



ALLOCATION POLICY

NOVEMBER 2014

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Contents		Page No.
1.0	Mission Statement	2
2.0	Key Principles	2
3.0	Regulatory Framework	3
4.0	Good Practice & Legal Framework	3
5.0	Administration of Allocation Process	5
6.0	Monitoring and Review	11
7.0	Access to Housing	12
8.0	Assessing Housing Need	16
9.0	Assessing Housing Need (Wheelchairs)	26
10.0	The Allocation of Houses	29
11.0	Transfer Applications	30

1.0 MISSION STATEMENT

- 1.1** Spire View Housing Association will generally allocate its houses to people with high levels of housing need (and/or support need, where appropriate).
- 1.2** Access to the allocations process will be open at all times to all sections of the community, with any unfair discriminatory restrictions eliminated.
- 1.3** Spire View Housing Association will make the best use of available stock and use the allocation process to assist in the creation and maintenance of balanced, stable communities.

2.0 KEY PRINCIPLES

- 2.1** The Allocation Policy will meet all relevant legal requirements and will comply with Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- 2.2** The Policy will be made available in a suitable format to allow an easy understanding of the process. It will be available in a wide range of locations to ensure that it is accessible to anyone who might wish to apply.
- 2.3** Good, open communications with applicants will be observed at all stages of the allocation process from the initial enquiry onwards. Confidentiality shall be observed at every opportunity.
- 2.4** Wherever possible, consideration will be given to what opportunities may exist for joint working with Local Authorities or other Associations and Co-operatives.
- 2.5** The day to day operation of the allocation process will be undertaken by staff and not the Management Committee.
- 2.6** The Allocation Policy and practices will not unfairly discriminate against any individual, household or group on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, family circumstances or marital status.
- 2.7** Record keeping will maintain audit trails to enable it to be seen how and why any given let was made to a particular applicant, paying attention to data protection legislation.
- 2.8** Results of the allocations process will be regularly monitored, reported to the Management Committee and be part of an ongoing review process.

3.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Scottish Social Housing Charter and Regulatory Guidance for Registered Social Landlords issued by The Scottish Housing Regulator contains several 'standards' that the Association must meet as well as a list of areas that would be used to assess whether or not we are meeting these 'standards'. Scottish Social Housing Charter & Outcomes (1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) and Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) (indicators 18, 20, 21, 34, 35, C7, C8, C9, C10, C20). This will be used as a basis to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the Allocations Policy and practices.

4.0 GOOD PRACTICE & LEGAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 The Association shall adhere to Scottish Housing Charter and the following Equality & Housing Legislation throughout the development of the Allocations policy

- Scottish Social Housing Charter indicators & Technical Annex (Scottish Government, 2012 & 2013)
- Affordable Rented Housing : creating flexibility for landlords and better outcomes for communities (Scottish Government, 2012)
- Scottish Housing Allocations Guide (Scottish Government, 2010)
- Tenancy Sustainment – Not just the latest Buzz word (Shelter, 2011)

4.2 Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

Associations are required by this legislation to have rules which govern admission to the housing list, priority for allocation of homes and exchanges of houses.

The association also has a duty under Section 5 of this Act to comply with a request from Glasgow City Council to re-house statutory homeless applicants. In fulfilling this duty, the association will also have regard to the 'Homelessness Duty Protocol for Glasgow', established between GCC and RSL's in the City.

4.3 Schedule 7 – Control of Payments and Benefits (Formerly Section 15)

Part 1 of Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 restricts the types of payments and benefits that RSLs can make to employees, governing body members and the families of employees and governing body members. These provisions are designed to make sure that such people do not abuse their position or benefit from their connection with an RSL and play an

important part in maintaining the RSL sectors good reputation. Schedule 7 replaces Section 15 of the Housing Associations Act 1985.

The Association may grant a tenancy, transfer of tenancy or mutual exchange to an employee, former employee, committee member or former committee member providing that the person;

- Fully meets the association's published allocations criteria, and
- The employee or governing body member has no involvement in or influence over the process by which the Association allocated the tenancy in question.

There is a duty on applicants to declare if they are related to any staff or committee members of the Association. Where an allocation falls within this category, it will be reported to the management committee at their next meeting and recorded in the Schedule 7 register. Approval will be sought from the management committee prior to the allocation being made.

All allocations falling within this category will be approved and countersigned by the Director prior to an offer of housing being made.

4.4 Racial Discrimination

The Association is subject to the Race Relations Act 1976 which makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin when letting properties or assessing applicants.

4.5 Matrimonial Homes

The Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981 protects a person's right to live in the family home and the Association will consider the implications of this Act whenever applicable.

4.6 Sex Discrimination

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of sex in the provision of housing facilities or services to the public.

4.7 Disability Discrimination

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it unlawful for organisations which provide goods, facilities or services (including housing) to the public to discriminate against disabled people by treating them less favourably than someone else.

4.8 Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 will be adhered to in terms of personal information held by the Association both on computerised and manual files.

4.9 Legislation Indirectly Affecting Housing Associations

Other legislation such as homelessness legislation which may be appropriate will be considered if appropriate.

5.0 ADMINISTRATION OF ALLOCATIONS PROCESS

5.1 The Role of the Management Committee

Staff will undertake the day to day operation of the allocations process, including every aspect of the assessment and selection process. The Management Committee's role is to assist in the formulation of the policy, to approve the policy and review it as necessary, consider appeals and special cases.

Spire View Housing Association committee members will hold a short, informal welcoming meeting with all prospective tenants. The meeting is an opportunity to introduce prospective tenants to the association and will also be used to promote membership of the organisation.

5.2 Application Forms

The Association will use a joint application form with Copperworks Housing Co-op.

5.3 Lettings Process

The procedural order for allocating a property is:

- Selection of suitable applicant(s) from the list or request for and receipt of, nomination
- Letter/telephone call for house visit (2 working days for reply)
- House visit(s) to be carried out (within 3 working days)
- A tenancy report will be requested from the applicant's current or most recent landlord(s) email / telephone if possible). These will be treated with caution as per section 7.8 of this policy.
- Welcoming Meeting (dependant on availability of committee)
- Offer letter with viewing arrangements (2 working days for reply)
- Viewing of property (within 2 working days)
- Up to 24 hours will be permitted to allow for acceptance decision to be made however immediate decision may be necessary if letting date is imminent.

Timescales may at times vary depending on letting dates and notice given for tenancy termination.

- Households to be allocated a property will usually be decided upon by the housing manager or director. All allocations will be countersigned by another member of housing management staff i.e. housing assistant or director.

5.4 Special Cases

A 'special' allocation should only be such if it cannot be addressed within the context of the current Allocation Policy or if it requires a variation on the regular policy. In this instance the approval of the Management Committee will be sought. Special cases will normally be considered by the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary.

Staff will draft a short report to Committee with recommendations being made. Based on the individual circumstances and the recommendation, Committee can award additional points as defined under section 8.12 of the policy. It may, in such instances be necessary to divulge the identity of the applicant. This will only be done with the consent of the applicant.

If it is found that approval from the Management Committee is being sought frequently then the Allocations Policy will be reviewed and amended in order to bring most of the cases within the policy.

5.5 Home Visits

Whenever possible two staff members will attend a home visit, this is for safety purposes as well as having two staff members to verify application details.

A home visit may be carried out to:

- confirm a specific issue which has been mentioned on the application form prior to it being assessed.

A home visit will be carried out if

- an applicant is actively being considered for a property. The purpose of this visit will be to clarify information on the application form and to confirm residency at the address from which they have applied. If an applicant is living c/o he/she will be required to provide proof of residency e.g. bank statement, i.e. benefit award letter or similar.
- if he/she is amongst a group of applicants with similar housing need. The purpose of this visit will be to investigate in further detail the level of housing need stated on the application.

House visits will not be made to make subjective judgements on issues such as choice of decoration and levels of tidiness. However signs of obvious abuse of fixtures and fittings etc will be discussed with the applicant and where appropriate the landlord before deciding if there is just cause for a refusal on this ground.

5.6 Offers and Refusals

Offer letters will include information on:

- Monthly rent
- Property size
- Date keys available
- Date first rental payment will be due
- Details on applying for housing benefit
- Information pack about the community and amenities.

There are no limits to the number of offers of housing that an applicant can receive. However, in order to accommodate and meet the needs of the applicant, a full discussion will follow any refusal of an offer. The purpose of this is to ensure applicant details are updated to reflect their actual wishes and requirements regarding type of house and location etc. This discussion should make clear to the applicant, their prospects for re-housing and establish if the association can in fact meet their wishes and expectations.

5.7 New Tenancy Visit

A visit will be made to the home of new tenants usually within 4 weeks of their date of entry. The purpose of this visit is to check:

- If housing benefit claim or rent payments are in order
- If any repairs are outstanding
- If stair cleaning rota has been established
- If tenant has actually taken up residency
- If new tenant has any queries regarding any aspect of the Association's service.

A new tenant satisfaction survey will be completed and responses reported to committee on a quarterly basis. Any necessary action will be taken.

5.8 Confidentiality

Any information provided by an applicant will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Committee Members conducting welcoming meetings have access only to the applicant's name, address and family composition no other details will be made available.

5.9 Timescales

- Upon receiving a completed application form from either an individual or from Copperworks Housing Co-op, a postcard acknowledging receipt will be sent to the applicant.

- Application forms will normally be assessed within 10 working days of receipt. If however, a review of the policy or waiting list has recently been carried out, assessment may take slightly longer.

5.10 Suspensions

There are circumstances in which applicants on the waiting list / transfer list can be suspended from receiving offers of housing for a defined period of time. Applicants will only be suspended for the following reasons;

- Where there are current or former tenant arrears or other rechargeable tenancy related costs exceeding the equivalent of 1 months rent outstanding and no payment arrangement in place, or the full repayment arrangement has not been adhered to for a period of at least 3 months.
- Where the responsibilities of an applicant in relation to their legal and / or contractual duties relating to the tenancy, are clearly not being adhered to. For example;
 - *Very poor condition of the tenant's home with evidence of vandalism and examples of abuse over and above general wear and tear.*
 - *Applicant not taking their turn of cleaning stairs and / or landing, failing to maintain garden etc.*
 - *Not controlling pets etc.*
- Where there is clear evidence of anti-social behaviour regardless of whether legal action has been initiated, including eviction proceedings or an ASBO sought / granted.
- Where applicants have displayed threatening or violent behaviour towards staff of the association or its representatives including committee members and contractors.
- Where an applicant has given up a tenancy within the 12 months preceding their application. The association will make an assessment of whether the intention was to gain significant advantage by worsening their housing circumstances. If the applicant is unable to substantiate the reason they gave up a home reasonably suited to their needs, the application can be suspended.
- Where the applicant or any member of their household is a Registered Sex Offender and it has been established, through work with the responsible authorities, that there is a threat to community safety. Further details are contained in section 8.9.4 of this policy 'Registered Sex Offenders'.
- Where an applicant has knowingly or recklessly made a false or misleading statement in their application or has withheld relevant information. Where a tenancy has been granted, the association may begin legal proceedings to recover possession of the house allocated.

Each application will be considered on its own merit, with clear, reasonable and justifiable reasons for suspension. Each applicant suspended will be

notified in writing together with details of why the suspension has been applied, length of time the suspension will be in force for and what action can be taken to end the suspension. Details confirming the applicant's right of appeal and information on the association's complaints policy and procedure will also be included. Suspended application will be reviewed on a regular basis.

5.11 Cancelled Applications

The association will cancel and remove an application from the waiting list in the following circumstances;

- The applicant has failed to provide additional information requested in order for their application to be accurately assessed.
- The applicant has repeatedly failed to allow access for a home visit.
- The applicant has requested removal from the waiting list. Written confirmation of this request will be obtained where possible.
- The applicant has failed to respond to the periodic review of the waiting list.
- Death of the applicant.

An applicant who has had their application cancelled will be notified in writing together with details of why their application has been cancelled. Applicant will be advised of their right to appeal and provided with details of the association's complaints policy and procedure.

5.12 Appeals

Any applicant dissatisfied with any decision taken regarding their application, or any part of the allocation process, can request an appeal. The process is as follows;

- Appeals will be dealt with by the associations Housing Manager. An appeal can be made in writing, verbally over the telephone or in person by arranging an appointment.
- The Housing Manager will provide a written response within 10 working days.
- If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they can make a further appeal to the management committee. The appeal can be made in writing or in person and will be considered by the full management committee (in accordance with the committee remit). The Housing Manager will prepare a confidential report for the committee regarding the appeal and it will be tabled at the next meeting. Following the meeting, the applicant will be notified of the outcome / committee decision within 5 working days.

This is a separate procedure from the 'Complaints Procedure' and will be adequately publicised in the letter sent to tenants advising that their application has been placed on the list.

5.13 Complaints

The association has a separate complaints policy and procedure. This allows for consideration of complaints regarding conduct of staff or Committee or about decisions of the Association. Applicants will be advised that they can use the complaints policy and procedure. This details how complaints are dealt with and includes information regarding final recourse to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

5.14 Groups of Applicants

The association has 3 different groups and lists of applicants on the waiting list;

Waiting List

The majority of applicants seeking to be re-housed by the association will be placed on this list.

Internal Transfer List

Current tenants of the association who wish to transfer to another property within the association will be placed on the Internal Transfer list. Please refer to section 11.0 of this policy which details the association policy for dealing with applications for internal transfer.

Section 5 Referral List

The association has a legal duty under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to comply with a request from Glasgow City Council to re-house statutory homeless applicants. In fulfilling this duty, the association will also have regard to the 'Homelessness Duty Protocol for Glasgow', established between GCC and RSL's in the City.

5.15 Target System of Allocations

As detailed previously, the association wishes to allocate its houses in a manner that creates and maintains balanced, stable communities. The association is committed to allocating houses in a manner that is objective, fair and accountable. The committee believes that this is best achieved through a target system in allocations that seeks to re-house different groups of applicants in order of points. The following targets have therefore been agreed for re-housing for each group;

- Waiting List (50%)
- Internal Transfer List (25%)
- Section 5 Referrals (25%)

6.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.1 Housing List Review / Applicant Survey

Staff will endeavour to keep the housing list as up to date as possible. All those on the housing list will be sent a 'review' form on a 12 monthly basis to check for changes in circumstances. The review will be carried out in the month in which the original application form was received. Applicants will be given the opportunity to re-register by phone, email, letter or in person.

Applicants who fail to respond to the review will have their application cancelled in accordance with section 5.11 of this policy.

The review process will include a survey of applicant to determine their views on an ongoing basis. The results will be collated and reported to committee and fed into the ongoing policy review process.

6.2 Monitoring and Reporting

It is vital that the Association, through the Management Committee, establishes the extent to which the policy is achieving its aims and objectives. Regular monitoring and reporting will therefore be carried out to include measurement of performance against targets. The following reports will be made to the management committee;

Quarterly

Applicant Report showing;

- Number of applicants on each list i.e. waiting list, transfer etc broken down by apartment size, at the end of the previous month
- Average time taken to process housing application forms.

Allocations report showing lets in year to date by;

- Applicant group (waiting list, transfer, section 5 etc)
- Ethnic origin
- Disability

Void Report for previous month and cumulative totals where possible for;

- Size of house
- Days void
- Rent loss

Annually

- Voids during year by property size and type.
- Movement in waiting lists broken down by apt size. i.e. no. of live applicants at year end and no of applicants rehoused in year.
- Source of allocations
- Refusals of offers
- Suspensions
- Cancellations

- Termination reasons
- Ethnic origin of applicants allocated house during year.
- Disability of applicants allocated house during year.
- RTB sales in year (if any)

Monitoring information will be gathered in such a way as to ensure confidentiality as far as possible.

7.0 ACCESS TO HOUSING

7.1 Publicity

The publicity covering the Association's Allocation policy should take into consideration its level of turnover as there is little point in encouraging vast number of applicants with little opportunity to re-house all but a very few of them.

The Association will forward its policy to the:

- Library
- North Glasgow Advice Centre
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- GHA Local Office – Royston Corridor Homes and Compass LHO
- The Scottish Housing Regulator
- Blochairn Housing Association
- Copperworks Housing Co-operative
- Social Work Department at Glenbarr St and Red Road
- Local Councillor and MSP
- Positive Action in Housing

This list is not exhaustive as other relevant agencies may become apparent.

The association will also publicise the policy in its regular newsletter, on the website and a summary leaflet will be produced and readily available. A full copy of the policy will be made available on request – free of charge.

If requested, the association will make this policy, in full and in part, available in summary, on tape, in braille, and in translation into most other languages.

7.2 Open Housing Lists

The housing list will remain open at all times with all applicants having the right to have their application assessed. In order to comply with the Housing Scotland (2001) Act, all applicants aged 16 years and over are entitled to be admitted onto the Associations housing list. However, applicants will be made

aware that the right to be admitted to the housing list is not the same as the right to be allocated a house.

7.3 Residency Qualifications

To lay down a minimum amount of time whereby a prospective applicant must have resided in the area prior to being able to make an application for housing is considered to be unfairly discriminatory.

7.4 Property Ownership

Owner occupation will not automatically result in an application being rejected.

The normal housing need criteria will be applied to applicants who own a property. Should an offer of housing be forthcoming from the Association, confirmation that the property is up for sale will be required prior to the signing of missives.

If an applicant has a sharing interest as an owner-occupier this should be disregarded as it will rarely enable them to address their housing need.

Individual cases may be looked at on their own merit.

7.5 Young and Vulnerable People

Households have to include a person of at least 16 years of age to apply for a house. The Association accepts that 16 – 17 years will vary in terms of background and level of maturity. We will not assume that anyone is incapable of maintaining a tenancy because of their age. However, it is also recognised that lack of money, furniture and budgeting experience may cause difficulty. It is also accepted that those becoming tenants for the first time are likely to need practical support. In addition, there may be legitimate concerns that a vulnerable person needs support to sustain their tenancy. The association does not want vulnerable people set up in a new home only for the tenancy to fail.

Therefore, wherever possible, an assessment of support as well as housing need will be carried out whenever a young or vulnerable person is being considered for a tenancy. If possible, the Association will assist in seeking support from the relevant agencies e.g GENR8. However, where support is not available, the Association will consider on an individual basis what course of action seems appropriate in the circumstances.

7.6 Properties with Adaptations

Some mainstream properties within the Associations stock have been fitted with medical adaptations. When re-letting these properties, priority will be given to applicants who require similar adaptations.

7.7 Rent Arrears

As explained under section 5.10 (suspensions), if an applicant owes a tenancy debt in excess of one months rent, their application will be suspended until they verify that they have established and maintained an arrangement for repayment for 3 months or more. A tenancy related debt includes rent, rechargeable repairs, cleaning of the house after tenant leaves, the costs of clearing an abandoned houses and storing furniture.

When deciding to suspend an application for tenancy related debt, the association will take account of the reason for the debt, the likelihood of a recurrence and if so, what impact this is likely to have on the ability of the applicant to sustain a new tenancy.

7.8 Tenancy Report

Reports relating to current or previous tenancy will be sought but will generally be treated with caution.

The request will not ask if the applicant was a 'good tenant' or about standards of house keeping. It will be used to determine:

- Occupancy/ tenancy holder
- Date of entry
- Family composition
- Breach of tenancy conditions
- Pending legal action
- Rental history in relation to statement in 7.7

Any unfavourable comments will be discussed with the applicant to see how these could be addressed when considering offering a tenancy.

7.9 Mutual Exchanges

This involves two households within the social rented sector in the UK swapping homes; mutual exchanges can also take place within the Association's own stock.

An application for exchange will be treated in a positive manner. Both applicants will be subject to a house visit to confirm details on application, the status of the rent account, service charges and rechargeable repair accounts. The Association's guidance on occupancy levels must also be satisfied. An exchange will not be permitted where it will lead to overcrowding. Under occupation by one apartment may be allowed.

Homeswapper

Homeswapper is the largest national mutual exchange service for council and housing association tenants wanting to swap their homes throughout the UK. This service is available for all Spire View Housing Association tenants with internet access and who register with the service. This service is to give our

tenants more of a choice when considering a mutual exchange. All criteria for a mutual exchange applies to Homeswapper.

7.10 Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers can be accepted onto the waiting list however, their application for housing will be deferred until such times as they are granted leave to remain in the UK.

7.11 Sensitive Lets

The association may allocate a house out with the normal operation of the policy if there are circumstances relating to an available house. For example, a history of anti-social behaviour or neighbour disputes, or a high number of children in a property. Lets of this nature must be approved by the Director prior to any offer of housing being made. The 'sensitive' allocation will be reported at the next committee meeting.

8.0 ASSESSING HOUSING NEED

1.0 OVERCROWDING

	Section	Points
Per bedroom short as per normal sharing conditions	8.1.1	7
Couple living C/o parents seeking first home	8.1.4	2
Three generations in one household	8.1.5	2
Two generations sharing bedroom	8.1.6	4

2.0 UNDEROCCUPATION

	Section	Points
Per bedroom extra	8.2.1	2

3.0 SHARED AMENITIES

	Section	Points
Sharing kitchen	8.3	3
Sharing living room	8.3	3
Sharing bathroom	8.3	3

4.0 LACKING FACILITIES

	Section	Points
Combined living room & kitchen	8.4.1	3
No bath / shower	8.4	3
No second toilet for 4apt or bigger	8.4.2	2
No Kitchen	8.4	3
Lacking Livingroom	8.4	2

5.0 UNMODERNISED ACCOMMODATION

	Section	Points
No controlled entry	8.5.1	4
Partial central heating	8.5.2	5
Heating in one room only	8.5.3	7
Unmodernised in relation to SVHA stock	8.5.4	6

6.0 INSECURITY OF TENURE

	Section	Points
Living C/o parents / Guardian	8.6.1	5
Living C/o others	8.6.2	3
Relationship breakdown	8.6.3	6
Tied Accommodation	8.6.4	3
Notice to quit	8.6.5	3
Statutory homeless	8.6.6	4
No fixed Abode	8.6.7	18

7.0 SOCIAL & FAMILY SUPPORT **Section** **Points**

Moving closer to work and / or college	8.7.1	6
Childminding support for education and / or work purposes	8.7.2	3
Housekeeping support for first tenancy	8.7.3	5
Return to area following relationship breakdown	8.7.4	3
Time in housing need per year since date of application	8.7.5	1

8.0 MEDICAL **Section** **Points**

Medical A	8.8	15
Medical B	8.8	5
Providing support for medical condition to Assoc resident	8.8.2	4
Receiving support for medical condition from Assoc resident	8.8.3	4

9.0 HARASSMENT **Section** **Points**

Fleeing domestic violence	8.9.1	5
Racial harassment	8.9.2	5
Lifestyle	8.9.3	3

10.0 CHILDREN / PENSIONER AT HEIGHT **Section** **Points**

Per child on 4 th floor and above	8.10.1	4
Pensioner in household above 2 nd floor	8.10.2	10

11.0 FURNISHED ACCOMMODATION **Section** **Points**

Furnished Accommodation	8.11	5
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12.0 SPECIAL CASES **Section** **Points**

Special Cases	8.12	0-100
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Guidance for the award of housing points

8.1 Occupancy Level

8.1.1 Overcrowding

- One bedroom for every applicant and partner
- Two children under 16 of same gender are expected to share a bedroom.
- Two children under 10 expected to share a room regardless of gender.
- Anyone over the age of 16 will be due their own room
- One bedroom for every remaining member of the household and their partner

The Association will not overcrowd but for good housing management reasons, may over-house.

If an applicant is intending leaving the matrimonial home and their partner and is being pointed as a separate household within the matrimonial home then the requirement for bedrooms shall be calculated as per above.

8.1.2 Pregnancy

So as to avoid an applicant being considered for an inappropriate house size for a number of months which may inadvertently lead them to be excluded from being considered for re-housing, the Association will accept pregnancy as from the date that suitable confirmation is received.

8.1.3 Week-end Children

If an applicant with access to children is to be offered a house this will initially be a property which meets their current requirements. Consideration for a larger house shall only be made if the larger list has been exhausted.

8.1.4 Couple Seeking First Home

A couple living C/o either set of parents and seeking their first home together shall be considered for points under this section. This applies to couples living both within and out with the Association.

8.1.5 Three Generations in One Household

This applies to for example: grandmother, daughter and granddaughter.

8.1.6 Two Generations Sharing a Bedroom

Two generations sharing a bedroom shall apply to a parent / child relationship or family relationship where those sharing are not siblings e.g. cousins.

Both 8.1.5 & 8.1.6 shall not apply, instead if an applicant qualifies for both categories then the higher points shall be awarded.

8.2 Underoccupation

8.2.1 Extra Bedroom

Points will be awarded for every bedroom not in use in accordance with the Association's guidelines on occupancy levels

8.3 Sharing Amenities

These points shall be applied to applicants who are sharing amenities with someone who will not be moving house with them.

8.4 Lacking Facilities

8.4.1 Combined Living Room and Kitchen

Combined living room and kitchen does not apply to purposely designed open planned homes but instead it refers to accommodation where a cooking facilities have been set up within the living area.

8.4.2 No Second Toilet

This section will apply to fully occupied 4 apartment house where no second WC exists in addition to the main bathroom.

8.5 Unmodernised Accommodation

Points do not apply to those living C/o.

8.5.1 No Controlled Entry System

This applies to multi-storey or tenemental properties which have not yet been fitted with a controlled entry system. It does not apply to properties where systems are not maintained to an acceptable working standard by the landlord.

8.5.2 Partial Central Heating

This category shall be applied if a partial heating system has been supplied. It does not apply if a heating system is not working or if a tenant chooses not to use a system for whatever reason.

8.5.3 Heating in One room Only

This shall apply where fixed heating is only available in the living room and no other radiators, gas or electric or under floor heating has been fitted.

8.5.4 Severe Disrepair

Points shall be awarded under this category for properties where kitchens and windows etc have not been modernised. This will be judged in relation to the

modernised and new build properties provided by Spire View Housing Association

8.6 Insecurity of Tenure

8.6.1 Living C/o Parents / Guardian

This applies to sons or daughters living C/o their parent either within or outwith the Association boundary.

8.6.2 Living C/o Others

Those living C/o others may apply for rehousing. A minimum length of time living C/o will not be required however proof of residency will be sought. The Association will pay close attention to those living C/o to avoid a situation whereby this situation is used to enhance an application rather than being an unavoidable situation.

8.6.3 Relationship Breakdown

This applies to an applicant who is leaving a relationship. It applies whether or not they have actually made the break. However if they have already moved away from the partner, the application should have been received by the Association within 3 months of leaving the relationship.

8.6.4 Tied Accommodation

Insecurity points will be awarded under this category. Should an applicant then be assessed as statutory homeless the application would move into this category.

8.6.5 Notice To Quit

Insecurity points would be awarded under this category and would subsequently change to Statutory Homeless if appropriate.

8.6.6 Statutory Homeless

The Association recognises that anyone can become homeless and that different types of households require different housing needs.

We are wholly committed to fulfilling our duties in respect of homelessness as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. To this end, we will endeavour to assist Glasgow City Council by re-housing referred homeless cases wherever practicably possible. The association will endeavour to adhere to the homelessness duty protocol between GCC and RSL's at all times.

Should an applicant apply directly to the Association claiming homelessness, we shall advise them to contact GCC for an assessment. However at this time we shall also accept a direct application from them and point this according to their current circumstances and insecurity whilst awaiting confirmation as to whether additional statutory homeless points should apply or indeed if a referral is forthcoming.

8.6.7 No Fixed Abode

Those applicants without a fixed address will be considered for points under the following categories:

- Insecurity of tenure (dependant on status) 3 – 6 points
- Lack of bedroom 7 points
- Lack of living room 2 points
- Lack of bathroom 3 points
- Lack of kitchen 3 points
- Length of time in housing need Variable

8.7 Social & Family Support

8.7.1 Moving Closer To Work / College

Points under this section may be awarded to applicants applying for housing from out with the Association's boundary. It will also apply to applicants living within the parental home within the Association who have found employment or a college place and wish to remain in the area.

8.7.2 Childminding Support

Should a parent require the assistance of a childminder who lives within the Association boundary in order that he or she may work or attend college, points may be applied under this section.

8.7.3 Housekeeping Support

Points under this section shall be awarded to sons and daughters of existing tenants of the Association who are applying for their first tenancy in order that they can receive support from their immediate family.

8.7.4 Relationship Breakdown

Should a former tenant or son / daughter of an existing tenant need to return to the Association area following a relationship breakdown, points may be awarded under this section. This is separate from section **8.6.2** as that applies when they have moved back into their parents' house.

8.7.5 Time in Housing Need

The Association recognises the length of time that a household in housing need has been on the housing list. This award of points will be minimal in relation to other categories.

Points will be awarded annually from the year following the date when the applicant's circumstances became as they are now. For instance, an application received in July 2012, will be awarded 1 housing need point each year commencing July 2013 when their application is reviewed. This is providing their circumstances stay the same and their application remains live during this period.

Points are awarded in arrears.

8.7.6 Local Connection

In cases where two competing applications are otherwise equally pointed, the Association will give priority to the local applicant. Local will be deemed to mean residing within the boundaries of the Association. If both are local then earliest date of application shall decide who has priority.

8.8 Medical

Consideration will be given to a medical condition only if the condition can be significantly alleviated by re-housing. Applicants will be discouraged from thinking that a particular medical condition will by itself increase their chances of re-housing.

It is often the case that an applicants GP merely 'rubber stamps' a case for re-housing. Also, more and more often applicants are being charged for what could be considered '*a waste of NHS resources*'. Therefore, the Housing Officer / Director will make a judgement as to whether a medical condition will be alleviated by re-housing or not.

Medical conditions such as stress and depression caused by living conditions will not receive additional medical points as the policy already addresses such issues as overcrowding, insecurity and lack of amenities.

8.8.1 Assessment of Condition

Applicants may wish to have a medical form completed by their GP. However, this is not a requirement.

Should an applicant have a medical need for requiring an extra bedroom, written documentary evidence of this will required.

8.8.2 Providing Support

Applicants must be providing support to a household within the Association's boundary.

8.8.3 Receiving Support

Applicants should be intending to receive support from a household within the Association's boundary.

Documentary evidence will be required before points can be considered under sections 8.8.2 or 8.8.3.

8.9 Harassment

8.9.1 Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can affect men, women and children, it knows no social or economic boundaries.

The Association recognises that a person has the right to a life free from violence and abuse and that it is not the victim's fault but the perpetrator's. Applicants applying to the Association as a result of fleeing from domestic violence will be given a degree of priority under Section 8.6.3. The following guidance will be borne in mind by staff dealing with such an application:

- Safety is paramount: the applicant will be advised of all appropriate agencies to approach and will be assisted in making contact wherever possible.
- Confidentiality is crucial: contact will never be made with or information given to other agencies without the applicant's permission. The alleged perpetrator will never be contacted.
- Believing the applicant: it is possible that evidence does not exist, the Association will approach such a case from a position of belief and sensitivity.
- Their rights: applicants shall be made aware of their rights to remain in their own home or seek alternative accommodation. It will be recognised that leaving an abusive partner is not easy and an applicant may leave several times before making the split for good.
- Homeownership: no account will be taken of an applicant's interest in an owner-occupied property unless it offers a genuine alternative housing option.

8.9.2 Racial Abuse

The Association does not operate in an area with a tradition of black and ethnic minority households. However, more and more applications are now being received from such groups. It does however have policy statements relating to those facing such problems of racial abuse within its own stock.

The Association will also strive to treat those facing abuse and seeking re-housing with the Association in a fair manner. We will deal with each case sensitively and on its own merit based on the evidence it is possible to gather.

The Association can access an interpreting service via Glasgow City Council or Positive Action in Housing should the need arise.

Documentary evidence may not be available or indeed required. However, we will attempt to substantiate claims of racial abuse wherever possible.

8.9.3 Lifestyle

Applicants facing harassment for areas of their life such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation shall also be treated in a fair and sympathetic manner. Cases shall be dealt with according to their individual merit and in relation to the evidence supplied. This is not normally awarded along with racial abuse points.

8.9.4 Registered Sex Offenders

The Cosgrove Report 2001 (1) highlighted serious failings in the management of Registered Sex Offenders both within prisons and within the community. Cosgrove recommended that there should be a national accommodation strategy and an education programme for housing providers and their management bodies.

The National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO) was introduced as part of the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) in March 2007. However, there is no proper education and training programme and there has been no proper consultation with housing associations.

MAPPA, NASSO and other publications by the Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland (2) and the University of Glasgow (3) highlight the role of housing organisations in maximising community safety and minimising the risk from Registered Sex Offenders. The association does not have the capacity to perform that role. It cannot reasonably claim to be able to maximise community safety and minimise risk from Registered Sex Offenders.

Cosgrove highlighted the danger of locating groups of sex offenders near to each other. However it is clear that current procedures result in sex offenders being housed disproportionately in poorer communities. The Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland (2) recommends that sex offenders should not be housed near to victims or potential victims. Yet poorer communities have significantly higher numbers of young children and single parent households.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (4) stated that housing associations are best placed to identify the risks they face and that outside advisors should not assess risk on their behalf. The Association will assess the risk to Spire View if a sex offender applies for housing or is referred by another agency. This is an assessment of the consequences to the Association if it provides a house and the sex offender reoffends. This is not an assessment of whether the sex offender is likely to reoffend. That will be decided by the Responsible Authorities.

Where a housing applicant or any other member of the applicant's household has to register with the Police under any legislation relating to Sex Offenders, the association will work with the Responsible Authorities to establish whether there is a threat to community safety. Where a threat exists, the application will be

suspended. The position will be reviewed if there is a material change in circumstances. The applicant will have the right of appeal against this decision as per section 5.12.

Review

The Allocation policy will be regularly reviewed. The current policy is the result of a full review carried out in November 2014. Every effort has been made to comply with legislation and guidance whilst meeting the specific needs of the Association and its customers. The outcomes of the current policy will be monitored and amendments may be made as appropriate.

In particular, the ongoing debates on social exclusion, housing need v choice / aspiration and housing related issues relating to Registered Sex Offenders will be followed and any significant developments may be incorporated into the policy.

References

- (1) Scottish Executive (2001). *Reducing the Risk: Improving the Response to Sex Offending*. Report to the Expert Panel on Sex Offending chaired by Lady Cosgrove.
- (2) Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland (1999). *Housing and Sex Offenders in Scotland*. Andrea Moore, Policy Officer.
- (3) University of Glasgow (2004). *Towards a national accommodation strategy for sex offenders*. A report for the Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland by Atkinson, R.; Flint, J.; and Blandy, S.
- (4) Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (2002). *RAISING Standards in Housing*

8.10 Children / Pensioners At Height

8.10.1 Children at Height

Points may be applied per child living on the fourth floor or above.

8.10.2 Pensioners at Height

Points may be awarded where a household member is of pensionable age and living on the 2nd Floor or above. Points will only be awarded where the applicant is applying for a ground or 1st floor house or actually being made an offer at ground or 1st floor level.

8.11 Furnished Accommodation

The association recognises that the high rents charged on furnished accommodation can result in tenants not being able to work. It also recognises

that it is difficult for tenants to move to unfurnished accommodation as usually their housing need is being met by their current home.

8.12 Special Cases

Special cases will be considered as outlined in section **5.4** and points awarded as deemed appropriate.

9.0 ASSESSING HOUSING NEED (WHEELCHAIRS)

1.0 MOBILITY

	Section	Points
Wheelchair user (reliant on wheelchair inside the house)	9.1.1	100
Illness which will progressively restrict mobility	9.1.2	50

2.0 PERSONAL

No independent access to house or assistance difficult	9.2.1	20
No independent access to bathroom or can't get wheelchair in with assistance	9.2.2	20
No independent access to kitchen or can't get wheelchair in with assistance	9.2.3	15
No independent access to bedroom or can't get wheelchair in with assistance	9.2.4	10
No independent access to lounge or can't get wheelchair in with assistance	9.2.5	10
Limited independent use of bathing / showering	9.2.6	5
Limited independent use of toileting	9.2.7	10
Limited independent use of cooking facilities	9.2.8	5

3.0 HOUSE CONDITIONS

Inadequate size of accommodation	9.3.1	5
Inadequate heating system	9.3.2	5
No bath or shower	9.3.3	5
No cooking facilities	9.3.4	5
No inside WC	9.3.5	5
Evidence of dampness/disrepair	9.3.6	5

4.0 APPLICANTS IN HOSPITAL / TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

To be discharged from hospital or in temp accommodation	9.4.1	50
Sharing a bedroom – not out of choice	9.4.2	20
Sharing other facilities	9.4.3	15
Limited independent use of bathing / showering	9.4.4	5
Limited independent use of toileting facilities	9.4.5	10
Limited independent use of cooking facilities	9.4.6	5

5.0 PERSONAL & SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Applicants potential personal autonomy inhibited	9.5.1	20
Socially Isolated	9.5.2	15

Guidance for the award of housing points

Unless a thorough report is submitted from an Occupational therapist, every wheelchair applicant will receive a home visit. An assessment sheet will be completed at this time and points awarded accordingly. Additional medical evidence from the applicants GP may also be required in line with Section 8.8.

9.1 Mobility

Applicants **must** meet one of these criteria in order to be accepted onto the wheelchair waiting list. Points will only be awarded for one of the categories, not both.

9.1.1 Wheelchair User

Points are awarded under this category where the applicant is a wheelchair user. The applicant must be reliant on the wheelchair inside the home.

9.1.2 Progressive Illness

Points are awarded under this category where the applicant has a progressive illness which will result in them becoming reliant upon a wheelchair within the house at some point in the near future.

9.2 Personal

The allocation of points under this section depends on an assessment of an individuals potential to function independently. In the case of a more severely disabled person, the assessment will be based on the ability of others to give assistance. Points under sections 9.2.6 – 9.2.8 will **not** be awarded in addition to 9.2.2 and 9.2.3 as these are used to assess the degree of independent living which applicants have.

9.3 House Condition

The following current house conditions will be taken into account;

9.3.1 Inadequate Size of Accommodation

Points are awarded where applicants are living in overcrowded accommodation according to the Associations allocation policy. Only one set of points will be awarded.

Where applicants are underoccupying their current accommodation by at least 2 bedrooms, points will also be awarded.

9.3.2 Inadequate Heating System

Points will be awarded where the applicant has an inadequate heating system compared with those in the Spire View improved and new build properties. Points will not be awarded where an adequate system is in place but not working.

9.3.3-9.3.5

Points will be awarded where these facilities are lacking.

9.3.6 Evidence of Dampness/Disrepair

Points are awarded where there is evidence of dampness or kitchens and windows etc have not been modernised. This will be judged in relation to the improved and new build properties provided by Spire View.

9.4 Applicants in Hospital / Temporary Accommodation

The points under this section relate to applicants who are currently in hospital or temporary accommodation. Points are **not** awarded in addition to those in Sections 9.2 and 9.3.

9.5 Personal & Social Circumstances

This section can be applied to both house and non-house dwellers.

9.5.1 Personal Autonomy Inhibited

Points shall apply where rehousing by the Association would enhance personal autonomy.

9.5.2 Socially Isolated

Points shall apply where the applicant is socially isolated from, for example, their family.

9.6 Allocations Priorities

A separate waiting list and internal transfer list is operated for wheelchair houses and applicants can only be on either the mainstream waiting list / internal transfer list or the wheelchair waiting list / internal transfer list.

10.0 THE ALLOCATION OF HOUSES

The association aims to demonstrate clarity, openness and accountability in relation to the allocation of houses that it may make.

10.1 Housing Need V Community Need

The association has already stated that it wishes to contribute towards creating a balanced community. It has defined this balanced community to be one which encompasses various types of households in terms of size and age groups as well as residents from differing socio-economic groups.

In an effort to do this, the Association will consider:

10.1.2 Choice/Aspiration amongst Applicants

Applicants shall be allowed to highlight particular properties and addresses when making an application for housing. Every effort will be made to take this into consideration during the allocations process but an offer of a chosen address is not guaranteed.

10.1.3 Creating Stability

The association will, through its allocations policy, strive to create a balanced mix of residents. It will ensure that the policy is weighted in such a way as to avoid an over concentration of one particular household type.

10.1.4 Encouraging Various Socio-economic Groups

Every effort shall be made to retain rent charges at a level that is affordable to those who are in employment and especially those on low incomes. Various properties may command a higher rent level and this will be borne in mind during the allocations process.

10.1.5 Sustaining Social and Family Networks

Where two or more applications have been awarded the same number of points and no distinction can be made in their housing need, priority will be given to applications made from within the association boundary.

10.2 Flexibility

10.2.1 Sensitivity & Discretion in Allocations

It is inevitable that the need for a certain level of discretion will always exist within allocations policies but this will be limited as far as possible.

- It is agreed that wherever possible applicants will be matched with appropriate properties and locations e.g. in terms of mobility needs.

- It will be considered to be good housing management practice to address potential clashes of personality or lifestyle that may be known the association staff prior to making allocations.

10.3 Allocations Priorities

As per sections 5.14 'Groups of Applicants' and 5.15 'Target System of Allocations', the association wishes to help create and maintain a balanced, stable and sustainable community. As a result, the target system will be used to re-house different groups of applicants in order of points.

11.0 TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

The association has a target of allocating 25% of available properties to transfer applicants. Performance against this target will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and referred to committee should a change be deemed necessary. This Section defines the criteria which apply to applications for transfers.

11.1 Priority

Forms will initially be assessed according to the main Allocation Policy and awarded points, where applicable, under the following categories;

- ❖ Occupancy Level
- ❖ Occupancy Level – Bedroom Tax Charge
- ❖ Medical Need
- ❖ Family Support
- ❖ Special Cases
- ❖ Garden for Children

This will help determine the actual need for a house.

Note 1 The above list is not in any particular order.

Note 2 Internal Transfer applicants affected by Welfare Reform / Bedroom Tax Charge on their property and can be transferred to a smaller Property to alleviate the charge.

Note 3 Applicants accepting ground floor properties for medical reasons will not be able to exchange to a higher up property unless the medical condition no longer exists and the ground floor property is needed by someone else.

Note 4 Tenants currently living above ground floor level, with no garden may request a transfer on the grounds of requiring a garden for their children to play in. Applications will only be accepted where the youngest child is 12 years or younger. Once the youngest child

reaches the age of 13, applicants will be advised that they no longer qualify for a transfer on these grounds.

11.2 Amalgamation of Transfer & Waiting List Applications

Where a transfer applicant seeks re-housing in order to move in with another person who may or may not already have their own tenancy elsewhere, the application will be assessed as follows;

- ❖ The current tenant's application will be assessed according to the transfer / allocation policy.
- ❖ The non-tenants application will be assessed according to the allocation policy.
- ❖ The applications will be amalgamated and the total number of points calculated.
- ❖ The application will be placed on the transfer list.

A joint tenancy will be required and the normal transfer rules / criteria will apply e.g. rent account status.

11.3 Qualifying Time

An applicant must have been in their current home for at least 12 months before an application for transfer will be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances.

11.4 Number of Moves

The number of internal transfers will normally be limited to one.

Transfers will be considered following a change in circumstances and not automatically after 12 months residency.

11.5 House Type

A transfer must be equivalent to or more suitably house the tenant.

11.6 Suspensions, Cancellations and Appeals

Applications for internal transfer may be suspended or cancelled in accordance with Sections 5.10 and 5.11 of this policy. Applicants also have the right of appeal as detailed in Section 5.12.

11.7 New Build

The new build and modernised stock will be treated equally by;

- ❖ Not granting transfers simply because someone wants a new build house
- ❖ Using the same criteria when assessing priority for modernised and new build

11.8 All Factors Equal

Where an allocation is being made from the internal transfer list and two or more applicants at the top of the list have the same number of points, the following will apply in order;

- ❖ If an applicant already lives within the close which has the vacancy then he / she will be given priority
- ❖ Length of residency within the current home shall be the deciding factor

This policy will be reviewed in full every 3 years.

November 2014