

# South Lanarkshire Tenants Development Support Project



## South Lanarkshire Council's Allocations Policy

### Background

In the light of the introduction of recent housing legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament, the Council has identified that it needs to update its **housing allocations policy**. In consultation with tenants and specifically working with tenants through the Central Liaison Group the Council is now carrying out a full review of this policy. A key factor for the Council is to ensure that housing is allocated in a fair, consistent and transparent way.

Another key factor for the Council in developing its' allocations policy is how to meet the needs of transfer and new applicants within a scarce housing resource. For instance at the present time the Council owns approx 27,500 houses, in 2005 the housing waiting lists had 16,675 applicants and on average the Council lets 2,496 houses each year (including Homeless lets). Some areas are in high demand and some areas have a low demand. The allocations policy also links to other Council policies such as the Homelessness Strategy and the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy.

### Tenant Consultation

Consultation on the new allocations policy will be carried out during 2007. Alongside Council Officers, the South Lanarkshire Tenants Development Support Project is supporting tenant participation in contributing tenants' views to this new policy. To assist the process we have compiled a series of leaflets to provide information to tenants on housing allocations. These are all free on request from the Project. Call 01698 527108 for copies .

The rest of this leaflet briefly outlines the key sections of the current Council allocations policy for your information. A full copy of the Council's current allocations policy is available on request from the Project.

### Principles and objectives

Three basic principles:

- To allocate houses to those in housing need
- To meet aspirations of existing tenants
- To ensure allocations help achieve balanced and sustainable communities

Six objectives

- To be fair, efficient and consistent in allocating tenancies;
- To ensure applicants are offered accommodation suitable to their needs
- To make best use of available housing stock
- To be responsive to local needs and individual circumstances
- To be non discriminatory in the allocation of properties
- To comply with the terms of all relevant legislation

**Do you agree with these objectives? What do you think should be the key objectives for the Council's allocation policy?**

### Access to Information

Applicants are entitled to access any information regarding their own application through their local Area Services Office. This is in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Who can apply for a house:.** Anyone over the age of sixteen years old can apply for a house. The Council cannot take into consideration; the applicants income, whether they own any property or its value, whether they are living with a spouse or co-habitee, any outstanding rent arrears for which the person is not responsible and whether the applicant lives out with the area.

**Occupancy standard:** This standard refers to the size of property that can be applied for. Applicants will be queued for one size of property. Currently the policy states that a bedroom is required for :

- A couple
- A single person aged 16years and over
- Two children of the opposite sex unless one is aged 10years or over in which case each child requires a separate room
- Two children of the same sex under 16years, unless the age difference is 10years or over

***What do you think about who can apply for a house? What do you think about the Occupancy Standard?***

**How applicants are queued:** The Council currently operates three lists; General Waiting list, Transfer list and Homeless list. In addition certain exceptional types of application are dealt which outside of the General allocations policy. These include urgent social need, management transfer and redevelopment.

**Homeless List:** This list includes all applicants who have been deemed to be homeless and to whom the Council has a duty to provide permanent accommodation in accordance with Housing law. This has been extended by the Homelessness Etc (Scotland) Act 2003 which may put additional pressure on housing allocations.

**Points and Priorities:** Like many other landlords, the Council operates a “Points” system to prioritise housing applications. A simplified version of the Points categories in table form is attached to this leaflet . A full version of the Points and explanation is available from the Project or from Housing and Technical Services on 01698 454352.

***Do you agree with the Points Categories and Points awarded for each Category? Should Categories be changed or new ones included?***

**Applicant’s Responsibilities:** The policy states that applicants have a responsibility to notify the Council of any change of circumstances which may affect their housing application.

**Refusal of Offers:** The policy states that applicants will be eligible for 3 offers of housing. After 2 offers the applicant will be interviewed to check details. If an applicant refuses a third reasonable offer, the application will be suspended for 12 months. After this time the application will be reinstated, if housing is still required, and the applicant will be eligible to receive a further 3 offers.

**Appeals:** The Allocations policy contains a detailed procedure for applicants to appeal if they feel that they have been treated unfairly under the terms of the Allocations policy.

**Local Letting Initiates:** The Council may use Local Letting Initiatives in certain areas to take account of the needs of a particular area or estate.

**Mutual Exchanges:** The Council operates a Mutual Exchange Scheme. Permission from the Council is required, which the policy states will not be unreasonably withheld.

The SLTDSP has produced five Fact sheets on housing allocations; An Introduction to Housing Allocations, The Legal Framework for Allocations Policies, SLC Allocations’ policy, Common Housing Registers and Choice Based Lettings. These are all available free by contacting the Project on 01698 527108.

## Categories and Points in Council's current Allocations Policy

Category	Points
<b>Medical. These points will be awarded only where re-housing would improve or alleviate an applicants medical condition and only for suitable accommodation.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category A 300points (Extremely Serious medical condition)</li> <li>• Category B 60points ( Serious medical condition)</li> <li>• Category C 20points ( Non-serious medical condition)</li> </ul> <p><b>Medical proof required.</b></p>
<b>Overcrowding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 additional bedroom required: 20points</li> <li>• 2 additional bedroom required: 40points</li> <li>• 3 additional bedroom required: 60points</li> <li>• 4 additional bedroom required: 80points</li> </ul> <p><b>Points will be awarded to a maximum of 100</b></p>
<b>Under Occupancy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under occupancy by 1 bedroom: 10points</li> <li>• Under occupancy by 2 bedroom: 20points</li> <li>• Under occupancy by 3 bedroom: 30points</li> <li>• Under occupancy by 4 bedroom: 40points</li> </ul> <p><b>Points will be awarded to a maximum of 40 points</b></p>
<b>Insecurity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 points</li> </ul>
<b>Sharing Amenities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 Points</li> </ul>
<b>Lacking amenities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No inside WC: 10 points</li> <li>• No fixed bath or shower: 10 points</li> <li>• No piped hot water: 10 points</li> <li>• No piped cold water: 10 points</li> <li>• No wash-hand basin 10 points</li> <li>• No sink</li> </ul> <p><b>Points will be awarded to a maximum of 60</b></p>
<b>Tied tenancies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 300 points</li> </ul>
<b>HM Forces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 points HM Forces do not qualify for points under any other category</li> </ul>
<b>Care and Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 points</li> </ul>
<b>HOMES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 points</li> </ul>
<b>Key Workers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 points</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Workers do not qualify for points under any other category</b></p>
<b>Date points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 points for every completed year on waiting list ( up to a maximum of 150 points)</li> </ul>