because you are leaving the armed forces and you are losing your accommodation; we will award priority points. To achieve this, you must meet the following criteria:-

- be currently serving with one of the recognised Ministry of Defense Armed Forces, with less than one full year to honourable discharge;
- have been discharged from one of the Armed Forces within the previous 6 months of applying for housing;
- have a local connection to Dumfries and Galloway;
- have completed at least a 3 year fixed term contract or have been about to be discharged on medical grounds; or
- be the surviving spouse/partner or a non-dependent child (aged 16 years or above) of a deceased Forces Personnel (either serving or served within the past 6 months).

6.5. Regeneration

Where an area within the boundaries of Dumfries and Galloway has been identified for regeneration by one of the partner RSLs, those whose homes will be demolished as a result of this activity will be eligible for priority points.

Wherever possible, you will be allocated a property equivalent to the home subject to demolition.

6.6. Witness Protection Cases

If you are subject to witness protection, Homes4D&G partners will assist in your relocation to appropriate housing.

Witness protection safeguards the wellbeing of a threatened witness or any person involved in the justice system, including defendants and other clients, before, during and after a trial, usually by police. While a witness may only require protection until the conclusion of a trial, some witnesses are provided with a new identity and may live out the rest of their lives under government protection.

Witness protection is usually required in trials against organised crime, where law enforcement sees a risk for witnesses to be intimidated by colleagues of defendants. It is also used at war crime trials. We will only consider referrals made by Police Scotland, Police UK or the National Witness Mobility Service. If we receive a referral of this type, your housing application will be awarded priority points.

6.7. Bed blocking Cases

If you are in hospital and are ready to be discharged, but you can't return to your previous home because it is no longer suitable to meet your needs. If we receive confirmation of this from NHS; Social Work etc. your housing application will be awarded priority points.

7. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

We understand that our allocation policy can't cover all of the circumstances that may lead to you wanting or needing to move home. You may have extenuating circumstances which we have not mentioned or included in this policy.

In these circumstances, Homes4D&G partners will consider your situation, and if you have a clear and urgent need for rehousing; the CHR Board will consider whether you qualify as priority under Extenuating Circumstances.

You will only be given one offer under Extenuating Circumstances. You must therefore make sure you communicate accurately the area for re-housing and the type; size of property. If you refuse the offer we make, this will result in priority being withdrawn and your application will be removed from the Extenuating Circumstance Group. You will be entitled to register in one of the other housing groups, for example Waiting List or Transfer List where your needs will be considered under the point scheme.

8. OFFERING YOU A PROPERTY

8.1. Deciding who will receive an Offer

Joining the housing list does not mean that we will always be able to make you an offer. This depends on:-

- your housing need;
- demand from other people on the list;
- the number of properties that become available; and
- the number of allocations we need to make to applicants in the Homelessness and Strategic Needs groups.

When allocating housing we have to comply with the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, and we must ignore the following:-

- your age, provided you are aged 16 or over and unless it involves housing designed or specifically adapted for people of a specific age, e.g. sheltered housing;
- the length of time you have lived in Dumfries and Galloway;
- your income or that of your family;
- whether you own or have owned a property;
- any housing debt now repaid;
- any non-housing debt such as Council Tax;
- housing debt not owed by you, for example, rent arrears owed by a partner; and
- rent arrears where the amount is no more than one month's rent or where you have an arrangement for paying the arrears, have been keeping to the arrangement for at least three months and are continuing to make such payments.

We must also ignore whether or not you live in Dumfries and Galloway if you:-

- are employed, or have been offered employment, in the area;
- wish to move into the area to seek employment and we are satisfied that this applies;
- wish to move into the area to be near a relative or carer;
- have special social or medical reasons for requiring to be housed within the area;
- are subject to harassment and therefore wishes to move into the area; or
- are at risk of domestic violence and wish to move into the area.

Finally, we must not impose any of the following requirements:

- that your application must have remained in place for a minimum period;
- a divorce or judicial separation be obtained; or
- that you are no longer living with, or in the same house as, some other person, before you are eligible for the allocation of housing.

When a property becomes available for let, we will decide which housing group the property will be allocated to, taking into account:

- Annual Lettings Plan targets;
- If the property is adapted and it is required for someone with a disability
- whether the property is required for Homeless applicants, and
- how to make the best use of our housing stock.

To make sure we do this in an accountable way, our staff will maintain a clear record of how individual lettings decisions were made. The decision-making process will be checked by a second member of staff before the property is allocated, and decisions will be reviewed regularly by relevant Managers.

8.2. Pre-Tenancy Checks

A pre-tenancy check will be carried out for all applicants prior to making an offer of housing. These checks will be carried out to confirm your current housing circumstances and to check that, where appropriate, your current tenancy is being maintained to a satisfactory standard. This may include carrying out a home visit or seeking references from other social registered landlords and registered private landlords. Checks will be carried out for evidence of debt related to a tenancy, evidence of anti-social behaviour or any other breach of tenancy.

Where information indicates that you will not be able to maintain a tenancy straight away, your application may be suspended for a period of time to allow further investigation, to allow a support package to be put in place, or to allow you time to take the necessary steps to resolve the problem. Where you, or a member of your household, have been evicted as a result of anti-social behaviour within the past 3 years, you will be offered a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy with support.

If you have debt related to a tenancy and you have an agreement to repay this debt you can still make an application for rehousing. This agreement will be monitored. You will not be considered for any offers of accommodation until you have repaid the debt in full or maintained the agreed repayment plan for a minimum of 3 months. Please refer to Homes4D&G Suspension Policy for further information which can be found in Appendix 4.

If you are a transfer applicant, a property inspection will be carried out as part of the home visit to:-

- make sure that you have maintained your home in accordance with tenancy conditions;
- discuss end of tenancy procedures; and
- verify your current circumstances.

8.3. Offers

We make offers based on your housing needs and preferences after contacting you to confirm that the details we hold on your application form are accurate. This is good practice as it allows us to reduce inappropriate offers and ensures that your application details are as up-to-date and accurate as they can be.

We will normally make Waiting List and Transfer List applicants up to two offers of re-housing. If you turn down two offers that meet your choices without good reasons, we will suspend your housing application. Please refer to Homes4D&G Suspension Policy for further information in Appendix 4.

8.4. Tenancies

If you qualify for an offer of housing, we will offer you a Scottish Secure Tenancy in line with our legal responsibilities.

In a limited number of situations, we may offer you a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy. As a Short Scottish Secure tenant you have many of the same rights as a Scottish Secure tenant. However, your rights are more limited on eviction, subletting and succession.

Your Short Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement will state that your tenancy is for a fixed period of time (at least six months). If by the end of that time, neither you nor your landlord has requested that the lease ends, it will renew itself for the same amount of time again (for example, for another 6 months).

We can only give Short Scottish Secure Tenancies in very specific circumstances. This is defined by law in Section 37, Schedule 6 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. These circumstances will apply to you if:-

- you have previously been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years;
- you or a member of your household is subject to an anti-social behaviour order;
- we are offering temporary accommodation for people taking up employment in the area;
- we are offering temporary accommodation for tenants where work is being carried out on their house;
- you are homeless and the property is let to you on a temporary basis for more than 6 months;
- you are in receipt of housing support services and the property is let to you on a temporary basis; or
- the property is leased from another body by the landlord.

In all cases we will serve you with a notice, informing you that we are offering you a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy. This notice will also state why you are being offered a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy and the period for which the tenancy is being offered.

If you have been given a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy because of a previous eviction for anti-social behaviour or because a member of your household has an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) served against them; the Short Scottish Secure Tenancy will be converted to a Scottish Secure Tenancy at the end of 12 months, provided the landlord hasn't given you a notice to quit. Your landlord will notify you when your tenancy agreement changes, and will tell you what your new rights and responsibilities are.

8.5. Joint Tenancies

Under this policy you can apply to Homes4D&G landlords to have a joint tenancy with someone who is staying with you or someone you intend to stay with you.

We encourage joint applicants, of the same or opposite sex, to apply for joint tenancies to ensure that they have similar legal rights.

8.6. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

We will never make an offer of housing that would result in 3 or more unrelated people living in a property, as this would create a house in multiple-occupation (HMO).

The only exception to this policy is where the property is being leased to a support provider to provide specialist accommodation for community care needs or homeless supported accommodation.

9. REVIEWING, REMOVAL, DEFERRAL, SUSPENSION & MERGING OF APPLICATIONS

9.1. Reviewing Applications

We review your applications at least a once a year. The date of this review is based on the date you registered your housing application with us. This is important to maintain accurate information about applicants so that appropriate offers are made. This annual review allows us to do this.

As part of this review, we will ask you to advise us within 10 working days if you wish to remain on the Common Housing Register. We use a standard review letter to gather this information.

If no response is received, we then issue a reminder letter giving you another 10 working days to advise us. If no response is received, we remove you from the Common Housing Register.

However, if you contact us within 6 months of your application being cancelled you can have your original application form re-instated. The date of registration will be based on the date you made the original application. You may be required to complete a new application form if circumstances have changed.

In addition to these reviews, you should tell us if there are any changes to your household's circumstances, as this could affect your chances of being rehoused.

9.2. Removal of Applications

There are other times when we will remove an application from the register apart from the annual review. We will remove your application from the Common Housing Register if:-

- you are housed by one of the partners;
- you request, to be removed from the list;
- you fail to respond to a periodic review;
- you fail to respond to two or more consecutive letters we send to you; or
- you die.

9.3. Deferred Applications

You may wish to apply for housing, without being considered for offers in the immediate future. If this is the case, you can ask to have your application placed on hold until a future date. This means that we will not make offers of housing during the period you have stated.

We will check whether you wish your application to stay on hold, when we review your housing application each year. Alternatively you can contact us at any time, to tell us that you now wish to be actively considered for offers.

9.4. Suspended Applications

Everyone has a right to have their application added to our Common Housing Register if they are 16 years or over. However, we can suspend your application from the housing list in certain circumstances. If we suspend your application, you will not be offered accommodation, even if you are in housing need.

We want to keep to a minimum the number of people we suspend from or take off our housing list, but there are some circumstances where we do need to remove people from the list. These circumstances are as follows:-

- if you owe us, or another landlord, a tenancy-related debt which is more than one month's rent, if you have not kept to a repayment arrangement for a 3 month period;
- if you or a member of your household has behaved in an anti-social manner and where there is evidence of this taking place;
- if you have given false information on your application form;
- if you or a member of your household has broken some condition of your tenancy agreement, such as causing damage to your current home;
- if you have not provided the information we need to assess your application despite reminders to do so;
- if you have refused two offers of housing that met with the choices on your housing application
- if you are a high risk offender, where Dumfries & Galloway's Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) team will carry out a risk assessment to determine if your application can be reinstated.

If we suspend your housing application, we will tell you clearly our reasons, the length of time your application will be suspended for, and what needs to happen before we can consider you for offers.

9.5. Merging Applications

Applicants wishing to be considered jointly for housing may merge their applications. In these cases, the date of application will be determined by the date of the earliest application.

If you wish to withdraw from a joint application you will be allowed to have your original date of application re-instated if you wish to re-submit an application in your own right. Points will be allocated based on the household in greater need.

10. OTHER ALLOCATIONS ISSUES & INFORMATION

10.1. Community Safety - Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements

Social landlords have a legal duty to consider the housing requirements of all applicants including persons currently on the sex offenders register and other high risk offenders who are subject to the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

These arrangements require that agencies including the Police, Local Authorities, Registered Social Landlords, Health Boards and the Scottish Prison Service work together to assess and manage the risks posed by such offenders.

The aim of MAPPA is to promote public safety and reduce the risk of harm. Allocations to individuals who are subject to these arrangements will follow on from multi agency scrutiny of assessed risk.

10.2. Local Lettings Initiatives

Section 1.6 of this policy sets out the objectives we want to achieve when allocating our homes. We have used these objectives to build a group plus points system that meets all of our legal responsibilities and prioritises the needs of applicants in a fair and consistent way. Our priorities are translated into the targets set in the Annual Lettings Plan, which specify the number of allocations that should be made to each housing group.

However, across Dumfries & Galloway, we have different amounts of housing in each area and different levels of demand. House types and sizes, the availability of local services and the location of our homes can affect the demand for housing. Although our Common Allocation Policy aims to create a simple, straightforward system for allocating our homes; sometimes we will need to make an extra effort to encourage applicants to move to a local area. As part of this, sometimes we may use the way we allocate our homes to support local investment and regeneration plans or to make sure we have a good mix of different household types and ages. To achieve this, Homes4D&G partners may introduce a Local Lettings Initiative to address a specific issue within one of our communities, e.g.:-

- in areas of low demand, we may wish to relax the bedroom criteria in order to allow applicants to occupy larger properties;
- in flatted accommodation, we may wish to reduce the number of household with children occupying properties in order to create a balanced mix of households; and
- for new build accommodation in rural locations, we may wish to give priority to local applicants who live in and contribute to the local community.

If we are considering whether to introduce a Local Lettings Initiative, we will consult as appropriate e.g. with the local community and/or other partners such as Health and Social Work Services. We will explain clearly:

- why we feel a Local lettings Initiative is needed and the evidence we have used to make this decision;
- our specific aims and objectives;

- the time period that we would expect the Local Lettings Initiative to remain in place; and
- how we propose to monitor that the aim of the local lettings initiative is being met and there are no unforeseen consequences for the local community.

To introduce a local lettings initiative, all Homes4D&G partners will jointly consider the evidence that has informed the proposal, the views of the local community/wider partners and the proposed aims and objectives. We will make a joint decision about whether to introduce a Local Lettings Initiative in order to make sure the overall aims and objectives of the Common Allocation Policy are not negatively affected by it. We will then seek the approval of their individual governing body before the plan is implemented.

Homes4D&G partners will manage and monitor Local Lettings Initiatives collaboratively to ensure positive outcomes are achieved. Details of the governance arrangements around Local lettings Initiatives are set out in the Homes4D&G Partnership Agreement, which can be accessed through the Homes4D&G website.

10.3. Mutual Exchanges

If you rent your home from a Homes4D&G landlord, another local authority or registered social landlord and you would like to swap with another tenant from any of these landlords; you can apply to exchange your home. Your landlord must agree to the exchange, and they can only refuse permission if it is reasonable to do so.

Anyone who has a Secure Tenancy or an Assured Tenancy can apply. This includes tenants of:-

- a registered social landlord in the United Kingdom;
- a local authority in the United Kingdom; and
- a water authority or sewerage authority in Scotland.

Each Homes4D&G partner has a separate policy that sets out the rules that apply if you want to take part in a mutual exchange. These rules are available on request. Contact details for all Homes4D&G landlords are available in Section 13.

10.4. Information and Publicity

All Homes4D&G partners are firmly committed to meeting the standard of communication that is placed on them by the Scottish Social Housing Charter, namely that *“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”*.

If you need more information from us or if you have a specific question about your housing application, there are a range of options available to you including:-

- contacting one of our trained Homes4D&G customer advisors;
- visiting the Homes4D&G website; or
- contacting any Homes4D&G partner landlords (see Section 13 for contact details).

We will make sure that we advertise our allocations policy. We will send you a summary of this policy when you first apply. We will also tell you where to get a copy of the full policy.

We will work with other organisations in Dumfries & Galloway to make sure that you and everybody who is interested in applying for housing with us knows about this policy. Other organisations include registered social landlords, housing information and advice organisations, community groups, tenants groups and equal-opportunities groups. If you ask us, we can give you a copy of this policy in another format (such as in Braille or in large print).

We will make sure that the information we provide on the Common Allocation Policy is clear, accurate and up to date. We will regularly update this policy document, our leaflets and the Homes4D&G website, publishing details of:-

- how we assess applications for housing;
- how properties are allocated; and
- our performance against annual lettings plan targets.

10.5. Personal Information

Any personal information you give us when you apply for housing under this policy will be handled according to the legal responsibilities placed on us by the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that your personal information will always be held on a secure IT system and accessed only by authorised individuals. The information you give us will only ever be used for the following 3 purposes:

- assessing your housing application in accordance with the policy;
- statistical monitoring of housing supply and demand; and
- future consultation and customer surveys.

This data will not be passed to third parties unless the request is for one of the purposes stated within Part 4 of the 1998 Act.

You have the right to access the personal information we hold on your housing application as set out by both the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and the Data Protection Act 1998. We cannot unreasonably refuse requests to access personal information and only ever in specific circumstances, e.g. if providing information involved revealing details about another person without their consent.

If you request to see the personal information we hold on you, we will provide this within 40 working days. We may charge you for providing this information according to the individual policy of each Homes4D&G landlord.

10.6. Appeals

We will always try our best to give you an excellent service, but we know sometimes things go wrong and you might want to appeal against decisions that we make about your housing application.

When you make an application for housing, you have the right to appeal against:-

- the points we award your application;
- a decision to suspend you from receiving offers;
- a decision to cancel your application; or
- any decision we make which you believe has not been dealt with in accordance with the Common Allocation Policy.

Appeal process:

You can appeal our decision by contacting us verbally, to Homes4D&G Implementation Team. For example, if you do not agree with the number of points we have given you, you should first contact Homes4D&G who assessed your application and ask them to add up your points again. We will do this within 5 working days.

If you remain dissatisfied with the decision, a written appeal can then be lodged with the Common Housing Register Manager. They will investigate your appeal and respond in writing within 10 working days.

10.7. Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the level of service you have received from us e.g. regarding the actual allocation of a property or not meeting our published service standards, each Homes4D&G partner has a complaints procedure that is simple and easy to use. You can contact any Homes4D&G partner to ask for a copy of their complaints procedure (see Section 13 for contact details). If the complaint is about the way in which your application has been registered or anything that is directly associated with the Homes4D&G implementation team/duties, you would follow DGHP's Complaints Handling Procedure.

Our complaints procedures will explain each step of our process, and how you can appeal to the Public Services Ombudsman. You must generally use our internal complaints system before contacting the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman is a government-based organisation who will review your case if you have already been through our complaints procedures and you feel we have not dealt with your complaint fairly. At each stage of the application and allocation process, we will remind you of your right to appeal against decisions that we make about your housing application.

10.8. The Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) is the independent regulator of registered social landlords and local authority housing services in Scotland. The SHR has a legal responsibility to: *"safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities"*.

The SHR monitors how well Homes4D&G landlords are delivering their housing services, managing their finances and performing good standards of governance. If needed, the SHR will intervene to make improvements where there is evidence that this is needed.

All Homes4D&G landlords will provide evidence each year that their performance meets the standards set out by the SHR in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This means that the SHR will monitor, assess, compare and report on the performance of all Homes4D&G landlords in relation to:-

- how easy we make it for you to apply for housing;
- how well we communicate with you and give you advice; and
- how well we manage the Common Housing Register.

Our approach to monitoring our performance against Charter standards is set out fully in Section 11 of this policy.

We want to be open and accountable in the way we allocate our housing. Homes4D&G partners will maintain a clear audit trail which allows us to demonstrate how and why we make decisions when allocating our homes. We will ask for approval from the Governing Body of the Homes4D&G partner if we propose to allocate a property to:-

- one of our current employees;
- a recent employee (e.g. someone who has worked for us in the last 12 months);
- one of our Board members; or
- a close relative of our staff or Board.

In giving us approval, the Governing Body will satisfy themselves that a clear audit trail is in place to support the selection of the applicant before we make such an offer.

We recognise that local Councillors play an important role in approving the Common Allocation Policy, Annual Letting Plan targets and in monitoring outcomes. This role is restricted by legislation which states that Councillors must not be directly involved in any decision on the allocation of housing in the electoral division or ward they are responsible for (Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993). This does not mean that Councillors cannot provide information in support of and on behalf of constituents' housing applications.

10.9. Equality and Diversity

All Homes4D&G partners are firmly committed to equality of opportunity for all housing applicants, and will ensure that in applying this policy we will not 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.

We will make this policy available in alternative formats such as large print or Braille on request. Translation services for other languages will also be made available if you require this.

We are also firmly committed to the equalities standard in the Scottish Social Housing Charter that *“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”*

11. MANAGING THE COMMON ALLOCATION POLICY

11.1. CHR Board

Homes4D&G partners have set up a Common Housing Register Board to monitor the Common Housing Register and Common Allocation Policy. The members of the Group are representatives from Dumfries and Galloway Council, Cunninghame Housing Association, Home in Scotland, Irvine Housing Association and DGHP. This group meets on a monthly basis. The objectives of the CHR Board are set out below:-

- to monitor performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter indicators and Annual Letting Plan targets;
- to oversee service delivery and implement new ways of working such as housing options;
- to agree and monitor budget provision;
- to make strategic decisions following consultation with all stakeholders; and
- to make recommendations/decisions on procedural change and development.

11.2. Training

Training is an important element in making sure that the Common Allocation Policy is implemented effectively and delivers positive outcomes for customers. We, therefore, provide on-going training for staff. This includes training on:-

- housing legislation and good practice;
- Common Allocation Policy and procedures;
- information technology systems;
- other relevant legislation such as equality law; and
- skills development, for example, conducting effective interviews.

We monitor and identify the need for staff training by developing training plans, by performing staff appraisals and by implementing staff development programmes that link training to job and personal development needs. This ensures that our approach to training contributes to continuous improvement in the way we deliver our services.

12. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In line with our commitment to meeting the outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, we work collaboratively to monitor our performance. We want to continuously improve our service delivery and implementation of the Common Allocation Policy.

12.1. Auditing Performance

In order to ensure that there is consistency across Homes4D&G partners in meeting the policy's aims and objectives, a sample of audit checks will be carried out in each partner organisation.

12.2. Monitoring Performance

We will undertake regular reviews of our performance and will produce performance reports to be presented to Governing Bodies. These reports will also be available on the Homes4D&G website or by contacting any of the partners.

Our reporting will focus on monitoring our performance against the outcomes and standards in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (set out in section 1.3 of this policy). In particular, we will monitor whether our applicants consider:-

- that they were treated fairly and with respect, and received fair access to housing and housing services (Charter Outcome 1);
- that we communicated well with them (Charter Outcome 2); and
- that we provided high quality information and advice that helped them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them and on their prospects of being made an offer of housing (Charter Outcomes 7, 8, 9 and 10).

In doing this, we will assemble performance data to produce monitoring reports. This data will also contribute to the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) which each partner is required to submit to the Scottish Housing Regulator each year. In particular, we will monitor the following aspects of the Common Allocation Policy:-

- admission to the Common Housing Register;
- assessment of applications; and
- outcomes for housing applicants.

12.3. Admission to the Common Housing Register

We will monitor performance against the following indicators which assess admission to the Common Housing Register:-

- the number of new applications, including whether or not they are processed within time targets;
- the categories in which applicants are placed

12.4. Assessment of Applications

We will monitor performance against the following indicators which evaluate our assessment of applications:-

- the number of applications reviewed and removed from the list as part of the review process;
- the number of applicants suspended, including banding and grounds for suspension;
- the number of appeals made, including the outcomes; and
- the number of complaints received, including the outcomes.

12.5. Outcomes

We will monitor performance against the following indicators which assess the outcomes achieved by housing applicants:-

- the number of lets to applicants and groups, by property type and area;
- the number of offers made, including whether they were accepted or refused;
- the number of offers refused and the reason for this; and
- the number of offers and lets by ethnicity, gender, disability and age.

12.6. Review of Common Allocation Policy

We will also use a variety of methods to review the content of this policy, as well as the information provided in our leaflets and on our website. In particular, we will:-

- obtain feedback from both new and existing tenants and applicants about the quality of information and service provided; and
- review the content of all of our publications and correspondence sent to applicants and tenants to ensure that it is accurate, up to date and written in plain language.

We will use the outcomes from our assessment and applicant feedback to improve our service and working practices.

We will review this policy every three years, or earlier if required in light of changes in the law or good practice guidance.

13.



Homes4D&G
FREEPOST RTHU-YASL-XCJC
DG12 6AJ

0300 123 1230
www.homes4dg.org.uk
enquiries@homes4dg.org.uk

14. Homes4D&G Partner Landlords



Working with our Tenants

Dumfries & Galloway Housing Partnership
Grierson House
The Crichton
Bankend Road
Dumfries
DG1 4ZS



Home Scotland
Pavilion 6, Parkway Court
321 Springhill Parkway
Baillieston
Glasgow
G69 6GA



Irvine Housing Association
44-46 Bank Street
Irvine
Ayrshire
LA12 0LP



82 – 84 Glasgow Street
Ardrossan
North Ayrshire
KA22 8EH

15. CONTACT DETAILS FOR OTHER AGENCIES

Care & Repair (East)	01387 321310
Care & Repair (West)	01776 233112
Handyman/Small Repairs & Home Support Service	Free phone 08000699173
Adult Social Services	0303 333 3001
Food Train Extra	01387 270800
Dementia Friendly Design	0800 069 9173

This publication is available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages. For more information contact Homes4D&G's Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 1230 or email: enquiries@homes4dg.org.uk

CANTONESE

本印刷品有錄音帶、凸字、大字印刷與社區其他語文版本可供索取，如欲獲取更多資訊，請通過以下方式聯絡 Homes4D&G 客戶服務中心：致電 0300 123 1230 或發送電子郵件到 enquiries@homes4dg.org.uk

POLISH

Niniejsza publikacja jest dostępna w formie nagrania magnetofonowego, w alfabecie Braille'a, w formacie dużym drukiem oraz w różnych wersjach językowych. Aby uzyskać dalsze informacje, prosimy o kontakt z centrum obsługi klienta Homes4D&G pod numerem telefonu 0300 123 1230 lub adresem e-mail: enquiries@homes4dg.org.uk

ARABIC

تتوفر هذه النشرة على شريط، بطريقة بريل، لغات التواصل والطباعة الكبيرة. للحصول على المزيد من المعلومات، اتصل بمركز خدمة عملاء Homes4D&G على الرقم 0300 123 1230 أو بالبريد الإلكتروني: enquiries@homes4dg.org.uk

BENGALI

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URDU

یہ اشاعت ٹیپ، بریل، بڑے پرنٹ اور کمیونٹی کی زبانوں میں دستیاب ہے۔ مزید معلومات کے لئے Homes4D&G کے کسٹمر سروس سنٹر سے 0300 123 1230 پر رابطہ کریں یا enquiries@homes4dg.org.uk پر ای میل کریں۔

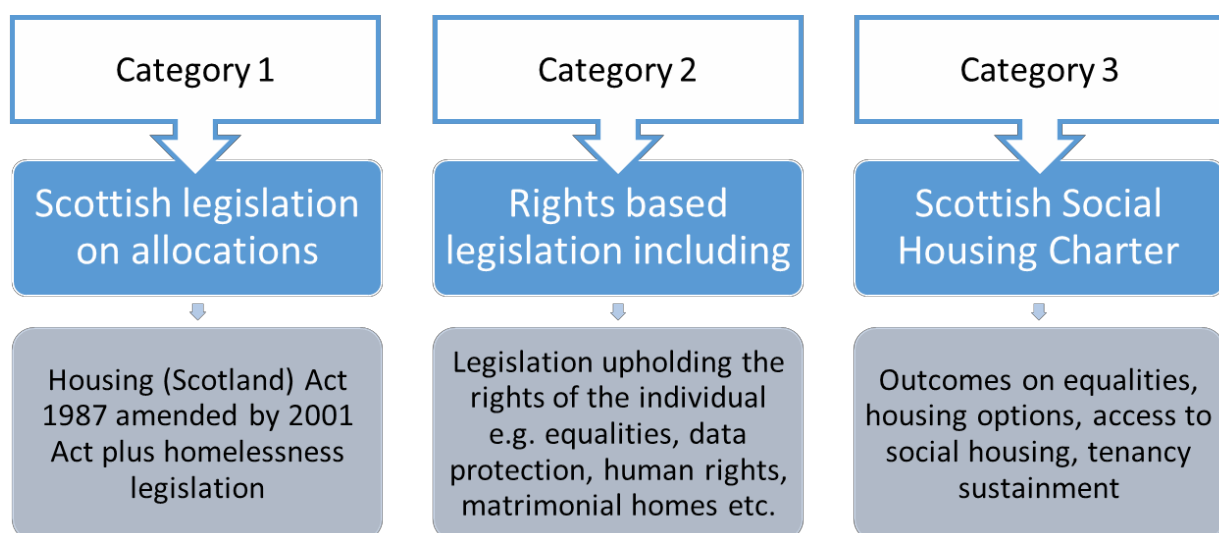


Appendix 1:
**Legislation: Impact on the Common
Allocation Policy**



Legislation: Impact on the Common Allocation Policy

There are three categories of legislation which we, the Homes 4 D&G partners, must comply with when allocating properties. These categories, and examples of the types of legislation this includes, are shown in the diagram below.



The purpose of this appendix is to highlight the specific **allocations and homelessness (Category 1)** and **rights-based (Category 2) legislation** which influence the Homes 4 D&G Common Allocation Policy and allocations practice. It explains what your rights are under each Act, and how this affects how we allocate properties.

Category 1: Scottish legislation on allocations	
Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 Leasehold Reform, Housing & Urban Development Act 1993	
Who can access the housing list	We must admit anyone over the age of 16 to our housing list.
Who we must give reasonable preference to when allocating housing	<p>We must give reasonable preference to the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons who are homeless or threatened with homelessness; • Households occupying houses that do not meet the tolerable standard; • Large families; • Households occupying overcrowded houses; and • Households living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
Definition of homeless	<p>As outlined above, we must give reasonable preference to persons who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>If you present as homeless, Dumfries & Galloway Council will assess your circumstances to check if you are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless within two months, and whether this was intentional, where you deliberately did or didn't do something that resulted in you becoming homeless.</p> <p>If you are considered to be unintentionally homeless, you will be placed in the Homeless Group, where applications are held in chronological order as a matter of urgency. The Council will provide you with temporary accommodation until you are offered permanent accommodation.</p>

	<p>If you are considered to be intentionally homeless, you will be placed in the Waiting List Group. However, the Council will still have a duty to provide you with temporary accommodation while you look for a new home.</p>
Section 5 referrals	<p>Under Section 5 of the 2001 Act, Dumfries & Galloway Council can make a referral to a local housing association, including one of the Homes 4 D&G partners, to offer housing to a person who the Council has decided is homeless or threatened with homelessness, which the housing association must comply with unless there is a good reason not to.</p>
Definition of the tolerable standard	<p>As outlined above, we must give reasonable preference to households occupying houses which do not meet the tolerable standard.</p> <p>A house meets the tolerable standard if it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is structurally stable; • is substantially free from rising or penetrating damp; • has satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and for heating; • has satisfactory thermal insulation; • has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water available within the house; • has a sink provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water within the house; • has a water closet or waterless closet available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the house and suitably located within the house; • has a fixed bath or shower and a wash-hand basin, each provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water and suitably located within the house; • has an effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water; • in the case of a house having a supply of electricity, complies with the relevant requirements in relation to the electrical installations for the purposes of that supply;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the electrical installation” is the electrical wiring and associated components and fittings, but excludes equipment and appliances; • “the relevant requirements” are that the electrical installation is adequate and safe to use • has satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food within the house; and • has satisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings.
Factors we must not take into account when allocating housing	<p>There are certain factors which we cannot take into account when allocating housing. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your age; • How long you have lived in Dumfries & Galloway; • You or your family’s income; • Whether you own or have owned a property; • 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; and • 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, you have been keeping to the arrangement for at least three months and you are continuing to do so.
What we must publish	<p>We must publish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the rules which explain how we prioritise applications for allocation; and • the rules relating to the management of housing lists and transfers. <p>We do this through the common allocation policy itself, as well as through our website. You can obtain further information by contacting any of the Homes 4 D&G partners. The contact details are listed at the end of the policy.</p>
When we can offer Short Scottish Secure Tenancies	<p>The majority of tenancies that we offer are Scottish Secure Tenancies. However, under certain circumstances, we have the right to grant a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) instead.</p>

	<p>As set out in the common allocation policy, an SSST may be offered to you in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> You have previously been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last three years; <input type="checkbox"/> You or a member of your household is subject to an anti-social behaviour order; <input type="checkbox"/> You are living in temporary accommodation whilst taking up employment in the area; <input type="checkbox"/> You are living in temporary accommodation where work is being carried out on your house; <input type="checkbox"/> You are homeless and will be living in temporary accommodation for more than six months; <input type="checkbox"/> You are in receipt of housing support services and will be living in temporary accommodation; <input type="checkbox"/> You are living in a property which is leased from another body by the landlord.
Role of Elected Council Members	<p>Whilst Elected Council Members are entitled to contribute to the governance of the policy in terms of setting targets and monitoring outcomes, they must not be directly involved in any decision on the allocation of housing where the house is situated, or the applicant for the house lives, in the member's electoral division or ward.</p>
Category 2: Rights-based legislation	
Human Rights Act 1998	<p>Within the common allocation policy, we acknowledge that everyone is given a number of fundamental rights and freedoms, as set out in Schedule 1 of the Act. Those relevant to the policy are:</p> <p><u>Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life</u></p> <p><i>This right does not provide an automatic right to be housed but is your right to access and live in your home without intrusion or interference. The right to respect for family life includes the right for a family to live together. We acknowledge this right by providing suitable homes for families to live in and by awarding points based on each individual's circumstances.</i></p>

	<p><u>Article 9: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion</u> and <u>Article 10: Freedom of expression</u></p> <p><i>We will not discriminate against any person based upon their opinions or beliefs by taking this into account when considering an application for a home within Dumfries and Galloway.</i></p> <p><u>Article 14: Prohibition on Discrimination</u></p> <p><i>Our allocation policy does not discriminate against any person on any ground mentioned within this Article such as sex; race; colour; language; religion; political or other opinion; association with a national minority; property; birth or other status.</i></p> <p><u>The First Protocol: Article 1: Protection of property</u></p> <p><i>We acknowledge your right to the peaceful enjoyment of your possessions.</i></p> <p>We will not interfere with your rights and freedoms, except in accordance with the conditions and terms outlined in the law.</p>
<p>Data Protection Act 1998</p>	<p>All personal data collected as part of the implementation of the policy will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. In particular the data will be held on a secure IT system and accessed only by authorised individuals.</p> <p>The data will only be used for the following three purposes:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessing your housing application in accordance with the policy; 2. Statistical monitoring of housing supply and demand; and 3. Future consultation and surveys. <p>Your data will not be passed to third parties unless the request is for one of the purposes stated within Part 4 of the Act, such as the prevention or detection of crime.</p> <p>You have the right to request a copy of the information we hold about you in accordance with Section 7 of the Act.</p>

<p>Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981</p>	<p>The policy recognises the rights of both spouses in a “matrimonial” home and other couples living together (“cohabiting couples”), for example through the award of sharing points.</p> <p>If you are a spouse (husband, wife or civil partner) in a matrimonial home, you have occupancy rights to the home, as set out in section 1 of the Act. Under these rights, you are entitled to occupy the matrimonial home and you cannot be made to leave by your spouse unless they have obtained a court order.</p> <p>If you are co-habiting, you will not automatically have occupancy rights to continue living in the home, but these can be granted by a court order.</p> <p>Where a court orders a transfer of tenancy of the matrimonial home from one spouse to another, as set out in section 13 of the Act, we must comply and transfer the tenancy. If there is a joint tenancy, the court has the power to grant the tenancy to one party only.</p>
<p>Civil Partnership Act 2004</p>	<p>The policy recognises that civil partners have the same rights (including occupancy rights) as married/co-habiting couples and are awarded the same points for the same circumstances as married/co-habiting couples.</p> <p>We also recognise that same sex couples have the same rights as mixed sex couples within the definition of family and spouse co-habitation. We acknowledge this within our policy through our bedroom requirements and the award of any under or over occupation points.</p>
<p>Immigration and Asylum Act 1999</p>	<p>Section 118 of this Act states that local authorities, therefore Dumfries & Galloway Council, are excluded from granting tenancies to persons subject to immigration control.</p>

<p>Protection of Harassment Act 1997</p>	<p>The policy recognises the need to protect applicants who have been subjected to harassment as defined by the Act.</p> <p>The Act defines harassment as “causing a person alarm or distress”, which can occur in various forms including breach of the peace, threatening or abusive behaviour and sexual offences.</p> <p>As set out in the policy, if you are a victim of harassment, your application will be given priority, subject to providing proof of the harassment, by the award of priority points;</p>
<p>Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005</p>	<p>The policy sets out how we will consider the housing needs of offenders who apply to the common housing register.</p> <p>Offenders’ access to housing is subject to the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA), which was established by this Act.</p> <p>The aim of MAPPA is to promote public safety and reduce the risk of harm. To do this, we will work collaboratively with the Scottish Prison Service and other agencies to identify the risks posed by offenders who apply to the common housing register.</p>
<p>Children (Scotland) Act 1995</p>	<p>This Act places a statutory duty on local authorities, including Dumfries & Galloway Council, to safeguard the welfare of looked after children, and intervene where there are concerns about a child’s welfare.</p> <p>To do this, the local authority must consider the views of the child, their parents and any other person whose views are considered relevant.</p> <p>As set out in the common allocation policy and in our Joint Protocol with Dumfries & Galloway Council’s Social Work Services (Appendix 3 of the policy), we are committing to protecting the welfare of children, and will therefore prioritise young people leaving care by the award of priority points;</p>

<p>Equality Act 2010</p>	<p>There has been an Equalities Impact Assessment carried out on the policy, which concluded that the policy does not discriminate against any of the equality groups including age, race and disability.</p> <p>We are committed to ensure that no discrimination will take place on any ground set out in the Act within future revisions of the policy.</p>
<p>Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007</p>	<p>We are committed to protecting the rights of vulnerable adults who apply to the common housing register.</p> <p>A vulnerable adult is defined by the Act as someone who has a physical or mental disability, is unable to look after themselves or their property, or is at risk of being harmed either by themselves or someone else.</p> <p>We will work closely with our partner agencies, in particular Dumfries & Galloway Council's Social Services, to fulfil the Council's duty to identify where it may need to intervene to protect a vulnerable adult's property, wellbeing or financial affairs.</p> <p>As set out in the policy, we will do this through our health and social work referral protocol, where the Health & Social Care Housing and ASARPP Adult Supported Accommodation and Residential Placement Panel Panels assess applications with extenuating circumstances and recommend the most suitable option.</p>



Appendix 2:
Points Scheme for Housing
Applications
(Waiting and Transfer Applicants)



Points Scheme for Housing Applications

(Waiting & transfer applicants)

Homes 4 D& G use the following point scheme for all housing applications, except for: -

- people referred to us by Dumfries and Galloway Council as homeless, where the Council has a duty to secure permanent re-housing;

The information below shows the points you can receive, and how we make decisions about each of the type of points. We will not give points if you deliberately provide false information, or if you deliberately and unreasonably make your housing situation worse to obtain a higher position on the housing list.

Type of Points	Points	How we will assess whether you will receive these points
<p>Overcrowding</p> <p>You can receive overcrowding points if your current accommodation is not large enough for the people living with You. Overcrowding points will not be awarded to applicants who wish to move to the same size of accommodation than they are currently residing in.</p> <p>If you need <u>one</u> extra bedroom 40 If you need <u>two</u> extra bedrooms 80 If you need <u>three or more</u> extra Bedrooms 120</p>		<p>You will receive points based on the information in your application form. We may visit you at home before you receive an offer, to make sure your points are correct.</p> <p>We will work out the number of rooms you need as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no more than two people should have to share a bedroom • one bedroom for couples/partners • one bedroom for single adults/single parents • one bedroom for two children of different sex up to 8 years old • one bedroom for two children of the same sex up to 12 years old • one bedroom for each child of 12 years or over <p>If your present accommodation has a box room, we will count this as a bedroom if the room has a window and there is space to fit and use a single bed, a small wardrobe and a small chest of drawers.</p>

Type of Points	Points	How we will assess whether you will receive these points
<p>Insecure Tenure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You live in private rented accommodation and have a short assured tenancy You live in private rented accommodation and your lease has expired or you have been served with a notice to quit by your landlord through no fault of your own (these points will replace the 5 points they will not be in addition) You live in tied accommodation and your employer has told you that will have to leave your accommodation within the next 6 months (for example, as a result of retirement or redundancy) <p>You are no fixed abode NFA</p> <p>You are living in a caravan</p> <p>If you are NFA or living in a caravan you will not qualify for any additional points i.e. overcrowding; under occupation; sharing facilities</p> <p>We will provide everyone who receives points under this category with advice and assistance on homelessness, and refer you to Dumfries and Galloway Council.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>50</p> <p>70</p> <p>20</p> <p>20</p>	<p>We will ask you to provide us with a copy of your tenancy agreement</p> <p>We will ask you to provide us with appropriate evidence:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence of your tenancy agreement; a copy of a valid notice to quit served by your landlord a letter from your employer, if you are having to leave tied accommodation through no fault of your own <p>If you live in tied accommodation, you can apply for housing at any time and ask to have your application put on hold. You should tell us when you know exactly when you will have to leave your tied accommodation. Your points for insecure accommodation can be awarded up to 6 months before that date.</p> <p>You will not receive these points if you are living in temporary accommodation provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council. If you are in this situation, the Council may refer you to us for permanent re-housing, when it has made a decision on your homeless application.</p>
<p>Sharing Facilities</p> <p>You can receive these points if you are sharing a bathroom, kitchen or living room with anyone (including your parents) who is not going to be re-housed with you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing with family Sharing with non-family 	<p>15</p> <p>30</p>	<p>Where we assess there is a housing need, you will receive these points. We will visit you at home before you receive an offer, to make sure your points are correct.</p>

<p>Living in Flats</p> <p>You can received these points if your household includes children aged under 12, and you currently live in a flat with a shared/communal entrance and you have no access to a private garden</p>	20	We will base this on who lives in your household. You will only keep these points until the children in your household reach the age of 12.
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Type of Points	Points	How we will assess whether you will receive these points
<p>Under-occupation</p> <p>You can receive points for under-occupation if your home is too large for your needs.</p> <p>We will only award under occupation points if you are moving to smaller accommodation.</p> <p>1 bedroom too many 2 bedrooms too many 3 or more bedrooms too many</p>	<p>5 10 15</p>	<p>You will receive points based on the information in your application form. We may visit you at home before you receive an offer, to make sure your points are correct.</p> <p>We will work out the number of rooms you need as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no more than two people should have to share a bedroom • one bedroom for couples/partners • one bedroom for single adults/single parents • one bedroom for two children of different sex up to 8 years old • one bedroom for two children of the same sex up to 12 years old • one bedroom for each child of 12 years or over
<p>Below Tolerable Standard</p> <p>You can receive these points if your main and principle home is in poor condition and it does not meet the tolerable standard.</p>	<p>60</p>	<p>If you tell us that there are problems with the condition of your accommodation, we will arrange for a Technical Inspector or we will ask the Council's Environmental Services to inspect your accommodation to see if it has any of the following problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structural problems • severe rising or penetrating damp or water penetration • unsatisfactory natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and for heating • unsatisfactory thermal insulation • no adequate piped supply of wholesome water within the house • no sink with an adequate supply of both hot and cold water within the house • no inside toilet for the exclusive use of the people living in the house • no fixed bath or shower and wash-hand basin, with hot and cold water • no effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water • unsatisfactory or unsafe electricity supply • unsatisfactory facilities for the cooking of food • unsatisfactory access to external doors and outbuildings

Type of Points	Points	How we will assess whether you will receive these points
<p>Medical</p> <p>You can receive these points if: You have difficulty with mobility and/or serious long term or terminal health problems, AND</p> <p>Your difficulty with mobility or your health problems are being made worse by your current housing situation, or would be alleviated or managed more effectively by being re-housed.</p> <p>There are three categories of medical points, as described opposite: Category A - High Category B – Medium Category C - Low</p>	<p>75 50 25</p>	<p>We will ask you to complete a medical application form. This will be assessed by the Homes4D&G registration Team</p> <p>We will recommend if you should receive medical points, and at what level.</p> <p>Category A You have extremely serious health or mobility difficulties (for example, where you cannot leave the house because of disability or illness), and your current home is completely unsuitable and you need to be re-housed as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>Category B You have serious health or mobility difficulties and your present home seriously affects daily activity. For example, getting up and downstairs is impossible and it is not practical to adapt your house, and your current home is unsuitable and re-housing would alleviate your health or mobility difficulties and/or improve your quality of life</p> <p>Category C You have less serious health or mobility difficulties but your present home hinders daily activity. For example, getting up and down stairs is hard to manage and it is not practical to adapt your home, and re-housing would alleviate your health or mobility problems and/or improve your quality of life.</p> <p>If you are awarded 75 medical points and you have not been rehoused within 6 months, we will review your case and unless there are good reasons it is likely you will lose 25 points.</p>
<p>Help to Live Independently</p> <p>You can receive these points if you or a member of your household need to move home for one of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive help – for example, you want to move to be near your helper • To provide help to somebody else – for example, you want to move to be near somebody you are going to help to live independently. 	<p>10</p>	<p>We will assess whether the distance or travelling time involved is too great to be reasonable.</p> <p>We do not use a standard way of assessing this, as everyone's circumstances are different.</p> <p>If you tell us in your application form that you need these points, we will ask for information about the type and frequency of help to be provided or given (for example help with maintaining a tenancy).</p> <p>We may ask you to provide us with evidence of the arrangement described in your application. Or, with your agreement, we may ask third parties (for example, other agencies who know about these arrangements) to confirm that you should receive these points.</p>

Priority Points		
<p>These points are designed to meet urgent housing need as quickly and successfully as possible and can be awarded to Waiting List and Transfer List applicants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked after and accommodated children • Domestic abuse • Serious Harassment • Armed Forces Personnel • Regeneration • Witness Protection Cases • Bed blocking Cases 	<p>75</p> <p>75</p> <p>75</p> <p>75</p> <p>75</p> <p>75</p> <p>75</p>	<p>The Homes4D&G team will carry out further checks to confirm the circumstances before priority points are awarded. If you qualify, these points will be awarded in addition to any other points you qualify for.</p> <p>A young person under 25 who is leaving care Dumfries & Galloway Council has statutory responsibility for the young person Priority will only be granted once the young person has been assessed as ready for a tenancy by Homes4D&G and Social Work Services</p> <p>A person who is experiencing domestic abuse physical; financial; sexual or emotional We will normally adopt a position of belief and any enquiries that we carry out will be performed with care and sensitivity</p> <p>Serious harassment at or near your home; physical attacks and /or damage to your property; as well as verbal abuse; hate crimes and other types of behavior that could cause harm or make you feel distressed or threatened We will need confirmation/evidence from your landlord and Police Scotland</p> <p>Currently serving with one of the recognized Ministry of Defense Armed Forces, with less than one full year to honourable discharge; have been discharged from one of the Armed Forces within the previous 6 months; have a local connection to Dumfries & Galloway; have completed at least a 3 year fixed term contract or have been about to be discharged on medical grounds; or Be the surviving spouse/partner or a non-dependent child (aged 16 years or above) or a deceased Forces Personnel (either serving or served within the past 6 months).</p> <p>Living in one of the partners properties to be demolished as a result of regeneration within the boundaries of Dumfries & Galloway</p> <p>Subject to witness protection confirmed by Police Scotland; Police UK or the National Mobility Service that you have a priority need for re-housing</p> <p>If you are in hospital, ready to be discharged, but cannot return to your previous home because it is no longer suitable to meet your needs</p>



APPENDIX 3
JOINT PROTOCOL FOR CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE
IN RELATION TO DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY COMMON
ALLOCATION POLICY

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Legislative framework
3. Context
4. Aims and Objectives
5. Outcomes
6. Common Allocation Policy
7. Support
8. Application Process
9. Data Protection
10. Monitoring and Review
11. Equality and Diversity

1. Introduction

The purpose of this agreement is to set up a formal working arrangement between the partner Landlords (RSLs) of Dumfries & Galloway Common Housing Register known as Homes4D&G, Dumfries and Galloway Council Social Work and Homeless Service.

The overarching aim of this Protocol is to ensure there is a coordinated response to the accommodation needs of care experienced young people aged between 16-25 years.

2. Legislative Framework

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 are designed to ensure that Dumfries and Galloway's local authority children's services and housing services work together to ensure that care experience young people have housing priority need status.

A young person has priority need for accommodation if he or she is: -

- a care experienced young person up to the age of 25 and statutory responsibility for this person is held by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

The Act provides the legislative underpinning for the duties and powers of public authorities responsible for supporting care leavers. Although many of the specific provisions have been amended by subsequent legislation and regulation, the principles set out in the Act's accompanying guidance continue to be relevant for local authorities and other corporate parents.

The Supporting Young People Leaving Care in Scotland: Regulations and Guidance on Services for Young People Ceasing to be Looked After by Local Authorities (published 2004) built on or amended the provisions laid out in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, setting out in detail the procedures to be followed by agencies providing through care and aftercare services to care leavers. The regulations (and statutory guidance) also reflected changes established through the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001.

The guidance details how the local authority should be flexible and focus on the individual needs of the young person: -

- pre-discharge discussions with priority setting
- advance planning to ensure accommodation is available
- reflecting the realities of the young person's life
- the capacity to offer a degree of choice of accommodation
- ensure the accommodation is safe and affordable
- care plan to ensure tenancy is sustained
- the need for contingency arrangements

The “Supporting Young People” guidance re-states that local authorities and their corporate parenting partners have a duty to provide assistance to care leavers, and that this may be in the form of accommodation support.

The “Supporting Young People” guidance also encourages relevant authorities to take into account a young person’s health needs, and the location of the accommodation; ‘It may be important for a young person to be close to support networks or to have easy transport links to their place of study or employment.’ The guidance states clearly that young people should not be placed in unsuitable bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation.

The issue of appropriate and effective support for care leavers is also highlighted in official guidance on preventing homelessness. In the Scottish Government’s Code of Guidance on Homelessness (published 2005).

The Prevention of Homelessness Guidance (published 2009), which informed local authorities that “care leavers should never leave the looked after system without careful advance joint planning to ensure that they do not enter the homeless system. Appropriate accommodation and any required support should be in place prior to any looked after child leaving care.’

While the primary responsibility for securing accommodation for care experienced young people rests with the local authority, it is essential that a corporate and multi-agency approach be adopted. The housing needs of the young person should be addressed before they leave their care setting.

3. Context

This agreement has been developed in the context of the current social, political and financial climate. It reflects the need to change the way we work across agencies and for agencies to work together in partnership to make better use of resources. It reflects an approach to housing that supports housing options for care experienced young people in or as close to their own natural communities and networks. It is a forward looking agreement that seeks to support creative housing solutions that promote and support independence. It is a key component in supporting the agenda around prevention and early intervention. It supports the emerging agenda locally and nationally around improving housing and accommodation outcomes for Scotland’s care experienced young people. Finally the agreement reflects a move towards working more closely with the young person to find the most suitable housing option to meet their needs.

4. Aims and objectives of the Protocol

To ensure care experienced young people are regarded as a priority group by all corporate parents and their partners to help reduce the risk of homelessness.

To ensure Registered Social Landlords, the Homeless Team, and Social Work provide appropriate housing options advice and assistance to care experienced young people in order to alleviate them from becoming homeless and ensure transition to suitable accommodation.

Housing provision will be based on the best interests of the young person taking their views into account.

To assist care experienced young people into permanent independent accommodation.

To ensure care experienced young people achieve a successful transition into independent living through preparation, offering support and suitable permanent accommodation to become successful and responsible adults and tenants.

A joint approach involving all relevant partners will be adopted to maximise tenancy sustainment.

To ensure the effective discharge of corporate responsibilities between housing and social work services by jointly addressing housing support and accommodation needs of care experienced young people.

5. Outcomes

Dumfries and Galloway Social Services will ensure that all care experienced young people will receive: -

- a consistent integrated service;
- a completed Pathway Assessment and plan which identifies the views of the young person;
- access to accommodation which considers the young person's needs and choices; and
- appropriate support during their transition to independence within the community

6. Common Allocation Policy

The Homes 4 D&G Common Allocation Policy has been developed as part of the Dumfries and Galloway Common Housing Register.

The Common Housing Register is a computer based single housing list which all four Registered Social Landlords will use to register applicants for housing.

This process is designed to make it easier for applicants to apply for social housing by filling in one application form.

Homes 4 D&G is the formal name given to the partnership between the 4 Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) operating in Dumfries and Galloway.

They are: -

- Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership;
- Home Scotland;
- Irvine Housing Association; and
- Cunninghame Housing Association

Care experienced young people will be recognised by granting 75 priority points to their housing application. This will only be done when confirmation is received from Social Work that the young person meets the criteria outlined in this policy.

The young person will be entitled to two offers under the Common Allocations Policy. It should be noted that in some areas housing will take much longer than in other areas and therefore young people should be encouraged to make a reasonable choice of areas. It will be important to make the young person aware that housing can take a long time in high demand/low turnover areas throughout Dumfries and Galloway. If the young person refuses two reasonable offers, the 75 priority points will be removed and their application suspended from the waiting list for 12 months. It is therefore essential that the young person has the support to make sure that their housing choices on their application reflect their rehousing needs.

7. Support

All care experienced young people will have a Pathway plan which should detail accommodation needs and the type of housing related support that the young person requires in order to successfully maintain a tenancy.

All Young people should fully understand what is required of them as a tenant, who will support them and what they should do in a crisis situation. **Young people should be assessed as having the necessary skills and abilities to maintain a tenancy with appropriate support prior to priority points being awarded.**

In addition to their application form, there must be written support from Dumfries and Galloway Council's Social Work Services, describing how the young person's care/support needs will be met. This is to ensure their tenancy is sustained and access to housing delivers positive outcomes for the young person.

The success of tenancies will be monitored by both agencies. Any potential difficulties will be identified as early as possible and dealt with by both agencies and the young person.

Good communication between agencies is essential at all times in order to support the young person and address tenancy issues. The young person must give their consent to the sharing of information.

Consultation should take place between agencies, and agreement reached, prior to any formal action being taken to end any young person's tenancy.

8. Application Process

A named Homes4D&G partner will be invited to attend all reviews/planning meetings held by social work in respect of the young person.

The standard Homes4D&G Housing Application will be completed by the young person. The application will be pended until a review is carried out by Homes4D&G involving Social Work and any other relevant parties. Once this is completed and all parties agree any required supports are in place to help the young person maintain the tenancy, the application will be activated and the 75 priority points will be granted.

A partner RSL will contact the Social Worker prior to the young person being informed of an offer of a tenancy to ensure that the offer is appropriate.

The Social Worker will arrange a planning meeting as soon as an offer has been accepted to ensure that appropriate and adequate support is in place to assist the young person both during and after the move to a permanent tenancy.

The young person's tenancy will be monitored regularly and any problems communicated immediately so that action can be taken to resolve any issues identified.

9. Data Protection and Information Sharing

Information will be shared across the agencies in line with existing information sharing protocols and best practice.

10. Monitoring and Review

Partners will support each other, through the protocol, to meet national key performance indicators in respect of young people leaving care.

There will be a named officer in each agency responsible for the housing application of care leavers.

To jointly develop a system to predict future housing need and continue to develop partnerships which will benefit young people leaving care.

It is the joint responsibility to agree local service outcomes and outputs that are monitored by designated officers

Designated staff from the partner landlords of Homes 4 D&G will meet regularly to discuss the application process and the outcomes achieved to ensure it is operating effectively. Any recommendations for changes to this protocol will have to be agreed by the CHR Board, who will also be responsible for implementing any changes required in light of operational experience, legislative changes or good practice guidance.

This protocol will be reviewed every three years or earlier if there are changes to legislation and the protocol needs to be updated to reflect these changes.

11. Equality & Diversity

The partners of this protocol value diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity for all young people, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, culture, faith or disability.

Jointly partners will seek to promote the participation of young people in the process of decision making and challenge any kind of discrimination, whether direct or indirect.



Appendix 4:

Suspension and Cancellation Policy

Contents

Title	Page No:
1. Background	
2. Introduction	
3. Aims and Objectives	
4. Legal Framework	
5. Regulatory Requirements	
6. Definition of Suspension	
7. Policy content	
7.1. Implementation of the Policy	
7.2. Reasons for Suspension	
7.3. Applying and Removing a Suspension	
7.4. Notifying Applicants of Suspension	
7.5. Appeal of Suspension	
8. Removal of an applicant from the housing list	
9. Monitoring and Reporting	
10. Review	
11. Associated documents	

Homes4D&G Common Application Suspension & Cancellation Policy

1 Background

This Common Application Suspension and Cancellation Policy has been developed for Homes4D&G, which is a partnership between Dumfries and Galloway Council and 4 Registered Social Landlords working in Dumfries and Galloway.

They are: -

- Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership (DGHP)
- Home
- Irvine Housing Association
- Cunninghame Housing Association (CHA)

Homes4D&G introduced a Common Housing Register and Common Allocation Policy to improve access for applicants seeking social rented housing in Dumfries and Galloway.

This procedure has been jointly agreed by the partners who will be referred to generally as 'we' or 'the partners' throughout this policy document.

2 Introduction

This policy describes when we will consider suspending offers of housing, how long we will suspend offers for and what an applicant needs to do to have the suspension removed. We are committed to minimising the number of suspensions we make; however, there will be certain circumstances when it will be necessary. The policy applies to **all** applications on the Homes4D&G Common Housing Register including existing tenants who wish to transfer and other applicants who are not currently our tenants.

3 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the policy are: -

- to ensure that all the partners have a common approach to dealing with suspensions;
- to ensure that applicants for housing are given fair and equal treatment regardless of disability, gender, age, race, culture, sexual orientation, marital status or religion in line with the partners' equalities policies;
- to enable the partners to effectively manage access to housing where applicants have breached the terms of their tenancy agreement;
- to minimise suspensions;
- To recognise individual circumstances and acute housing need;

- To ensure that suspended applications are formally monitored and we have regular contact with applicants when they are suspended;
- To reinstate applicants to the Homes 4 D&G Common Housing Register at the earliest opportunity;
- To be accountable through an open and transparent appeals process; and
- To ensure that all applications are processed within the legal framework as detailed in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and in accordance with current good practice.

4 Legal Framework

The framework for the policy is provided by the following legislation: -

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Part 1, Section 10 Allocation of Housing
- The Anti-Social Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004

5 Regulatory Requirements

The Scottish Housing Regulator uses the outcomes and standards in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) to assess the performance of social landlords. The outcomes and standards that have been considered in the development of this policy are outlined below:

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

6 Definition of Suspension

A suspension happens when someone has been assessed for and accepted onto the housing register but is told that he or she will not be eligible for an offer of housing until: -

- (a) a specified period has elapsed;
- (b) it is evident that the conduct has changed; or
- (c) a change in circumstances has occurred.

A suspension is **not** a deferred application.

A deferred application is when the applicant is not currently seeking housing, e.g. applicants in tied accommodation, prison, armed forces or supported accommodation. It can also be where the applicant has stated that they do not want to currently be considered for housing for a short period e.g. due to illness or family crisis, but wish to remain on the register. This is known as a *voluntary deferral*.

7 Policy Content

7.1 Implementation of the Policy

Homeless legislation takes priority over this suspension procedure therefore none of the grounds for suspension will apply to statutory homeless applicants, i.e. applicants who have been assessed as unintentionally homeless (under Part II of the Homeless (Scotland) Act 1987 (amended)).

Each application will be assessed on an individual basis and all relevant matters will be taken into account

The use of suspensions will be minimised for our existing tenants through the use of appropriate interventions as contained within other housing management policies, for example, rent arrears, debt management, anti-social behaviour and estate management policies.

7.2 Reasons for Suspension

Although we want to keep to a minimum the number of people we suspend from our housing list, there are some circumstances where we do need to remove people from the list. Applicants can be suspended from receiving an offer of housing under the following circumstances:

- if the applicant owes us, or another landlord, a tenancy-related debt which is more than one month's rent, if they have not kept to a repayment arrangement for a 3 month period;

- if the applicant or a member of their household has behaved in an anti-social manner and where there is evidence of this taking place;
- if the applicant has given false information on their application form;
- if the applicant or a member of their household has broken some condition of their tenancy agreement, such as causing damage to their current home;
- if the applicant has not provided the information we need to assess their application despite reminders to do so;
- if you have refused two offers of housing that met with the choices on your housing application
- if the applicant is a high risk offender, where Dumfries & Galloway's Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) team will carry out a risk assessment to determine if their application can be reinstated.

7.3 Applying and Removing a Suspension

The specific criteria for suspension, length of suspension periods, the review process and the circumstances when the suspension will be removed are detailed in Appendix 1.

A suspension can be activated at the point of application or when an applicant is being considered for an offer of housing. Suspensions can be applied and removed during the course of the application.

7.4 Notifying Applicants of Suspension

Applicants will be notified in writing if their application for housing is subject to suspension of offers. Applicants will be told why they have been suspended from receiving offers, how long they are suspended for and what they need to do to get the suspension removed. They will also be advised of the appeals procedure and provided with a leaflet explaining the suspensions process.

7.5 Appeal of Suspension

If we do suspend offers to an applicant they have the right to appeal this decision.

You can appeal our decision verbally, to Homes 4 D&G Implementation Team. For example, if you do not agree with the reason for suspension, you should first contact Homes 4 D&G and ask them to review your circumstances again. We will do this within five working days.

If you remain dissatisfied with the decision, a written appeal can then be lodged with the Common Housing Register Manager. They will investigate your appeal and respond in writing within 10 working days.

8 Removal of an applicant from the housing list

The partners would only remove an applicant from the waiting list where: -

- the applicant is housed by one of the partners
- the applicant requests, in writing, that they wish to be removed from the list
- the applicant fails to respond to a periodic review
- the applicant fails to respond to two or more consecutive letter sent out
- the applicant dies

9 Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring is essential to evaluate how effectively we meet our legal requirements and the policy and procedural guidelines.

We will monitor: -

- Number of suspensions and a breakdown of the reasons; and
- The number of suspended applicants as a percentage of the total number of applicants on the Homes4D&G.

10 Review

We will review this policy every three years along with the Common Allocation Policy, or earlier if required in light of changes in the law or good practice guidance.

11 Associated documents

The following documents are associated with this policy: -

- Homes4D&G Common Allocation Policy
- Homes4D&G Common Allocation Procedure
- Homes4D&G landlords' Anti-Social Behaviour Policies
- Homes4D&G landlords' Debt Management/Rent Arrears policies

Date:	15 th March 2021
Subject:	Operational Performance
Author:	Heather Anderson
Sponsor:	Paul Hillard
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Period 11 Dashboards Appendix 2 – Irvine Customer Plan
Action:	Information
Data Class:	Public

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper sets out performance across the operational KPIs as at the end of Period 11 of 2021, and includes the Association's updated Customer Plan following the Covid pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to consider and note the performance position and the updated Irvine Customer Plan.

1 Background

- 1.1 Performance against the current agreed KPIs is reported to each Board meeting using the performance reporting system, Tableau. The dashboards as at the end of Period 11 of 2021 are attached to this report as Appendix 1. The Irvine Customer Plan has been revised and updated due to the delay in progress arising from the Covid pandemic. The revised plan is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

2 Performance Context

- 2.1 The agreed KPIs for 2020/21 for Irvine are:

- Total unadjusted arrears.
- Void rent loss.
- Rent Evictions
- Repairs timescales.
- Compliance
- Tenancy Turnover
- Tenancy Sustainability
- Overall satisfaction
- Listening to Views
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Latest Repair satisfaction
- Complaints Handling
- Complaints resolved at first stage.

3 Performance update and analysis

3.1 Income

Total arrears are currently at a 4 week average of 4.14%. There has been a slight increase over the reporting period following a significant decrease due to non-charging fortnight in December. The pattern of arrears is similar to last year, albeit the level is higher as a result of the impact of Covid and increased numbers of tenants moving onto Universal Credit (currently 782 tenants claiming UC compared to 250 this time last year). Four Housing Officers remain focused on arrears recovery work and are working hard to engage with customers and maintain repayment arrangements. No evictions legislation has been extended beyond 31st March 2021 and we currently have approximately 9 households for whom we are likely to seek eviction when permitted. We have developed bespoke letters in conjunction with our solicitor Harper MacLeod, and are likely to progress to legal action in the meantime for some high risk cases to request enforcement of agreed repayment arrangements.

[REDACTED]

Void rent loss is out with target due to a higher than average number of voids in recent months (a significant number of tenant deaths), as well as increased turnaround timescales as a result of deep cleans and Covid restrictions.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has dipped slightly in the period following continued improvements overall in recent months. Customers who have expressed dissatisfaction, and who have agreed to be called, have all been contacted and issues resolved. There is a general trend from analysis of customer comments that tenants are becoming increasingly frustrated at the Covid restrictions, and that fact that we are currently only carrying out emergency repairs. Further information will be issued on our website reiterating that we will restart all repairs services as soon as Government guidelines allow.

Due to the pandemic, we have been unable to progress the actions within the Irvine Customer Plan as far as we would like. This plan has been reviewed to reflect progress and include some new actions arising from changes and service improvements identified as a result of Covid, which we will be working to progress over the next year. The revised plan is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

Compliance

Gas safety check compliance currently sits at 100%.

4 Next steps

Teams will be working to progress the revised Customer Plan actions over the coming year, and face to face visits will be re-introduced across the various service areas as restrictions allow.

5 Recommendations

5.1 As described in the Executive Summary.

Irvine Performance Dashboards

As at Period 11 End (01/02/21 to 28/02/21)

Irvine Operational KPIs - Board...

Report Date
03/03/2021

Rent Evictions
0

Repairs Completed in Ti..
97.6%
Total Repairs: **4,876**

Gas Compliance
100.0%
Expired: **1**

Tenancy Turnover
4.5%
Tenancies Ended: **102**

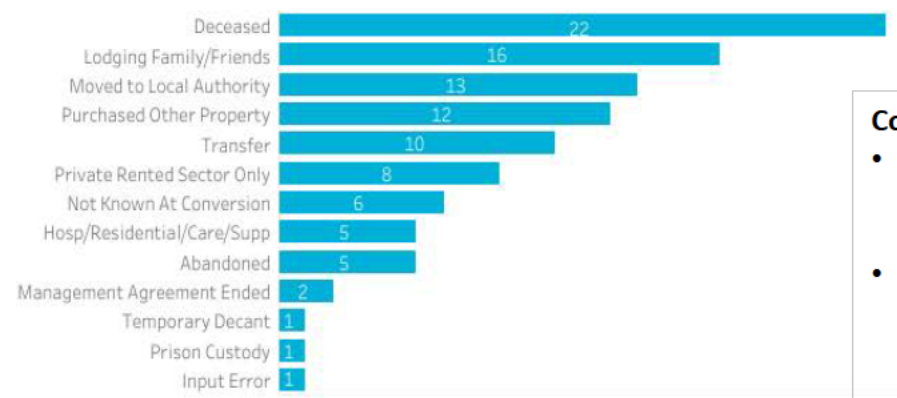
Tenancy Sustainability
5
Evictions (any reason) and abandonments

Refusals
3.85%
104 Lets with 4 refusal

Average Relet Days Week by Week



All Ended Tenancies



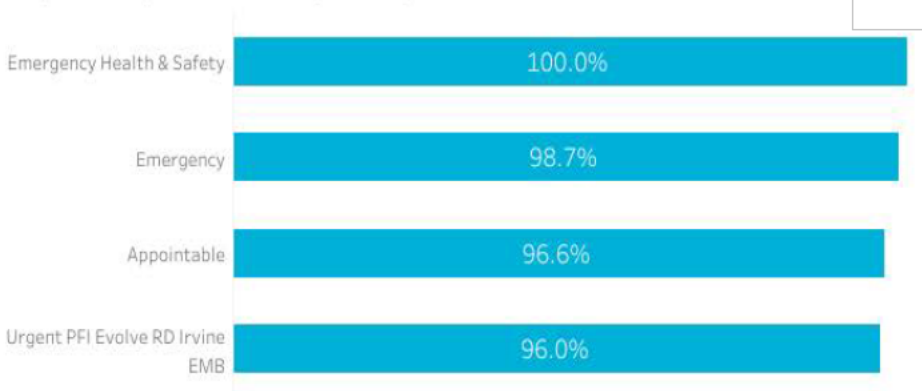
Commentary:

- Gas safety check compliance is now at 100% and processes are progressing within Covid restrictions.
- Lettings are being processed as normal and teams working closely to monitor progress, average re-let days have reduced to 14 over the reporting period.

Repairs Completed in Time vs Volume of Repairs



Repairs Completed in Time by Priority



Social Housing Cash Leakage - NSC Paper...

Stock
Riverside

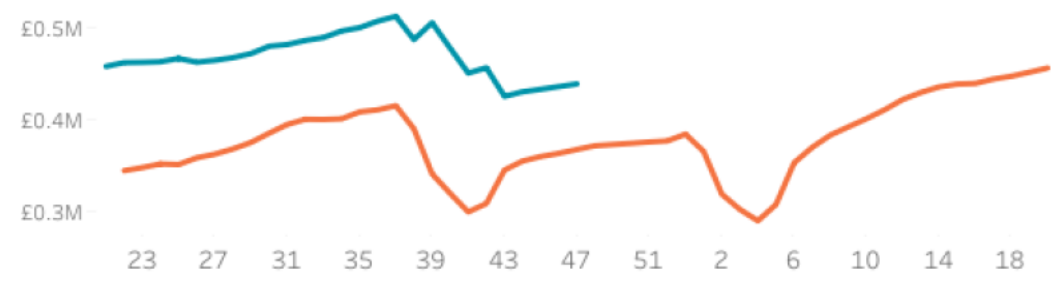
Report Date
28/02/2021



Currently Showing: **Irvine A**

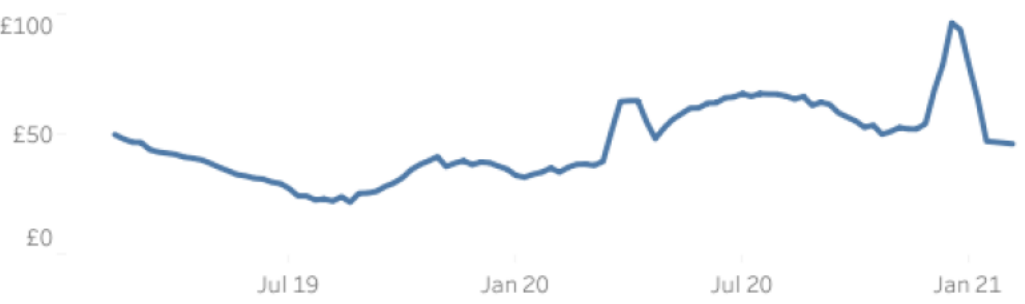
Current Arrears
£0.44M
£10.60M (4.14%)

Arrears 4 Week Average **This Year** vs **Last Year**
The latest week is fixed at the centre of the chart



Year Movement Per Unit
+£46
Moved to Former: **£0.04M**

Yearly Movement Per Unit
(Arrears Per Unit - Arrears Per Unit 1 Year Ago) + Arrears Moved to Former in Year per Unit



Void Rent Loss
0.31%
£29,610 / £9.51M

Void Rent Loss Weekly
The Rent Loss for each individual week



Commentary

- Arrears have increased slightly over the period which is in line with trends in previous years, albeit at a higher level. Four Irvine Housing Officers remain focused on arrears recovery, supported by one member of the Income Collection team.
- Actions will be taken to progress higher level sporadic payer cases to court to enforce agreed repayment arrangements as current alternative to eviction requests under Covid restrictions.
- Legal letters developed by our solicitors are being issued on an individual basis.
- Discussions are underway to plan for a safe return to visits for higher risk arrears cases.
- [REDACTED]
- Void rent loss has reduced over the reporting period. Asset and Lettings teams continue to work closely to manage the end to end process for each void, pre allocate voids well in advance of tenancy termination, and manage the void repairs and property cleans.

Commentary

Commentary

Social Housing Customer Satisfaction - NSC Paper...



Currently Showing: IRV
Rolling 3 Month Measures

Overall Satisfaction

78.4%

Responses: 264



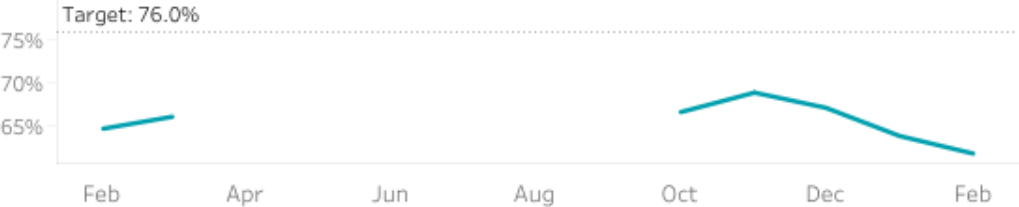
Commentary

- Overall satisfaction has dipped over the month, with 6 out of 93 tenants who responded to the survey advising they were very dissatisfied. Contact has been made with each of these customers who agreed to discuss the issues, and solutions have been put in place.

Listening to Views

61.9%

Responses: 265



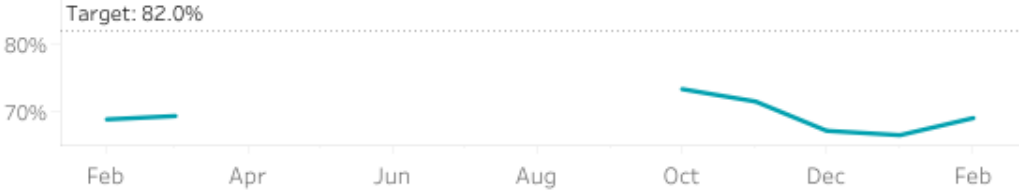
Commentary

- Key issues raised were around the fact that some repairs were not classed as emergencies, and therefore could not be carried out due to Covid - normal repairs services will resume as soon as Government restrictions are lifted, and customers have been advised.

Repairs and Maintenance

69.1%

Responses: 265



Commentary

- Complaints handling satisfaction has dipped during the period, this is based on 5 responses received between Dec-Feb 2021, 3 were very dissatisfied, 1 fairly satisfied, and 1 very satisfied. The three dissatisfied tenants have been contacted and issues now resolved. Internal complaints handling session has been carried out with all staff, and single point of contact for all asset complaints now in place.

Latest Repair

78.9%

Responses: 142



Commentary

Complaints Handling

40.0%

Responses: 5



Commentary

Date:	25 th March 2021
Subject:	Managing Director's Report
Author:	Paul Hillard (paul.hillard@irvineha.co.uk)
Sponsor:	N/A
Appendices:	None
Action:	Noting
Data Class:	Public

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report is provided to Board to give an update on the following matters where no formal decisions are required at this time:

- Bank Street, Irvine, Office
- Board Member Resignation
- Board Strategy Sessions
- Governance Policies
- Housing to 2040
- Convene – governance software platform
- Carbon Literacy Training
- Promoting Riverside in Scotland

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that Board Members note and comment on the contents of this Report.

1 Bank Street Office

1.1

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2 Board Member Resignation

2.1

Mr Christopher Donohoe has tendered his resignation from the Board with effect from 25th February 2021. This means the Board will have dropped to 8 members, the lowest figure permitted by the Rules, but will increase to 9 once Mr Strang joins the Board to fill a casual vacancy.

3 Board Strategy Sessions

3.1

As discussed at the January Board meeting, in normal circumstances the Board would have a Strategy Event during March. As we are currently unable to meet in the traditional way, it is proposed that we have separate strategic session on line. After consideration of the key strategic issues facing the Association, it is suggested that there should be four sessions focussing on the following areas:

- Customer Experience
- New Ways of Working
- Growth
- The 30 Year Financial Plan

3.2

It is envisaged that each session will last approximately 75 minutes and will be carried out once a month from May.

3.3

Board members are asked to comment on the proposed topics and give feedback on convenient days and times for the sessions to take place.

4 Governance Policies

4.1 The Association has several governance related policies which are currently due for review. These include:

- Governance Framework
- Board & Committee Code of Conduct
- Standing Orders
- Membership Policy

4.2

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The review of these policies has therefore been postponed until later during 2021.

5 Housing to 2040

5.1 The Scottish Government has published its overarching housing strategy for the next 20 years. The main components of the strategy include:

- £16bn to fund 100,00 new homes by 2032 (70% for social rent)
- A new, all tenure, Housing Standard to be introduced between 2025 and 2030
- Tackling high rents in the private sector and supporting fair, accessible private and social rental sectors through a Rented Sector Strategy and Housing Bill
- Decarbonising heating in all homes in line with Scotland's climate ambitions, ensuring this is done in a fair and just way, including by adapting and retrofitting existing homes
- Aiming for all new homes delivered by Registered Social Landlords and local authorities to be zero emissions by 2026
- Establishing a new fund to help local authorities bring empty homes back into residential use
- Supporting housing development in rural and island areas, helping to prevent depopulation and enabling communities to thrive
- Continuing with our updated plan to end homelessness and rough sleeping once and for all
- Undertaking a comprehensive audit of our current housing and homelessness legislation to understand how best to realise the right to adequate housing.

5.2 The full document is available on the link below:

[Housing to 2040 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/housing/housing-to-2040)

6 Convene – governance software platform

6.1 A new governance software platform is currently being introduced across Riverside. This will allow on line access to governance documentation and will be used for the collation and distribution of Board and Committee papers. Training will be provided for Board members on this software system prior to implementation from the May 2021 Board meeting.

7 Carbon literacy training

- 7.1 The Association is currently participating in a programme of Carbon Literacy Training provided by Keep Scotland Beautiful. The programme has been organised and facilitated through the G8. Eight colleagues from across the organisation will receive eight hours of training each, over a four week period, which will lead to an accredited qualification.
- 7.2 It is intended that, once all colleagues have completed the programme, this cohort will be responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of a carbon elimination plan for the Association. More detailed reports will be provided to the Board as this initiative develops.

8 Promoting Riverside in Scotland

- 8.1 The marketing and communications initiative to promote the Riverside brand in Scotland has now commenced. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

9 Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Board Members note and comment on the contents of this Report.