



# **NORTH AYRSHIRE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

2025-30

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## Section 1 - Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The North Ayrshire Housing Allocation Policy (herein the policy) defines how social housing in North Ayrshire will be allocated. Following consultation, the policy was approved by North Ayrshire Council (herein the Council) Cabinet on 30 September 2025 and is effective from 1 November 2025.

The policy was developed in accordance with the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 1987](#) (“the 1987 Act”), as amended by the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#) (“the 2001 Act”), the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) (“the 2014 Act”) and other relevant legislation. It also aligns with the Scottish Government’s [Scottish Housing Allocations Practice Guide 2019](#).

### 1.2 The Allocations Framework

The legislative and regulatory framework for the allocation of social rented sector homes continues to evolve over time, including through the 1987 Act, the 2001 Act and the 2014 Act.

Allocation policies are additionally required to comply with the homelessness rules set out in Part II of the 1987 Act (as amended by the 2001 Act and the [Homelessness etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) (“the 2003 Act”). Landlords also have a duty to make and publish rules covering priority of allocation of houses, transfers and exchanges (section 21 of the 1987 Act, as amended by section 155 of the [Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993](#) and the 2001 Act). This means that any allocation policy should set out clearly how the landlord will decide on priority for housing.

Landlords should take any other relevant legislation into account when developing or reviewing their allocation policy. Although there is a clear legal framework within which allocation policies must operate, within these constraints, landlords have considerable discretion to develop their allocation policy and practice to meet the needs of the communities in which they operate.

### 1.3 The Scottish Social Housing Charter

The [Scottish Social Housing Charter](#) (the Charter) sets out the outcomes and standards that all social landlords should be delivering for their tenants and other customers.

The policy aligns with the following Charter Outcomes:

#### Equality

- 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.

## **Communication**

- 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.

## **Participation**

- Outcome 3: Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

## **Housing options**

- 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 home get advice on preventing homelessness.

## **Access to social housing**

- 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.

## **Tenancy sustainment**

- Outcome 11: Social landlords ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

## **Homeless people**

- Outcome 12: Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) monitors, assesses and reports on landlords' performance against the Charter. All social landlords submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the SHR and the SHR publishes performance information for each landlord on their [website](#).

## **1.4 Aims of the policy**

This section describes the aims and objectives of the allocation policy.

- Maximise efficient use of North Ayrshire Housing Register (NAHR) housing to respond to local housing needs, demands and aspirations.



- Prioritise applicants assessed as having the greatest housing need.
- Support the development of active, inclusive and resilient communities through the allocation of housing.
- Ensure we are fair, transparent, and consistent in our approach to the allocation of all NAHR housing.
- Meet all legislative and regulatory requirements for the allocation of housing in North Ayrshire.
- Promote an equalities-led approach to the allocation of housing in North Ayrshire.

NAHR partners have developed a monitoring framework to ensure that the policy aims are being met. We will report policy outcomes to all relevant stakeholders (incl. tenant representatives).

### **1.5 Consultation**

The [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) requires the social landlords to prepare and publish a report on the consultation carried out during the development of the allocation policy. A copy of the consultation report can be made available upon request.

### **1.6 North Ayrshire Council Privacy Statement**

The Council is a local authority established under the [Local Government etc. \(Scotland\) Act 1994](#) and is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as a data controller (registration number Z4840237). The Council gathers and processes information about you for a range of purposes, including to ensure:

- That services can be delivered effectively and efficiently
- To manage the employment relationship with our employees

Your privacy is important to us.

All employees who have access to your personal data, or are associated with the handling of that data, are obliged to comply with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#).

The Council's [Privacy Statement](#) details how we will look after your information.

### **1.7 North Ayrshire Housing Register Privacy Statement**

The NAHR is a partnership operating the Common Housing Register in North Ayrshire. It gathers and processes information about you so that services you request in relation to housing can be delivered effectively and efficiently. We regard your privacy as important and all employees who have access to your personal data, or are associated with the handling of that data, are obliged to comply with the Data Protection Act. The [NAHR Privacy Statement](#) details how we will look after your information.

Each partner is responsible for managing information securely. Individual NAHR privacy statements can be found on their websites.

## **1.8 Equal Opportunities**

NAHR partners are committed to the principle that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. In relation to the allocation of social housing, this policy ensures that the NAHR partners act fairly, with transparency, and lawfully. NAHR partners do not discriminate against applicants in any way on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

To support this and as part of the development of the policy, an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to ensure that the policy is inclusive and does not unfairly disadvantage any of the groups detailed above. A copy of the impact assessment can be made available upon request. NAHR partners will monitor the policy to ensure that it achieves all equalities objectives set.

If any applicant feels that they have been treated unfairly they have the right, through the appeals process, to have their case reviewed (*see Section 7.1*).

If you require this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone 01294 310000 or email [commonhousingregisterteam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:commonhousingregisterteam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk).

## **Section 2 – Applying for a house**

### **2.1 North Ayrshire Housing Register – Housing Options Wizard**

It is important that people have the information that they need to make informed choices about their housing options.

The NAHR website provides an online information system ('Housing Options Wizard') to support individuals to understand their Housing Options in North Ayrshire. It is a self-assessment service that asks a few simple questions about an individual's circumstances. Once all the questions are completed, the NAHR website will provide a personal plan detailing housing options that are most appropriate.

Applicants can access the NAHR website at <https://www.northayrshirehr.co.uk/>

### **2.2 Who can apply for housing?**

In accordance with the terms of the 1987 Act, as amended by the 2001 Act, anyone aged 16 years or over can join a housing register. You can apply as a single applicant, or with other persons (*see Section 2.10 – Joint applications*) provided they are not prevented from doing so by immigration or any other relevant legislation.

### **2.3 How to apply for housing**

Application forms can be completed online via our [website](#), or support to complete a form will also be made available across our local housing offices.

In line with our equality commitments (*see Section 1.8 – Equal Opportunities*), this can be made available in different languages and in other formats, such as large print. We can also arrange for interpreting services (incl. for hearing impairments), where necessary, and will meet relevant costs.

Upon request, we will assist applicants to complete their application form. Applicants can use our online services to apply for housing, update an existing application, review housing options, contact us and search and apply for a mutual exchange.

Information on applying for a house is available from the NAHR website at <https://www.northyrrshirehr.co.uk/>

## **2.4 Processing applications**

When processing and reviewing applications for housing, we will:

- Aim to assess completed application forms **within ten working days** from receiving them;
- Send you a letter advising you what group we have put your application in and the number of points you have been awarded; and
- Review your housing application at least once per year (*see Section 5.1*).

## **2.5 Applying for sheltered housing**

Sheltered housing is for persons aged 60 and over and provides housing support services and, in certain circumstances, an alert response service for emergencies. It is intended for people who require some support to live independently and who may have a medical condition which makes their current home unsuitable.

While the process for applying for sheltered housing is the same as detailed at 2.3, there are additional qualifying requirements in relation to the allocation of sheltered housing. Our website provides further details on how to apply for sheltered housing and how sheltered properties are allocated in North Ayrshire.

Further information on applying for sheltered housing can be found at <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/housing/amenity-and-sheltered-housing>

## **2.6 Applying for amenity or adapted housing**

A number of properties have been purpose built or adapted to meet specific needs of different groups of applicants, for example, older people, people with a disability and/or with restricted mobility. Priority for this type of accommodation is given to those who have been assessed as having appropriate needs.

Further information on applying for amenity housing can be found at <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/housing/amenity-and-sheltered-housing>

## **2.7 Mutual exchange**

A mutual exchange is where two, or more, tenants swap homes with each other. This is a good opportunity to find a new home when there are a lot of people on the NAHR.



Council tenants can exchange homes with:

- Another North Ayrshire Council tenant
- Any other tenant of a UK housing association
- Any other tenant of a UK council

Further information on applying for mutual exchange can be found at <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/housing/managing-your-tenancy/council-house-mutual-exchange>

## **2.8 Applicant choice**

The allocation system (see *Section 3*) ensures that applicants' choices are factored into consideration. Applicants can state their preferences from a number of factors, such as:

- Preferred area and streets
- House types
- Floor level
- Amenities, such as gardens, etc.
- Heating types

Applicants are **also permitted to state where they don't want to be considered** in respect of the above factors.

It's important to understand that an applicant's choice of housing may be impacted by legal requirements and/or relevant guidance that the Council is obligated to follow.

Applicants' choices are subject to the availability of housing. Although applicants can request housing in particular areas, the prospects of housing will vary from area-to-area based on the number of houses available for let and tenancy sustainment (i.e. how long tenants remain in lets for).

## **2.9 Areas of choice**

The NAHR partner's housing stock is divided into management areas and within each area; the housing stock is further divided into a number of letting areas. Letting areas vary in size, however they generally reflect areas that are commonly recognised and requested by applicants.

Applicants can apply for housing in any area of North Ayrshire and can select as many letting areas as they wish.

## **2.10 Joint applications for housing**

There are circumstances where applicants may decide to submit a joint application for housing with someone else.

### **Applicants who currently live separately**

Applicants who live separately are assessed on the combined housing needs of the household.

Where one or both applicants have previously made an application for housing, the joint application will be assessed based on the combined needs of the household. Points are awarded based on the applicant who has the highest level of assessed housing need points, and the earliest date of application.

### **Applicants who have moved in together**

Where two applicants have separate existing applications for housing and thereafter move in together, their circumstances will be re-assessed on a joint basis according to their current housing circumstances, and earliest date of application.

In both circumstances above, should applicants wish to be considered individually for housing, their application will be assessed from the original date of application and in accordance with their current housing circumstances.

## **2.11 Common Housing Register - joint working arrangements**

The Council operates a Common Housing Register (the NAHR) with a number of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) with properties across North Ayrshire.

The NAHR makes it straightforward for applicants to apply for housing with the Council and participating RSLs, through a single housing application form.

More details on the NAHR and partner RSLs can be found on the NAHR website at <https://www.northayrshirehr.co.uk/>

In addition, joint working arrangements are in place with other RSLs who are not part of the NAHR, however have housing stock in North Ayrshire.

### **Referral of homeless applicants to RSLs**

Aligning with Section 5 of the 2001 Act and assisting with meeting demand for housing from homeless applicants, the Council can request that RSLs with properties within North Ayrshire provide applicants with housing if they have been assessed as homeless. This is known as a Section 5 referral. We predominately utilise the nominations process (see below) due to the limited number of properties held by non-NAHR RSLs.

Prior to a Section 5 referral, the Council will take into consideration an applicant's needs and preferences and the availability of suitable housing. The key aim of the Section 5 referral is to ensure that applicants are housed appropriately and as quickly as possible.

### **Nominations agreements**

The Council works in partnership with certain RSLs to agree and implement a nomination process for allocations whilst ensuring systems are in place for monitoring.

When applying for housing, applicants can select other RSLs who have housing in areas they have chosen.

## Section 3 – Our allocations system

This section explains what type of allocation system the NAHR partners operate in North Ayrshire to ensure we meet our policy objectives effectively. In this section we will cover:

- What we mean when we consider ‘housing need’
- What ‘reasonable preference’ is and where it will apply
- The groups plus points allocations system the NAHR partners work within
- How we group and place applications
- How we assess housing needs and what points we award/apply

### 3.1 Understanding housing need

A significant role of our policy is to address housing need. It is important that we define what we mean when we refer to ‘housing need’. In this policy, we define housing need by reference to:

- Legal requirements in relation to homelessness, the tolerable standard and under-occupation. These define minimum acceptable housing conditions and occupancy levels.
- Professional standards, for example, we regard households as being overcrowded if they do not meet our occupancy standard.
- Social standards that take account of applicants’ preferences and aspirations.
- Affordability of housing, for example, applicants may become homeless in the private sector because they cannot afford to pay mortgage costs.
- Unsatisfactory housing including accessibility needs.

We assess levels and types of need on a regular basis through our individual Letting Plans. A Letting Plan is the method used to identify and address housing needs. Some of the factors that we consider when assessing needs are:

- Numbers of applicants on the NAHR.
- The preferences and circumstances of applicants.
- Supply and turnover of the housing stock that is available for letting.

### 3.2 Reasonable preference groups

The 2014 Act amended section 20 of the 1987 Act and sets out three categories of applicants who should be given reasonable preference in an allocation policy. These are:

- a) people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and have unmet housing needs
- b) people who are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions and have unmet housing needs

- c) tenants of a social landlord who are under-occupied (not using all of the bedrooms in the property they live in)

There are specific laws which determine our responsibility towards supporting those who present as homeless or are threatened with homelessness. The Council has a separate Homelessness Policy which can be made available upon request.

### **3.3 The groups plus points system**

The groups plus points system establishes groups with applications placed into the appropriate group. Applicants in each group are awarded points recognising their housing needs.

Where applicants have the same points and are placed within the same group, applications are thereafter prioritised by the date of application. Therefore, if two applicants have the same points, the applicant who registers first will be given greater priority.

We use Letting Plans to assess the target of lets to be allocated to each group (see *Section 6.1*). These targets vary and are revised based on housing needs and stock available for letting.

NAHR partners follow the general rules detailed in this policy. Individual partners may vary their targets of lets allocated to groups within their own areas. This is necessary to ensure that we take account of both local housing stock and needs. The policy notes where individual partners have developed specific procedures to address local circumstances.

### **3.4 Our groups and placing applications**

The NAHR is made up of seven groups. Applications will be assessed according to the individual circumstances of the applicant and placed on one of the following seven lists:

#### **Group 1 – Homeless**

If an applicant is determined as homeless, their application is placed in Group 1.

Group 1 is used for homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness, who have unmet housing needs and to whom the Council has a legal duty to provide permanent accommodation under the 1987 Act, as amended by the 2001 Act, the [Homelessness Etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#), and the 2014 Act.

You are homeless or threatened with homelessness if:

- You have no accommodation that you can legally reside in or are likely to become homeless within 6-months.
- Your family, who normally live with you, are forced to live apart as you have no accommodation you can live in together.
- You have accommodation, but you have, for example, been illegally evicted, or forcibly prevented from living in it.

- You may be at risk of violence from someone living in the accommodation if you continue to live there.

Under the Council's Homelessness Policy there are protocols for dealing with applicants affected by homelessness and those threatened with homelessness. 'Threatened with homelessness' refers to anyone who is likely to become homeless within 6 months. This policy is used to address the needs of all people affected by homelessness, including people experiencing domestic abuse.

An important part of this policy involves the prevention of homelessness, as well as working in partnership with other housing providers to reduce homelessness. The Council has a separate Homeless Prevention Strategy which outlines how we aim to mitigate homelessness and support those threatened with homelessness.

In general terms, every attempt will be made to offer homeless people genuine choice of accommodation, as this is more likely to ensure sustainability. However, the Council recognises that demand for housing within some areas of North Ayrshire is exceptionally high, and turnover is low. As such, the urgency of the housing need of the applicant will be compared to availability of housing across the Council and NAHR partners, and the competing demands from other applicants in housing need.

The Council will seek to utilise public and private sector housing throughout North Ayrshire to fulfil statutory duties. An assessment of the most appropriate source of housing for the applicant will be undertaken and duty equally discharged across either option. Nomination Agreements and Section 5 protocols with local RSLs (who are not partners) are in place and are monitored and reported quarterly to ensure compliance.

The proportion of housing allocated to people affected by homelessness is relatively high given:

- the number of applicants affected by homelessness; and
- legal obligations under homelessness law to re-house homeless people.

Homelessness advice can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/housing/homelessness-support/homelessness-advice>

## **Group 2 – Strategic housing needs**

If an applicant has a strategic housing need which is not able to be adequately addressed elsewhere in the policy, their application is placed in Group 2. This applies even if the applicant has other housing needs.

This group assists us to address strategic policy objectives at local level. These objectives relate to strategic matters such as:

- Demolition and regeneration initiatives
- Community care and other support needs, such as:
  - Adoption
  - Foster carers
  - People re-housed through care initiatives



- People housed through resettlement programmes
- Needs not covered by policy.

### **Group 3 – Accessible housing needs**

If an applicant requires accessible housing as their current home does not meet their needs due to their health or a disability (as assessed by our occupational therapists) and they are not covered by either Group 1 or 2, their application is placed in Group 3. This applies even if the applicant has other housing needs.

### **Group 4 – Transfers**

Applicants will be placed on the 'transfer' list if their housing needs do not make them eligible for Groups 1 – 3 and they are:

- A tenant of North Ayrshire Council; or
- A tenant of a NAHR partner living in North Ayrshire.

This applies even if the applicant has other housing needs.

A separate transfer group is important to meet policy objectives for the following reasons:

- It promotes households to move to other accommodation, in turn releasing stock for other applicants (otherwise known as secondary lets).
- It addresses the preferences of existing tenants, which is important as preferences are a form of housing need.
- Meeting the needs of tenants is important to establish active, inclusive and resilient communities.

### **Group 5 – Overcrowded**

If an applicant is living in overcrowded conditions and not in any of the above groups, their application is placed in Group 5. This applies even if the applicant has other housing needs.

We will give reasonable preference when letting houses to households that are overcrowded, or people with large families.

A household is defined in this policy as any person(s) wanting to live separately, for example, a family member no longer wanting to reside with her/his parents.

### **Group 6 – General needs**

If an applicant has not been placed in any of the above groups and they currently live in North Ayrshire or meet the legal criteria if they live out with North Ayrshire, their application is placed in Group 6.

'General needs' recognise other housing needs such as insecurity of accommodation and households who want to move into the social rented sector.

## Group 7 – Relocation needs

All other applications are placed in Group 7.

Following the Scottish Government's [Scottish Housing Allocations Practice Guide 2019](#), we do not consider local residence if an applicant:

- Is employed or has been offered employment in the area
- Wishes to move into the area to seek employment and we are satisfied that this applies
- Wishes to move into the area to be near a relative or carer
- Has special social or medical reasons for requiring to be re-housed in the area
- Is subject to harassment and therefore wishes to move into the area
- Runs the risk of domestic violence and therefore wishes to move into the area

Applicants who live out with North Ayrshire and who do not meet the above legal factors will have their application placed in Group 7. Applicants who meet the factors will have their application placed in the appropriate group where their circumstances meet the necessary requirements for that group.

Applicants in Group 7 will receive all points to which they are entitled.

### 3.5 Assessment of Housing Need

Applicants are awarded points for any housing needs that they have. **There is no maximum number of points that will be awarded to applicants.** This section of the policy explains the points awarded for each category of housing need available to applicants.

#### Foster carers and adoption

Foster carers and those who adopt can apply for housing with an extra bedroom so that fostering and adoption can occur. They will receive points if their existing house lacks the necessary additional bedroom. A protocol has been agreed with North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership that identifies foster carers and those who adopt; applicants within this category will be allocated additional points.

*Points awarded: 50 per bedroom (for each extra room required based on our occupancy standard)*

#### Kinship care

'Kinship care' is where a child is unable to live with their birth parent and resides instead with a relative or other individual with whom they have a pre-existing relationship (e.g. a sibling, or close family friend), as outlined in the [Looked After Children \(Scotland\) Regulations 2009](#). The carer is referred to as a kinship carer.

Applicants with a Formal Kinship Care Arrangement that results in overcrowding can apply for housing for the necessary additional bedroom(s). They will receive points if their existing house lacks the necessary additional bedroom. A protocol has been

agreed with North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership that enables Formal Kinship Care Arrangements to be allocated points within this category.

*Points awarded: 50 per bedroom (for each extra room required based on our occupancy standard)*

### **Houses subject to demolition or regeneration**

Applicants whose houses are subject to demolition or regeneration due to action taken by us and who require permanent re-housing are regarded as being in strategic housing need.

*Points awarded: 250*

Applicants who are temporarily accommodated elsewhere and wish to return to the regeneration area are also awarded points to enable them to return to their community.

*Points awarded: 250*

### **People re-housed through care and support initiatives**

This covers applicants who need to be housed as part of community care initiatives. Applicants are referred through the North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership or other support agencies with whom referral procedures have been established. We may also establish specific procedures with other statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

Examples of such groups are as follows:

- Young people “looked after” and accommodated by the Council
- Residents of hospitals and other institutions who are returning to the community, including people returning following closure of the institution in question
- Residents in supported accommodation establishments who are now ready to move to other accommodation

### **Care experienced adults and care experienced young people**

The Scottish Government aims for Scotland to be the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. Central to this aspiration is the recognition and promotion of children’s rights. As well as the national legislative and policy drivers such as the [Children and Young People Act \(Scotland\) 2014](#), [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\)](#) and [The Promise Scotland](#), Scotland also has duties to secure and enact the rights enshrined in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#).

On 29 March 2023 the Council approved a motion in support of treating “care experienced” as a protected characteristic in North Ayrshire’s Equality Impact Assessments. The following definition of “care experienced” was adopted for the purposes of carrying out EIAs in December 2023:

*“Anyone who is currently in care or has been for any length of time regardless of their age. This care may have been provided in many different settings, such as:*

- (i) “Kinship Care” (living with a relative who is not your mum or dad)*
- (ii) “Looked After at Home” (with the help of Social Work)*
- (iii) “Residential Care” (Living in a residential home or school)*
- (iv) “Foster Care” (living with foster carers)*
- (v) “Secure Care” (living in a secure accommodation),*
- (vi) “Adoption” (living with adoptive parents.”*

The Council places the health, welfare and development of children and young people, at the centre of the planning and delivery of services. This is recognised within our Housing Social Services Care Leavers Protocol and Procedure.

The Council offer an integrated and co-ordinated service which aims to ensure that no care leaver will become homeless on leaving care, residential, foster or Kinship Care and will provide the necessary support to ensure a care leaver can achieve independence and stability within the community.

The Protocol promotes the principle that care leavers will be provided with the securest form of tenancy available to them, dependant on support needs and independent living skills. The Protocol is an inter-agency departmental agreement between Housing and the Health & Social Care Partnership, detailing the joint response to the support and accommodation needs of care experienced adults and those who are care experienced.

*Points awarded: 150 for Throughcare Protocol applicants*

*Points awarded: 150 for Other Care in Community*

### **Needs not covered by policy**

We apply this section of the policy only in extenuating (i.e. justifiable) circumstances if the policy does not address the housing needs in question. Should this apply, we will award points only after each case has been fully investigated and evidence gathered, as appropriate. To ensure accountability, each case must be approved by Senior Management in each NAHR partner organisation. The points award is withdrawn if their housing need is resolved prior to an offer being made. These cases are scrutinised and monitored closely and, if unique circumstances occur, they will be considered further within future policy reviews.

*Points awarded: 300*

### **Experiencing Domestic Abuse and/or Violence**

The [Domestic Abuse \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#) came into force on 1 April 2019. The Act created a new statutory offence of engaging in a course of behaviour which is abusive of a partner or ex-partner.

Thereafter, the [Domestic Abuse \(Protection\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#) came into force on 5 May 2021 and provides new and improved protections, to complement the existing measures, for victims of domestic abuse.

The Housing (Scotland) Bill introduced a requirement for social landlords to develop and implement a domestic abuse policy, setting out how they will support persons at risk of homelessness due to domestic abuse.

The Council is committed to supporting victims of domestic abuse and/or violence. This is outlined within the [North Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Policy – All Tenures](#).

The Council hosts routine Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). These meetings enable representatives from statutory and non-statutory agencies to discuss and manage the highest risk domestic abuse cases. Where it has been considered by MARAC and highlighted that a housing situation could be a risk factor, additional points will be applied.

*Points awarded: 300*

### **Housing below the Tolerable Standard**

The 1987 Act (as amended) introduced the [Tolerable Standard](#). It is a minimum standard that applies to all residential dwellings including social and privately rented homes and owner-occupied properties.

A house is below the tolerable standard if it fails to meet any one of the elements within the Tolerable Standard.

For example, a house must be substantially free from rising or penetrating damp and must have a sink that has a supply of both hot and cold water. Applicants whose housing is below the tolerable standard may apply for housing under the homelessness policy.

A protocol is in place to support private tenants who indicate they have repairing issues within their property; when completing an application for housing, they are directed to the Below Tolerable Standard Request form - [Below Tolerable Standard Request](#)

This process ensures that, before being considered for rehousing, the private tenant must have reported the problem to their landlord/letting agent in the first instance, allowing 30 working days for them to resolve the matter. Consequently, only valid Below Tolerable Standard requests are accepted, allowing officers to focus on working with landlords and private tenants to help address repairs, thus supporting tenancy sustainment.

Below Tolerable Standard points will only be awarded where the landlord has failed to bring the property up to standard. The points will be removed if the landlord subsequently carries out the repairs.

*Points awarded: 200*



## Accessible Housing Need

If an applicant or a member of their household has a health issue or disability which is impacting on their ability to carry out day to day living activities in their home, they can apply for an Accessible Housing Assessment (AHA).

AHAs are carried out by qualified Occupational Therapists (OT) and include:

### Grade assessment

There are three grades of priority that can be awarded to an application. These grades are low, medium and high. An applicant whose housing is deemed to be satisfactory for their needs will receive no award.

Grade	Points awarded
<i>High</i>	400
<i>Medium</i>	200
<i>Low</i>	75

Where two or more people within a household have accessible housing needs, only one award of points is made. The award will be for the person with the highest need.

### House type recommendation

If a grade is awarded, the occupational therapist will recommend house types that are suitable for the household's needs. Applicants who do not wish the type of accommodation recommended by the occupational therapist will not receive any award of points.

### Reasonable adjustments

We may be able to make reasonable adjustments to housing, through North Ayrshire Council's adaptations scheme. This may allow people to remain in their current home. Cases are assessed and prioritised, and are subject to available resources.

We have several houses that have been adapted or designed for disabled people, for example, wheelchair accessible housing. We have well-established procedures for allocating highly adapted properties.

## Overcrowding

When assessing overcrowding, we use our occupancy standard (see *Section 4.4 Table 2*).

We award points for each extra room needed based on our occupancy standard subject to our overcrowding rules (see *Section 4.5*). The table below details the number of points available under this category.

Additional bedrooms required	Points awarded
1 additional bedroom required	50
2 additional bedrooms required	100
3 additional bedrooms required	150
4 additional bedrooms required	200

*Points awarded: 50 (for each extra room required based on our occupancy standard)*

### **Insecurity of accommodation**

Applications from people living in insecure accommodation will be awarded points based on their circumstances. Applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness can apply for housing through the Council's Homelessness Policy, which includes advice and assistance.

'Insecurity of accommodation' covers a range of situations, including applicants who live in:

- **Private sector accommodation with limited security**

This covers private rented sector accommodation that is ending due to actions by the landlord or agency to seek recovery of possession. For instance, this might apply in cases where the landlord is terminating either an assured, short-assured or private residential tenancy through the correct legal procedures.

Insecurity of tenure points may also be awarded to owners whose home is threatened because of mortgage default. This may happen if owners cannot afford to maintain mortgage payments and lenders have taken court action to recover the property for sale. Points are awarded once the owner has a date to leave the accommodation. In processing applications we will carry out checks, as required, to confirm details.

*Points awarded: 150*

- **Tied accommodation**

This applies to applicants living in accommodation as part of their employment duties. We award points under this category when the occupation is ending due to termination of employment. Points are awarded 6 months before the person leaves employment.

*Points awarded: 150*

- **Armed Forces**

This applies to Armed Forces personnel and Veterans who wish to be re-housed in North Ayrshire.

The [Armed Forces Act 2021](#) places a legal duty ([the 'Covenant Duty'](#)) on social landlords to consider the armed forces community when exercising certain statutory functions in housing, including developing and reviewing allocation policies.

Where applicants are leaving the Armed Forces, additional points will be applied on receipt of the certificate of discharge. Points will also be awarded for any other housing needs specified in the allocations policy.

Applicants who own or have a legal right to occupy other accommodation will not be awarded these points.

If an applicant does not receive a suitable offer of housing prior to the date they are due to leave the Armed Forces, these points will remain in force for a period of 12 months from receipt of the certificate of discharge, provided they have not secured alternative accommodation which they have a legal right to occupy.

The rules in this section will also apply to a surviving partner who confirms that they are required to leave forces accommodation because of a partner's death.

If an applicant did not have an application for housing while serving in Armed Forces, and has now left service, and has not secured accommodation which they have a legal right to occupy, they may apply retrospectively. This request must be made within 12 months of the date the applicant left the armed forces. The points will remain in force for a period of 12 months from receipt of the certificate of discharge unless the applicant secures alternative accommodation which they have a legal right to occupy beforehand.

This demonstrates our partnership commitment to the [UK Armed Forces Covenant](#).

*Points awarded: 150*

- **People of no fixed abode**

Applicants of no fixed abode will be awarded a minimum number of points for the number of bedrooms that they need in line with our occupancy standard (see *Section 4.4 Table 2*).

Applicants will also be referred, as appropriate, to North Ayrshire Council's Housing Advice Team (HAT).

*Points awarded: 30*

### **Shared Accommodation**

Applicants who stay with other people, such as friends or relatives, or who are lodgers but want their own accommodation, are in this group. It also includes partners in a relationship breakdown who now want to live separately and children who have grown and want to leave the family home. As applicants for housing, they now form a separate household.

Applicants who sub-let part of their home or take in lodgers do not qualify for these points.

*Points awarded: 20*

## Shared Amenities

We also award points to applicants who are living with other households if they share key amenities. The amenities for which points are awarded are kitchen, bathroom or toilet. Applicants need to only be sharing one of these amenities to qualify for the points.

Household type	Points awarded
Single person and couples	20
Families	30

## Under-occupation

The Housing Allocation Policy adopts a ‘transfer-led’ approach towards releasing more homes for letting and to enable existing tenants to move into properties better suited to their current and future housing needs.

Reducing under-occupation helps us to make for best use of our housing. Tenants often wish to downsize to a smaller property where they are not using all the bedrooms in their current property.

Tenants can apply to move to accommodation that reduces present under-occupation levels even if the house remains under-occupied. Such applicants would be awarded under-occupation points **only where under-occupation is reduced**.

*Points awarded:*

*50 for one- or two-bedroom properties (for each room under-occupied based on our occupancy standard)*

*100 for three-, four-, five- and six-bedroom properties (for each room under-occupied based on our occupancy standard)*

## Releasing housing for let to other applicants

Where two separate tenants are partners and wish to live together, and re-housing both households’ releases both of their houses for let, we award a fixed number of points.

*Points awarded: 50*

## Arran Local Letting Initiative

The Arran Local Letting Initiative (LLI) allows certain NAHR applicants to be entitled to additional points if they live on Arran and/or are deemed to be essential workers. The additional award of points will be added to any points already accrued by applicants, reflecting their current housing needs and circumstances.

The award of points is applied where the applicant meets the appropriate criteria.

*Points awarded:*

*100 for residency where the applicant has been living on the island for at least 6 months.*

*200 for Tier 1 Worker - where the applicant is a public sector employee who provides an essential service.*

*100 for Tier 2 Worker - where the applicant has any other employment.*

To meet the criteria for additional points for those who are employed on Arran you must:

- Have a permanent contract or a minimum of a two-year temporary contract; and
- Have a minimum of 16-hour working week.

#### **4. Making an offer of housing**

In this section we will focus on explaining how we make an offer of housing. This section will cover:

- How we make an offer of housing
- What type of tenancy we offer
- What size of property applicants will be considered for
- Explain our Occupancy Standard to determine over and under-occupancy
- How we use Local Letting Plans to make best use of stock to meet local demand
- How we allocate housing to those individuals/families coming through refugee resettlement programmes
- How we allocate housing to Gypsy/Travellers
- Outline our approach to harassment
- Explain our process when allocating housing to staff, elected members, etc.
- Explain when and where we will review and remove applications.

##### **4.1 Offers**

We make reasonable offers based on the applicant's housing needs and preferences, after confirming details on their application form. This is good practice as it aims to reduce unsuitable offers and potential refusal of offers.

Before an offer of housing is made, we will take into consideration the applicant's individual needs and circumstances, the most effective use of the stock, and any impact on the wider community.

Existing Council tenants applying for housing will be subject to a pre-allocation check and visit at their existing home. Any offer of housing will be subject to approval.

All offers are reviewed by a secondary officer to ensure compliance with the policy.

The overall objective is to address housing need in accordance with the policy. This is consistent with the aims and objectives agreed by the NAHR partners.



Reasonable offers are those that reflect an applicant's stated choice. NAHR partners will consider an offer to be reasonable if it meets the preferences stated on the application, based on the criteria set out in Section 2.8.

Should an applicant refuse an offer of housing, we will contact the applicant to discuss their preferences and housing options in more detail. The Council aims to provide relevant housing options advice and information on supply, turnover and demand to ensure applicants can make informed choices about their preferences.

## 4.2 Tenancies

We offer applicants who qualify for housing, a Scottish Secure Tenancy in line with our legal obligations. In a limited number of situations, we may offer applicants a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST). A SSST has limited security of tenure in comparison to a Scottish Secure Tenancy.

NAHR partners have developed separate policies which explain when a SSST may be granted. Copies of these policies can be made available upon request.

Examples of when a SSST may be granted are:

- Where an applicant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour within the last 3-years; or
- Where a tenant (or a family member) is subject to an anti-social behaviour order.

## 4.3 House size

This section details the house size for which applicants will be considered. In addition, it outlines rules to address overcrowding and under-occupation.

*Table 1: The size of house for which applicants will be considered*

Household size	Number of bedrooms applicants will be considered for				
	Bedsit	One	Two	Three	Four
Single person	X	X	X		
Couple		X	X		
Couple or single adult and one other person			X		
Couple or single adult with two children under 5 years			X		
Couple or single adult with two persons, either of whom is aged 5 years or older			X	X	
Couple or single adult with three persons of whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three are under 5</li> <li>• One is aged 5 or older</li> <li>• Two are aged 5 or older</li> <li>• Three are aged 5 or older</li> </ul>				X X X X	X X
Couple or single adult with four persons of whom:					

• Four are aged under 5				X	
• One is aged 5 or older				X	X
• Two are aged 5 or older				X	X
• Three are aged 5 or older				X	X
• Four are aged 5 or older				X	X
Any larger household					X

#### 4.4 Occupancy standard for assessing over and under-occupation

When assessing whether overcrowding or under-occupation exists, we use our occupancy standard (see *Table 2*). This standard is used to award points to applicants if they are overcrowding or under-occupying.

The number of bedrooms assessed as being required is based on the household size.

*Table 2: Occupancy Standard*

Household Size	Bedrooms Required
Single person	Bedsit/One
Couple	One
Other household members who are aged 5 years or older	One
Two children aged under 5 years	One
Any other person	One

The 1987 Act (Sections 135-137) outline the legal standard for overcrowding. In assessing if overcrowding exists, the legal standard takes account of the living room and bedrooms as sleeping accommodation. Applicants whose homes are legally overcrowded and in which the overcrowding is detrimental to health can be entitled to apply for housing under the Homelessness Policy.

While the law sets out the minimum standards needed to prevent overcrowding, in practice, landlords can set more generous standards of their own. **The policy standard excludes the living room when measuring overcrowding and is more progressive than the legal standard.** Our standard states that children should have separate bedrooms as soon as they reach **five** years of age, whereas the legal standard has the age limit set at ten years of age.

In some properties, rooms used as a separate dining room are also suitable for use as bedroom accommodation. In these cases, the dining room is regarded as a bedroom.

In specific circumstances, for medical needs and functions, extra room space may be required. This will be subject to confirmation from a qualified Occupational Therapist.

The size of house that we let to parents with shared access is based on the specific access arrangement and our shared access procedures

#### **4.5 Rules on overcrowding**

We will not let houses to applicants if this creates statutory overcrowding, as this would not meet our legal obligations. The size of houses that we let to applicants is based on our policy standard (*See Section 4.3 - Table 1*). This is to meet applicants' choice in certain circumstances, for instance, where moving house meets other needs.

We use our occupancy standard to assess need. Applicants are grouped and receive points based on their present housing circumstances.

Overcrowding assessments include people who normally live in the house but who are temporarily absent. This could include family members working away from home for a short period and students.

Bed-sit accommodation is considered suitable only for single people. Couples living in bed-sit accommodation would be regarded as being overcrowded.

In the case of households that are living apart in separate houses but want to live together, overcrowding points are granted based on the main applicant's address.

Applicants may also choose to move to accommodation that does not reduce overcrowding. No points for overcrowding will be awarded in such cases.

Demand for larger houses exceeds supply in many areas. This makes it necessary, on occasion, to consider applicants for smaller houses than specified in our occupancy standard. This decision is based on the stated preferences of applicants.

#### **4.6 Under-occupation**

We use our occupancy standard (*see Section 4.4, Table 2*) to assess need. Applicants receive points based on their present circumstances.

We may allow under-occupation of larger accommodation, where required. This may be necessary if:

- a house is located in an area of low demand and there is no demand from particular groups on the NAHR; or
- an applicant can show a need for such accommodation, for example, medical needs or family needs.

#### **4.7 Local Letting Plans**

The Council, working with NAHR partners, may devise strategies to address local letting demand.

These plans set out in detail where and how it is intended to vary the policy at a local area level to take account of the supply of housing and the needs and demands that exist locally.

All local letting plans are developed in consultation with tenants, NAHR partners and other community stakeholders.

The plans clearly state aims and objectives which align with those detailed within the policy.

Local letting plans are monitored and reviewed to ensure that the outcomes from the plans are consistent with the aims of the policy. On an annual basis, the Council will report on and publish details of performance during the year and revise the letting targets for the year ahead.

The existence of local letting plans ensure that a more flexible and strategic approach is taken to the allocation of housing in North Ayrshire communities.

#### **4.8 Refugee Resettlement Programmes**

North Ayrshire continues to support several humanitarian resettlement programmes in relation to the evacuation from Afghanistan, various Ukrainian visa routes, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People and the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS - legacy of the Syrian Resettlement Scheme).

We have established separate policies that cover the rights of asylum seekers and immigrants, including the rights of other European Union citizens. These policies cover access to the NAHR and the rules concerning the allocation of houses to these groups.

#### **4.9 Gypsy/Travellers**

Applications from Gypsy/Travellers, are placed in the appropriate group based on their present housing conditions and are awarded points based on their actual housing conditions.

Applications from Gypsy/Travellers who have nowhere to pitch their caravan would be referred to the Council's Homeless Services.

The Council has one official Gypsy/Traveller site with 16 individual pitches. The site has a separate allocation policy, which can be made available upon request.

#### **4.10 Harassment**

NAHR partners condemn all forms of harassment and will vigorously pursue action against all perpetrators. NAHR partners are committed to promoting a safe and secure environment so that residents can live peacefully in their own home and communities.

Harassment may occur on various grounds for example harassment on grounds such as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. We have established specific procedures for dealing with this through our [Harassment Policy](#). The Harassment Policy does not apply in cases of domestic abuse and/or violence, as these are dealt with under the [North Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Policy – All Tenures](#) and Homelessness Policy.

In dealing with harassment situations, we assess each case individually and discuss appropriate remedies with the complainant. This might include applying to the court to evict or transfer tenants responsible for harassment.

After investigating complaints of harassment, we may consider that it is no longer reasonable for the applicant to live in their current accommodation. In such cases, a referral will be made to the Homeless Services.

We adopt a victim-centred approach to addressing harassment and consider relevant options in discussion with the victim.

#### **4.11 Domestic Abuse and/or Violence**

The [Domestic Abuse \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#) came into force on 1 April 2019. The Act created a new statutory offence of engaging in a course of behaviour which is abusive of a partner or ex-partner.

Thereafter, the [Domestic Abuse \(Protection\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#) came into force on 5 May 2021 and provided new and improved protections, to complement the existing measures, for victims of domestic abuse.

The definition of domestic abuse is in two parts. The first part deals with the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim/survivor; the second part defines what constitutes abusive behaviour.

‘Abusive behaviour’ can be defined as any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse.

For the definition to apply, both parties must be aged 16 or over and ‘personally connected’. ‘Personally connected’ can be defined as parties who:

- Are married to each other
- Are civil partners of each other
- Have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- Have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- Are or have been in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- Have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- Are relatives.

The law also recognises that domestic abuse can impact a child who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of the abuse and it treats such children as victims/survivors of domestic abuse in their own right (where they are related to or under parental responsibility of either the perpetrator or the victim/survivor).



Partners across North Ayrshire recognise the impact domestic abuse has on victims and their families. As social landlords, we regard domestic abuse as unacceptable behaviour which will not be tolerated.

The [North Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Policy – All Tenures](#) is aligned to the [Chartered Institute of Housing's 'Make a Stand' campaign](#). The Council and its partners have signed a pledge to demonstrate our commitment to this campaign to bring an end to domestic abuse in all its forms, ensuring our tenants and residents know their rights and understand how to access services.

The policy was developed by an inter-agency group comprising of the Council, NAHR partners and agency partners, and sets out our commitment to anyone in North Ayrshire who is experiencing or is concerned about another individual affected by domestic abuse. The policy is for all North Ayrshire residents, irrespective of tenure or gender, and complements the individual domestic abuse policies of the partner organisations.

In dealing with domestic abuse and/or violent situations, we assess each case individually and work with partner agencies to support the victim.

After investigating reports of domestic abuse and/or violent situations, we may consider that it is no longer reasonable for the applicant to live in their current accommodation. In such cases, a referral will be made to the Homeless Services.

We adopt a victim-centred approach to addressing domestic abuse and/or violence and consider relevant options in discussion with the victim.

#### **4.12 Council employees and Elected Members**

Applications from North Ayrshire Council employees and Elected Members are assessed in accordance with the policy. These applications are dealt with in accordance with relevant codes of conduct.

Although Elected Members are involved in the approval of the Housing Allocation Policy and additionally in monitoring and reviewing its impact, **they are not, however, directly involved in decision-making concerning the allocation of housing.**

#### **4.13 NAHR partner employees and committee (or board) members**

Applications for housing from NAHR partner employees and committee (or board) members are assessed in accordance with the Allocations Policy. These applications are dealt with in accordance with relevant codes of conduct and Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Policies.

Although board/committee members are involved in the approval of the policy and additionally monitoring and reviewing its impact, **they are not, however, directly involved in decision-making concerning the allocation of housing.**

## **5. Managing housing applications**

### **5.1 Reviewing housing applications**

It is important that the information held in respect of a housing application accurately reflects the applicant's current housing needs and circumstances. NAHR partners will contact applicants at least once annually to clarify and confirm that the information held on the application is up to date. The date of review is determined by the date of registration. This is important to maintain accurate information about applicants so that appropriate offers are made to reflect their needs and choices, and subsequently minimise refusals.

We request applicants to advise us within 10 working days if they wish to remain on the NAHR. If no response is received, we will issue a reminder giving applicants a further 10 working days to respond to us. Thereafter, if no response is received, we will cancel the application and remove it from the NAHR. If an application is cancelled due to failure to respond to the review, it will only be reinstated where the applicant can demonstrate an appropriate reason for not responding.

Applicants who contact us within 6 months of their application being cancelled will have their original application form reinstated. The date of registration will be based on their original application. However, applicants may be required to complete a new application form if circumstances have changed.

### **5.2 Change of circumstances and preferences**

As outlined in Section 5.1, NAHR partners will contact applicants annually to review their application and contact details. However, applicants are responsible for informing NAHR partners, by contacting their local housing office, of any changes in circumstances as this may impact on their application. An example of this may be:

- Where the applicant moves house
- Where the applicant leaves or joins another household
- Where a member of the household reaches 5 years of age.

In addition, we also request that applicants ensure their contact details are kept updated as, if we are unable to contact an applicant, their application may be cancelled.

Applicants can change their choices/preferences at any time by contacting their local housing office.

### **5.3 Cancellation of housing applications**

There are times where it is necessary for NAHR partners to cancel applications. This allows us to maintain an accurate and up-to-date register, as well as ensure fairness and transparency and regulatory compliance.

The following circumstances are where we would cancel an application from the NAHR:

- Where applicants have requested that it be removed (either in writing or by e-mail);
- Where the NAHR partner has been notified of the applicant's death;
- Where applicants have failed to respond to the review of their application;
- Where applicants have persistently failed to respond to correspondence from a NAHR partner requesting contact;
- Where an applicant's housing need has been met, either by the NAHR, mutual exchange, obtaining a Scottish Secure Tenancy, or via purchase of a property; or
- Where the NAHR partner has established that the applicant has no legal right to a tenancy.

## **5.4 Suspension of housing applications**

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to suspend an application for housing for a specific period. Where applications have been suspended, applicants will not be considered for, or receive, an offer of housing during the period of the suspension. A suspension will not have a detrimental impact on the applicant's points.

There are specific circumstances where it would be necessary to suspend an application for housing. These are set out clearly within the [Suspension Policy](#). Where a decision has been taken to suspend an application for housing, the applicant will be notified in writing, outlining the reason for suspension and the period that their application will be suspended for. In addition, we will provide advice and support to enable the applicant to take appropriate action to remove their suspension.

## **6. Monitoring and reviewing our performance**

The policy was developed by consulting tenants, Registered Tenants Organisations, the North Ayrshire Network (NAN), NAHR partners, other housing providers, independent advice agencies, Elected Members and staff.

Throughout the development and review of the policy, we have assessed housing needs and demand across North Ayrshire's communities. We will regularly review the performance of the policy to ensure that these needs and demands continue to be addressed.

### **6.1 Setting targets**

NAHR partners are committed to ensuring that the allocation process is transparent and accountable. At the beginning of each financial year, we will set and publish grouped targets for the percentage of allocations intended to offer applicants placed within each of the housing lists.

The targets will be set at both a North Ayrshire-wide and local level. The targets will be informed by local needs and circumstances, as well as housing needs and demand information summarised within local lettings plans. Local targets will often

vary from the North Ayrshire target, to reflect differing housing needs across our communities.

## **6.2 Auditing performance**

Procedures are in place to allow individual housing allocations to be audited. A sample of Housing Application Forms and allocations audit checks are carried out regularly by designated staff within each NAHR partner organisation.

## **6.3 Monitoring performance**

Monitoring of the application of the policy is essential, to ensure that allocation practices are subject to scrutiny and continuous improvement. To do this we will:

- Monitor monthly progress towards meeting targets set for allocating housing to each of our needs groups;
- Provide the Council's Cabinet with progress reports, as well as making information available to tenants, RTOs, the NAN, NAHR partners, other housing providers, Elected Members and staff;
- Review the policy annually to ensure it aligns with any relevant changes in legislation;
- Undertake a thorough review of the policy in its third year of implementation;
- Take an equalities-based approach, ensuring we have representative engagement from across North Ayrshire's communities prior to making any changes to the policy;
- Communicate any changes that we make to the policy to tenants, RTOs, the NAN, and applicants.

## **7. Complaints and appeals**

### **7.1 Appealing a decision**

Applicants are entitled to appeal decisions in relation to the policy. An example of this may be where an applicant does not agree that their points have been awarded correctly. A standardised approach to appeals applies to all NAHR partners.

There are two stages to the appeals process. These are as follows:

- **Stage One** – an appeal must be made in writing to the local housing office and thereafter reviewed by the area housing manager.
- **Stage Two** – should the applicant remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage One decision; a further written appeal should be submitted for consideration by a Senior Manager within that organisation.

### **7.2 Making a complaint**

NAHR partners aim to provide an excellent service, however there are times when customers may wish to complain against decisions that we make in relation to their

housing application. Details of NAHR partner complaints policies and procedures are available on their websites.

- North Ayrshire Council – [click here for information on how to make a complaint](#)
- Cairn Housing Association – [click here for information on how to make a complaint](#)
- Cunninghame Housing Association – [click here for information on how to make a complaint](#)
- Riverside Scotland – [click here for information on how to make a complaint](#)
- Trust Housing Association – [click here for information on how to make a complaint](#)

If you have any questions in relation to this policy, please contact us by either: calling North Ayrshire Council's Housing Service on 01294 310000; or emailing us at [commonhousingregisterteam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:commonhousingregisterteam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk).

This document is available in other formats such as audio tape, CD, Braille, large print and other languages on request.

If you have any questions in relation to this policy, please contact us:

North Ayrshire Council Housing Service

01294 310000

[commonhousingregisterteam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:commonhousingregisterteam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

[www.northayrshirehr.co.uk](http://www.northayrshirehr.co.uk)