



# **Drumchapel Housing**

Co-operative Limited

## **Choice Based Lettings Allocations Policy**

Approved by Board  
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# Allocations policy

## 1. Background

Drumchapel Housing Co-operative is a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) operating in the Northwest of Glasgow. We are committed to providing an excellent service to our tenants and service users. We will work in partnership with the local community to provide good quality homes and create a better Drumchapel.

The Co-operative operates a choice based letting allocations policy which provides choice to applicants on the areas they choose to live.

## 2. Purpose of Choice Based Lettings Allocation Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that everyone who applies for housing is treated fairly, consistently and with respect. This policy is based on the following principles:

- Fairness and accountability
- Equality, openness and transparency
- Confidentiality
- Consistency of decision making

This policy sets out:

- How to apply for housing;
- How an application for housing will be assessed based on housing need; and
- How homes are allocated to meet the needs of housing applicants

The Local Housing Strategy for Glasgow and Drumchapel area have been considered when writing this policy and guidance from the Scottish Government on allocations. The following links below provide some of the guidance reviewed:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/allocations](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/allocations)

[www.gov.scot/policies/social-housing/housing-management/](http://www.gov.scot/policies/social-housing/housing-management/)

This policy is supplemented by working procedures which will be used by staff in implementing the policy.

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## 3. Policy Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy are:

- To meet all relevant legal and good practice standards, for example, addressing the specific housing needs of groups set out in housing law.
- To contribute to the regeneration of Drumchapel through the provision of quality housing services at affordable rent levels which will meet the changing needs and aspirations of our customers.
- To operate a policy that is easily understood and simple to administer.
- To maximise opportunities by offering applicants comprehensive advice and information concerning their housing options.
- To avoid discrimination on grounds covered in our Equality and Human Rights Policy:
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Marriage and civil partnership
  - Gender reassignment
  - Pregnancy and maternity
  - Race
  - Religion or belief
  - Sex
  - Sexual orientation

The Co-operative will not tolerate any sort of unfair treatment or discrimination on any grounds. In addition to the above, our zero tolerance will be broadened (but not confined) to the following:

- National origin
- Cultural background
- Ethnic origin
- Tenure
- Issues related to literacy or numeracy
- Employment status
- Domestic circumstances

Each of the above is equally important, and we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that no discrimination, whether deliberate or inadvertent, occurs.

- To establish new tenancies that are successful and sustainable
- To process personal information confidentially to meet relevant legal obligations

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- To make best use of the housing stock and ensure a balanced community
- To form partnerships with other housing providers to address housing need
- To respect at all times the human rights of applicants and in particular their right in respect for a private and family life
- To maximise income by letting empty houses quickly in accordance with timescales
- To deal with appeals and complaints fairly and in accordance with timescales
- To assess if policy objectives are met through our audit and performance management system.
- To review the policy every three years.

### 4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

#### 4.1 Legal Framework

This policy complies with and takes account of legislative requirements. Some of these are as follows:

- Housing (Scotland) Acts – 1987; 2001; 2006 & 2010 and 2014.
- Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (“the GDPR”); any legislation that, in respect of the United Kingdom, replaces, or enacts into United Kingdom domestic law, the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679, the proposed Regulation on Privacy and Electronic Communications or any other law relating to data protection, the processing of personal data and privacy as a consequence of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union
- Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981.
- Civil Partnerships Act 2004.

#### 4.2. Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) & Scottish Social Housing Charter

The SHR was set up to operate as an independent regulator who is directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament.

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The SHR monitors, assesses, compares and reports on social landlords' performance of housing activities. It requires landlords to collect and provide key information on their performance in relation to achieving the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) outcomes and standards.

The following SSHC outcomes and standards are directly relevant to this Choice Based Lettings Allocation policy:

### **Charter Outcome 1 – Equalities**

'Every tenant and other customer have their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services'.

### **Charter Outcome 2 – Communication**

'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'.

### **Charter Outcome 4 - Quality of housing**

'Tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair'.

### **Charter Outcome 7, 8 and 9 - Housing Options**

'People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them'.

'Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options'.

'People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness'.

### **Charter Outcome 10 - Access to Social Housing**

'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 on their prospects for being housed'.

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## Charter Outcome - 11 Tenancy Sustainment

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’.

### 4.3. Code of Conduct / Applications from staff or Board members

As Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), we have adopted and comply with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations two models of Code of Conduct for Governing Body and staff members.

The codes were developed to provide RSLs with models they could adopt to uphold and promote the standards of behaviour and conduct expected of governing body members and staff and also support RSLs to meet our regulatory standards.

The SHR also monitors RSLs to ensure no-one receives any special treatment as a result of their connection with an RSL.

We may grant a tenancy to employees, Board members, former employees, former board members and close relatives of these. This, however, is provided the allocation has been dealt with in accordance with policy and that the person has not been involved in or any influence over the process by which the Co-operative allocated the tenancy.

## 5. Allocation Law

The purpose of this section is to explain some of the main legal provisions/rules for housing applicants. These rules cover the following matters:

- Access to the housing register
- Groups that are to be given reasonable preference when letting houses
- Factors that must be disregarded when letting houses
- Information
- Publicity
- Access to personal information



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## 5.1 Access to the Housing Register

Any person who is **sixteen years** or older may apply to our housing register. **This is not, however, an automatic right to receive offers of housing.** Section 6 explains how we process and prioritise applications in line with the law and good practice.

## 5.2 Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Applicants subject to immigration control must declare this when completing their application. Eligibility for housing will require to be assessed in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 and asylum and immigration legislation. Applicants may remain on the housing list but will be asked to provide evidence of their immigration status before we can confirm if they are eligible for an offer of housing.

## 5.3 Mutual Exchanges

Scottish Secure Tenants have a legal right to exchange their homes with other Scottish Secure Tenants. Landlords can only refuse permission if it is reasonable to do so. The Co-operative operates a separate tenancy changes policy.

## 5.4 Reasonable Preference Groups

The law requires us to give reasonable preference to certain groups when letting houses. The groups to which we must give reasonable preference when letting houses are:

- Homeless applicants and those threatened with homelessness who also have unmet housing needs
- Applicants who are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions and have unmet housing needs
- Applicants living in an under occupied property

## 5.5 Factors not taken into account when allocating housing

- Length of time applicants have lived in the area
- Housing debt relating to a tenancy for which the applicant was not the tenant
- Housing debt now repaid
- Any non-housing debt such as council tax

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- Age of applicants unless under the age of 16 or we have specifically designed or adapted a property for applicants of a certain age
- Applicants income or property, including income or property owned by other household members
- Housing debt outstanding: Less than the equivalent of one month's rent charge is not taken into account

Over one month's rent outstanding:

- Applicants must have a repayment arrangement in place and have maintained this for a minimum consecutive period of 3 months/13 weeks.

### **5.6. Information**

We can make available a summary of this policy. Applicants can also obtain a full copy on request.

The summary and full copy are provided free of charge and can be made available in alternative formats.

### **5.7. Publicity**

We must publish details in a variety of formats. We can facilitate this by Happy to Translate, Global Languages, Read IT and Speak IT on our website pages. These rules cover all applicants on our housing register, including existing tenants who wish to transfer to alternative accommodation. We publish details via our newsletters, website and office reception. We will prepare and publish a report on our consultation of this policy.

### **5.8. Access to personal information**

Applicants have rights to access personal information in two ways. Firstly, an applicant is entitled to view information supplied in connection with their application.

This right is set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, 2001, 2010 and 2014.

Secondly, an applicant may access personal information as determined by rights of access under UK GDPR, this is commonly known as a Subject Access Request.

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If you wish to request access to your personal information, please refer to our Fair Processing Notice that explains how to make a request. We will provide the information request within one month.

### 6. The Application Process

This section explains the stages and rules concerning the allocation process.

#### 6.1 Admission to the housing register

Applicants must complete a housing application, this can be downloaded from our website ([www.drumchapelhc.org.uk](http://www.drumchapelhc.org.uk)) or a printed copy can be provided on request.

Applicants can be assisted by the Co-operative's staff in completing an application form.

We can also carry out home visits to assist infirm, housebound or disabled applicants to complete their forms within a reasonable proximity, on request.

In line with our equality commitments, this form can be made available in different languages and in alternative formats. We may provide support services including an interpreter for hearing impaired applicants or applicants whose first language is not English. We also support applicants with learning difficulties who may need support to complete an application.

Formats may include:

- Large print
- Audio CD/DVD
- Translations into community languages
- Use of language or sign interpreters
- Braille

All costs in relation to this will be borne by the Co-operative.

In addition, applications can be made via formal referrals by agencies that have an agreement in place. An example of this being Glasgow City Council Homeless Service (also known as a Section 5 Homeless Referral).

Our target for assessing completed application forms is 7 working days, from the date all information/relevant proof is received. Applicants are sent written confirmation of their priority awards.

Applications will only be fully processed to the 'live and eligible' status when a completed Share Certificate Application is returned, the Co-operative is a fully mutual organisation therefore all prospective members are required to have Board approval prior to be added to the Housing Register.

If further information is required following an application submission the applicant will be contacted directly about this. The application may however still be processed on the information provided.

Applicants are responsible for advising of any changes to their housing circumstances.

Applicants can contact housing staff during office hours to discuss their application details.

## 6.2 Verifying an applicant's circumstances

To enable the correct housing need assessment to be made, we generally require applicants to provide information to verify their circumstances.

Examples of the verification required include the following (Please note that this list is not exhaustive):

<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Verification Required</b>
All applicants / joint applicants	Proof of identity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proof of Current Address (2 items)</li> <li>• Photographic ID</li> </ul>
All household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proof of current address if over 16 yrs. (1 item)</li> <li>• Proof of Identification e.g. passport, birth certificate, driving licence</li> </ul>
Homeless or threatened with homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment undertaken by Glasgow City Council</li> </ul>
Asked to leave current accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of valid Notice to Quit</li> </ul>
In need of rehousing as health affected by current housing circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date relevant medical documentation</li> <li>• Priority B form completed</li> <li>• Other supporting information</li> </ul>

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Residency	Proof of residency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bank Statement</li> <li>• Driving Licence</li> <li>• Tenancy Agreement</li> </ul>
Access to children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter from child's other parent</li> <li>• Letter from solicitor</li> </ul>
Experiencing harassment	Corroborating evidence from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Landlord</li> <li>• Support agencies</li> </ul>
Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAT B1 form or similar showing expected due date</li> </ul>
Owner Occupiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proof of intent to sell</li> </ul>
Non-UK Nationals, Asylum Seekers and Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proof of right to reside in the UK</li> </ul>

### 6.3 Applying for a joint tenancy

Applicants including existing tenants may make a joint housing application. We encourage joint applicants – of the same or opposite sex – to apply for joint tenancies to ensure they have the same legal rights.

### 6.4 Information and Processing Applications

We recognise the confidentiality of information gathered as part of the allocations process and all applicants will be informed clearly of the way in which the information provided will be used. Applicant information will only be used for the assessment of housing need, including the request for tenancy references from current and / or previous landlords.

We handle all personal information in line with our UK GDPR Policy and further information on how we process your personal information can be found in our Fair Processing Notice.

### 6.5 Tenancy Checks

We may carry out tenancy checks/ask for references from any landlord or mortgage lender to confirm housing and tenancy details. We will request the applicant's consent to do this.

We will check an applicant's current housing circumstances before making an offer of housing. This is good practice to ensure that information is recorded

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accurately and enables suitable offers of housing to be made. For instance, we may telephone applicants to confirm details are as recorded on their application form.

### **6.6 Home Visits**

We may also carry out home visits to verify application details, to provide information relating to tenancies and also to consider any support requirements of the applicant.

A home visit is of particular importance if no references are available confirming household details. For example, at the home visit, application details may have changed, and an offer may no longer be appropriate.

### **6.7 False / Misleading Information**

If we believe an applicant has intentionally changed their circumstances in order to secure a higher position on the housing register, we may assess this application as if this change in circumstances had not occurred and if appropriate suspend the application for up to 6 months.

If an applicant is re-housed based on false information that an applicant has made knowingly, we are entitled to take legal action to recover the tenancy.

### **6.8. Suspension from the Housing Register**

A suspension happens when an applicant has been assessed for and accepted onto a housing register but is not eligible for an offer of housing until either a certain period has elapsed, their conduct has changed or a change in circumstances has occurred.

**6.8.1.** An application for housing may be suspended by us at the point of the application in the following circumstance:

- the applicant has engaged in anti-social behaviour
- anti-social behaviour towards a social landlords' employees when applying for housing
- the applicant has been convicted of certain offences and where those offences are associated with a residential property or the surrounding area. We may consider convictions in the past 3 years, or longer in exceptional circumstances.
- any other offence punishable by imprisonment committed in the locality of their home (also applies to someone who has resided with the applicant)
- the applicant has had an order for recovery of possession on certain grounds

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made against them

- a previous tenancy has been terminated on the grounds of abandonment or neglect of the property
- there are or were certain outstanding debts relating to a previous tenancy
- the applicant made a false statement in an application to the housing register
- the applicant has already refused offers of housing and the landlord considers the refusal of the number of offers to be unreasonable

**Table: Suspension Periods**

Reason for Suspension	Period of Suspension	Removal of Suspension
Antisocial Behaviour – you or someone in your household has received complaints regarding antisocial behaviour	12 months	Evidence provided to show that behaviour has improved
Abandonment – you have abandoned a property in the past 3 years	6 months	Application re-instated after 6 months
Conviction – e.g. you or someone in your household has been convicted of an offense punishable by imprisonment which was committed in or in the locality of a house occupied by you in the past 3 years	24 months	Application re-instated after 24 months
Refusal of two reasonable offers	6 months	Application re-instated after 6 months
Outstanding tenancy related debt – e.g. rent arrears	36 months	Applicant provides evidence that debt has been paid in full, an arrangement to pay has been maintained consecutively for 13 weeks/3 months or the debt is less than one month rent
Eviction – you have been evicted by a court order in the past 3 years for rent arrears, drug dealing etc	36 months	Application re-instated after 36 months

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False or misleading information – you have withheld or provided false or misleading information on your housing application	3 months	Information requested is provided e.g. tenancy reference
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### 6.9 Home Ownership

If the applicant owns a home, then account will be taken of that in our allocation process except in the following circumstances:

- If the home owned by the applicant has not been let but the applicant cannot obtain access to it
- where the property is in such a poor condition that it cannot be lived in such as a burst pipe or flooding where the property cannot be lived in whilst repairs are completed
- an illegal occupation by squatters
- a matrimonial breakdown where the applicant cannot return to the joint property
- the applicant has bail conditions which means that they cannot return to their property
- situations where the applicants living in the property could lead to abuse. This could be from someone still living in the property or from someone who used to live there
- situations where the applicant living in the property could endanger the health of the applicant or someone living with them and there are no reasonable steps that can be taken by the applicant to prevent this

We can decide to offer a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy if the applicant is only looking for a temporary arrangement.

### 6.10 Reviewing Applications

Regular reviews of the Housing Register will be carried out. Applicants can however review and update their application at any time. It is important that applications are kept up to date with accurate information so that appropriate offers of housing can be made. Proof of any change in housing / personal circumstances will be required.

If no response is received after a standard review and reminder letter, applicants are removed from the Housing Register. We will write to the applicant to explain why we have removed them from the Housing Register.



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### **6.11 Removal of Applications**

An application can be removed from the Housing Register under the following circumstances:

- the applicant is re-housed and confirms they wish their housing application cancelled
- the applicant has requested removal – if this request is made verbally and not in writing, the organisation will then confirm the request in writing
- the applicant fails to respond to a periodic review within a reasonable timescale (send review letter and 28 days later send reminder letter before removal of application)
- the applicant is deceased

### **6.12 Applicant Choice/Selection**

We operate a choice based system of allocation which will allow applications who are on the housing register to choose the houses for which they wish to be considered. However, in selecting who will be given the offer of a house, the Co-operative will take account of a household's needs.

The Co-operative maintains a lettings database (SDM) which will provide staff with brief details of all the houses which are coming up for let. We will advertise available properties for let on our website, Facebook page and within the office. We will also maintain a list of applicants who prefer to receive available properties by post. The Co-operative will prepare a property schedule for each property which will include the following details:

- type of property (e.g. flat, semi-detached, terraced etc.)
- size of property
- monthly rent charge
  
- type of central heating
- type of windows (single/double glazed)
- access to gardens

The database and the property schedule will also include closing dates by which applicants must apply for the houses on offer and any restrictions with regard to the use of "priority tickets".

Applicants who have a live housing application on the Housing Register will be able to register an interest in any property that is on offer, providing that the property meets their needs and is big enough to accommodate their household. They may register an interest in more than one property at the same time.

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### 6.13 Offers of Housing

In selecting who will be given the offer of a house, we will take account of a household's needs.

At the closing date, the Co-operative will consider all the applications it has received for each of the houses on offer. It will then decide who will be given the offer of house based on the criteria set out in the table below:

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Assessment Process</b>
<b>Priority A – Homeless people and those threatened with homelessness who also have unmet housing needs</b>	All applicants who have a Resettlement Plan from Glasgow City Council and the landlord has accepted as a Section 5 homeless referral will be awarded a priority A ticket. The award will also be awarded on proof of homelessness for example a letter from the local authority confirming they have accepted duty
<b>Priority B – People who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and have unmet housing needs</b>	Visit will be carried out prior to allocation to verify priority.
<b>Priority C – Under occupation</b>	Visit will be carried out prior to allocation to verify priority.
<b>Priority D – Exceptional</b>	Visit will be carried out prior to allocation, supporting evidence assessed.

As mentioned previously, admission to the housing register does not mean that we will always be able to make an offer of housing. Whether an applicant receives an offer of housing will depend on:

- an applicant's housing need;
- the numbers and circumstances of other applicants registering an interest in a given property;
- the number of properties that become available; and
- Offers of housing are 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 inappropriate offers

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We will also not offer properties which do not suit an applicant's housing requirements for example we will not offer a top floor property where mobility requirements have been identified.

The Co-operative will provide advice and information on realistic preferences, as demand generally exceeds supply in certain areas / property types.

In cases where an applicant refuses a number of reasonable offers (i.e. meeting the assessed needs and preferences of the applicant) we reserve the right to re-interview and re-assess the application.

If we decide to offer an applicant a property this will be a written formal offer of housing. We may telephone to tell applicants' we have an offer, but we will always confirm any offer in writing.

### 6.14 House Size

The size of property for which applicants may be considered is noted below:

Apartment size	2 Apt (1 bedroom)	3 Apt (2 bedroom)	4 Apt (3 Bedroom)	5 Apt (4 bedroom)
Single Person	✓	*		
Couple	✓	*		
Parent(s) with 1 child (over 1 year old)		✓		
Parent(s) with 2 children under 16 of same gender		✓		
Parents(s) with 1 girl and boy both under 10 years		✓		
Parent(s) with 2 children of same gender where 1 is 16 years or older			✓	
Parent(s) with 1 girl & 1 boy where oldest is over 10 years			✓	
Parent(s) with 5 children aged between 0 and 16				✓

\* At the discretion of the landlord.

6 apartments and above, where available, are let at the discretion of the landlord.

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All applicants will be placed on the housing register for the size of property required based on their current household composition.

In particular circumstances you may be able to obtain a property of a different size. For example:

### **Overcrowding assessments**

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

### **6.15 Tenants' Rights and Responsibilities**

We provide information on tenant rights and responsibilities at various stages of the application process. These are also explained in detail when applicants sign their tenancy agreement.

### **6.16 Tenancies**

We provide applicants who accept an offer of housing a Scottish Secure Tenancy in accordance with our legal obligations.

In a limited number of instances, we may offer applicants a short Scottish secure tenancy. This has limited security of tenure.

Examples of grounds for a short Scottish secure tenancy agreement include:

An applicant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour within the last three years.

A tenant (or a member of their family) is subject to an anti-social behaviour order. The accommodation is let on a temporary basis for certain reasons.

## **7. Our Allocation System**

This section explains the type of allocation system we have adopted to ensure that we meet our policy objectives effectively.

### **7.1 Priority award system**

In order to provide a fair system, this policy prioritises applicants on the Housing Register according to their housing need. To do this we operate a priority award system. This means that applicants are awarded a priority ticket dependent on their housing need.

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## **7.2 Advantages of awarding priority tickets**

- Housing needs specified in law are addressed (the reasonable preference groups), as well as other housing needs
- Facilitates monitoring of allocation practice, in particular how effectively we are meeting our legal responsibilities
- Ensures accurate identification of housing needs and allows us to respond quickly to changing patterns of need
- Provides for a wide range of housing needs to be tackled thereby promoting our objective of creating sustainable communities

## **7.3 Applicants with the same priority ticket**

If there is more than one applicant with the same level of priority ticket, or if there is no one using a priority ticket, then the offer will go to the applicant who has the earliest date of registration on the Co-operative's Housing Register should the property meet their needs.

## **7.4 Travelling People**

Applications from travellers or other applicants living in a caravan are awarded a priority ticket based on their actual housing conditions.

Applications from travelling people who have nowhere to pitch their caravan would be referred to Glasgow City Council's homeless service.

## **7.5 High Risk Offenders**

Persons currently on the sex offenders register and other high risk offenders are subject to the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

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

Multi agency scrutiny of assessed risk will therefore be the paramount factor in determining whether an allocation may be considered.

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## 8. Our Application Groups

This policy has 3 groups and applicants will be placed in the group reflecting their housing need:

**Group 1      Homeless Persons** (Section 5 referral as defined by current legislation)

**Group 2      Standard Applications**

**Group 3      Internal Transfers / Aspirational**

### 8.1 Group 1 – Homelessness Applications

We recognise our policy objective to assist in the prevention and resolution of homelessness.

All applicants who have a Resettlement Plan from Glasgow City Council's Homeless Casework Team and the landlord has accepted as a Section 5 homeless referral will be placed in Group 1.

Homelessness will be confirmed at the time of offer. If homelessness is not confirmed any offer of housing may be withdrawn.

Only accepted section 5 homeless referrals are placed within this group.

If a suitable property is available at the time of or within 6 weeks of receipt of the Section 5 referral, applicants will be made one reasonable offer of accommodation. If this offer is refused, this will normally result in the applicant being removed from the Homelessness Group.

### 8.2 Group 2 – Standard Applications

The majority of applicants will fall into this group as it includes applicants who do not have a tenancy with the Co-operative.

### 8.3 Group 3 - Internal Transfers/Aspirational Applications

From 1 May 2019 only applicants who are tenants of the Co-operative and who have been a tenant for five years or more will be placed in this group from 1 May 2019. Non tenant applicants who are eligible prior to 30 April 2019 will still be eligible to apply for these properties after 1 May 2019.

## Allocations policy

An internal transfer / aspirational group is important to meet policy objectives for the following reasons:

It promotes households to move to smaller accommodation, in turn releasing stock for other applicants. It addresses the preferences of existing tenants and is important in establishing communities which are popular and sustainable.

This category also includes 'aspirational transfers' which relates to existing Co-operative tenants who wish to move for reasons other than housing need. This is further explained as follows:

The Co-operative recognises that some existing tenants may wish to apply for moves to what they regard as better quality houses (for example, new build and/or main door properties).

Such tenants may not qualify for priority tickets and therefore, would be extremely unlikely to obtain a move to a very popular house type. In order to ensure that applicants who are adequately housed can still exercise choice, the Co-operative will identify a number of properties during each year which will be offered on the basis that no priority tickets can be used. This will include new build first time lets.

The number of houses identified for this initiative will not exceed 25% of the total number of houses which were offered for let or relet in the previous financial year.

**Standard applicants** – Properties advertised as aspirational let's for standard applicants will be advertised in exactly the same way as other properties which are available for let.

**Internal transfers** – Properties advertised as aspirational let's for internal transfers will be advertised only to internal transfers whose housing need suit the property available for let.

Properties advertised as aspirational lets will be clearly marked as being part of this initiative and applicants will be advised that they cannot use priority tickets to support their application for these properties.

Properties advertised as aspirational let's will be allocated on the basis of the earliest registration.

The Co-operative recognises that in offering applicants on the Housing Register maximum choice, in exceptional circumstances this may not always be practicable, such as the first lets in a new build scheme as demand for this type of property would outstrip supply, new build first let's will be allocated on the basis of the earliest registration date.

## Allocations policy

All properties included in a first let in a new build scheme will be advertised in exactly the same way as other properties which are available for let. However, these properties will be clearly marked as 'new build, first let and applicants will be advised they cannot use priority tickets to support their application for these properties

### 9. Priority Ticket Categories

This policy has the following priority tickets:

#### **Priorities – Reasonable preference groups**

**Priority A** – Homeless applicants and those threatened with homelessness who also have unmet housing needs

**Priority B** – Applicants who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and have unmet housing needs

**Priority C** – Applicants living in an under occupied property

#### **Out with reasonable preference groups**

**Priority D** – Exceptional Circumstances

Applicants will be placed in the highest priority reflecting their housing need.

#### 9.1 **Priority A – Homeless people and those threatened with homelessness who also have unmet housing needs**

We recognise our policy objective to assist in the prevention and resolution of homelessness.

A priority ticket will be awarded to applicants who:

- Have a Resettlement Plan from Glasgow City Council's Homeless Casework Team and the landlord has accepted as a Section 5 homeless referral will be awarded a priority A.
- Homelessness will be confirmed at the time of offer. If homelessness is not confirmed any offer of housing may be withdrawn.

**If a suitable property is available at the time of or within 6 weeks of receipt of the Section 5 referral, applicants will be made one reasonable offer of accommodation.**



## Allocations policy

**If this offer is refused, this will normally result in the applicant being removed from the Homelessness Group.**

Part II of the 1987 Act (as amended) defines “homeless persons”. A person is homeless if he or she has no accommodation in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, or he or she has accommodation, but it would not be reasonable for him or her to occupy it. A person is homeless if he or she has accommodation, but:

- Cannot secure entry to it;
- It is probable that occupation of it will lead to abuse;
- It is probable that occupation of it will lead to threats of abuse from someone who previously lived with him or her and who is likely to carry out threats;
- It is a movable structure, vehicle or vessel and there is no place where he or she is entitled or permitted to place it and live in it;
- It is overcrowded and may endanger the health of the occupants; or
- It is not permanent accommodation, and the local authority has a duty to provide permanent accommodation. Permanent accommodation includes accommodation owned by him or her in which he or she is a tenant with a secure, assured tenancy or private residential tenancy. It also includes a short Scottish Secure Tenancy where such a tenancy has resulted from previous antisocial behaviour or from any prospective tenant or resident under an antisocial behaviour order.

**Most applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, or who are living under satisfactory housing conditions, are likely to be entitled to reasonable preference.**

### **9.2 Priority B – People who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and have unmet housing needs**

Landlords should give reasonable preference to the housing needs which were reasonable preference groups prior to the 2014 Act. These include:

- **Living in a property which does not meet the tolerable standard**

A property is below tolerable standard if one or more of the criteria set out below are not met. If evidence is not readily available, landlords may want to bring in the local authority’s Environmental Health Service to assess whether the property meets the tolerable standard. If the property is below tolerable standard the local authority may contact the owner and ask for repairs or work to be carried out on their property. However, while a property remains below tolerable standard any applicant should be given reasonable preference.

## Allocations policy

A house meets the current tolerable standard if it:

- Is structurally stable;
- Is substantially free from rising or penetrating damp;
- Has satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and for heating;
- Has satisfactory thermal insulation;
- Has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water available within the house
- Has a sink provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water within the house;
- Has a water closet or waterless closet available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the house and suitably located within the house;
- Has a fixed bath or shower and a wash-hand basin, each provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water and suitably located within the house;
- Has an effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water;
- In the case of a house having a supply of electricity, complies with the relevant requirements in relation to the electrical installation for the purposes of that supply;
- Has satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food within the house; and
- Has satisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings.

- **Medical**

An applicant whose current accommodation cannot be adapted to suit their medical needs.

- **Overcrowding**

Part VII of the 1987 Act defines 'overcrowding'. When the number of people sleeping in a home exceeds the room standard or the space standard (both of which are set out below) a house is overcrowded.

**Under the room standard**, if the number of people sleeping in the house and the number of rooms available as sleeping accommodation (that is rooms normally used in the locality as a bedroom or living room) mean the two people of the opposite sex have to sleep in the same room then the accommodation will be overcrowded unless:

- The two people are living together as a couple; or
- One or both of them is under 10 years old

## Allocations policy

**Table 1:** Occupancy standard

Household size	Bedrooms required
Single person	One
Each adult couple	One
A dependent or non-dependent to be rehoused with the applicant cannot share a bedroom due to a medical condition (evidence required)	One
Two children of the same sex under 16	One
Two children under 10 regardless of their sex	One

**The space standard**, determines the number of people who are permitted to sleep in a home based on:

- the number of rooms available as sleeping accommodation. Rooms that are counted are rooms normally used in the locality as a bedroom or living room;
- the size of those rooms. Rooms under 50 square feet (4.645m squared) are ignored; and
- the ages of the people who live there. Children under one year old are not counted and children over one year old and under 10 years old count as a half.

**Table 2:** How many people can sleep in the house according to the number of rooms

Number of rooms available for sleeping	Number of people who can sleep in the property
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	7 ½
5 or more	2 for each room

## Allocations policy

**Table 3:** How many people can sleep in each room according to the size of the room

Floor area of room	Number of persons who can sleep there
110 sq. ft or more (10.219 m <sup>2</sup> )	2
90 sq. ft (8.361 m <sup>2</sup> ) or more but less than 110 sq. ft	1 ½
70 sq. ft (6.503 m <sup>2</sup> ) or more but less than 90 sq. ft	1
50 sq. ft (4.645 m <sup>2</sup> ) or more but less than 70 sq. ft	½

**Unsatisfactory housing conditions**, landlords will need to determine the types of housing need that will include within this reasonable preference group. The 2014 Act says that people have unmet housing needs ‘where the social landlord considers them to have housing needs which are not capable of being met by housing options which are available’. Being able to meet their own housing needs could be described as being able to secure suitable accommodation which meets their needs from existing housing options.

Landlords are required to give reasonable preference to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness or who are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions if their housing need cannot be met in another way. This does not mean that landlords cannot house somebody whose housing needs can be met in another way, but it does mean they should not give them reasonable preference under their policy. There are two elements landlords should consider when deciding whether someone has unmet housing needs. These are:

- The applicant’s circumstances; and
- The existing housing options which are available and accessible to them

An example of when it may be possible to meet housing need other than by giving an applicant reasonable preference for social housing allocation would be where someone’s current home can be adapted to meet the household’s needs, for example by the installations of a ramp, stairlift or level access/wet floor shower.

However, if an applicant’s needs for an accessible or adapted home cannot be met by adapting their current home, they would be given reasonable preference. Equally, landlords and/or the local authority will have to weigh up the practicalities and cost of adapting a property. If that cost would be excessive, landlords may consider someone’s housing need cannot be met and give them reasonable preference for rehousing.

## 9.3 Priority C - will be awarded to applicants living in an under occupied property if:

- Reducing under-occupation helps us to make best use of our housing stock. (Tenants may wish to move to a smaller house as their present home is too large.)
- Applicants who meet this criterion would be awarded a priority ticket only if under occupation is reduced.
- Only tenants (including private rented sector tenants) will qualify for Priority C. No priority will be awarded to owner occupiers.

Landlords should give some level of priority to their own tenants who are under occupying their home and who want to downsize. Landlords should also give an equivalent level of priority to the tenants of any other social landlord who has applied to them for housing and is under occupying according to their allocation policy. The number of applicants involved is not likely to be high and tackling under occupation supports the best use of the socially rented stock across the country. Applicants may find it difficult to leave a property that has been their home for some time. There may also be financial and practical disincentives to making a move. Landlords may wish to consider offering financial or other supports to encourage applicants to free up larger homes and make a move to a smaller home that may better suit their needs.

## 9.4 Priority D – Exceptional circumstances

Where an application needs urgent consideration/action which may not fit within the Priorities A, B and C, the Co-operative may award a priority D. For example, there may be a carer who has been living in the property for 11 months rather than the 12 months qualifying period for succession and therefore, does not meet the new residency requirements to succeed to the tenancy on the death of the tenant. In this example, we may award a priority D ticket which would give a degree of preference as an exception to our normal approach.

These types of awards may require Management Board approval. Priority D tickets will not supersede a Priority A, B or C ticket when selecting applicants at the closing date of registration.

## **Allocations policy**

### **9.5 Consideration of other needs groups**

#### **a) Properties subject to demolition or re-generation**

This applies to applicants whose properties are subject to demolition or regeneration due to action taken by their own landlord and who require permanent re-housing.

We will consider on case by case basis requests by local landlords to assist their clearance programmes.

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

This applies to applicants who need to be housed as part of community care initiatives and are referred through Social Work or other support agencies. Examples of such groups are:

- Young applicants looked after and accommodated by Glasgow City Council
- Residents of hospitals and other institutions who are returning to the community
- Residents in supported accommodation now ready to move to other accommodation

#### **c) People subjected to domestic abuse, harassment**

This applies to applicants who need to be rehoused as a consequence of harassment or domestic abuse. The types of abuse and harassment we consider include:

- Domestic abuse
- Racial harassment
- Religious or sectarian harassment
- Homophobic harassment
- Transphobic harassment
- Harassment of disabled applicants, including those with a learning disability

The Co-operative believes victims of abuse should not be penalised and all applicants should be made aware of their right to stay in their own home safely or seek alternative accommodation. If they elect to stay in their homes, they will be referred (if they consent) to a relevant organisation for assistance / support).

## **Allocations policy**

### **d) Private sector accommodation with limited security**

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

A priority award in this category 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. Priority is awarded once the owner has a date to leave accommodation.

In processing applications, we carry out checks as required to confirm details.

### **e) Tied accommodation**

This applies to applicants living in accommodation as part of their employment duties. A priority ticket is awarded under this category when the accommodation is ending due to termination of employment. Priority ticket is awarded six months before the person leaves employment.

### **f) Armed forces personnel**

This applies to Armed Forces personnel who occupy service accommodation and want to be re-housed in our community. We encourage applicants to apply as soon as possible before discharge. Applicants are required to provide a copy of their certificate of discharge. A priority ticket is awarded six months before the person leaves the services.

### **g) Relationship Breakdown**

This applies to partners in a relationship breakdown who now want to live separately. As applicants for housing, they now form a separate household. It should be noted that the current landlord has no obligation to provide housing for applicants in this category.

### **h) Shared amenities**

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. Applicants who sublet part of their home or take in lodgers do not qualify for this priority.

## **Allocations policy**

### **i) No fixed address**

Applicants with no fixed address are in this group. For clarity, this would cover those applicants whose applications are registered c/o a Government agency such as the Job Centre or Social Work Departments.

### **j) Care & Support**

Where a person requires support from a friend or relative and the applicant is either the carer or the person requiring support, a priority ticket will be awarded.

Each application will be assessed on its individual circumstances and a number of factors may be taken into account:

- The current distance between the two individuals involved and whether there are other carers
- The dependency of one person on the other any associated health/emotional problems
- The type and frequency of care being provided
- The recommendations of health/social work professionals in relation to care and support.

There requires to be a fully justifiable reason for the support need and further evidence may be required before a priority ticket in this category is awarded.

### **k) Employment**

Applicants who live out with the Drumchapel area who work or are due to take up permanent employment in the Drumchapel area will be awarded a discretionary priority ticket. The onus is on the applicant to provide verification from their employer of their employment and place of work before a priority ticket is awarded. A priority ticket will not be awarded without sufficient supporting evidence.

### **l) Children/Elderly at height**

Applicants will be awarded a priority ticket in this category in the following circumstances:

- Applicants with a child or children under 10 years living in multi-storey accommodation.
- Elderly applicants, defined as those people who are 60 or over, living on the third floor or above and wish to move to a lower level property.



## **Allocations policy**

### **m) Medical**

Applicants will be awarded a priority ticket in this category in the following circumstances:

- Applicants can evidence mobility issues, however, do not fit Priority B with an unmet need

### **9.6 Needs not covered by the policy**

There may be occasions when the Co-operative needs to use discretion and make an allocation of housing out with the terms of the policy. This would only be applied under exceptional circumstances and any offers of housing must be approved by the Management Board.

### **9.7 Changes to the policy**

We will not change our policy on the priority of allocation of houses without consulting applicants on our housing register, our tenants, any bodies registered in our register of tenant organisations or any other persons as we think fit. Further before we alter any of our rules in relation to priority of allocation of houses, we will have regard to any local housing strategy for our area any guidance published by the Scottish Ministers.

## **10. Appeals and Complaints**

### **10.1 Appeals**

An appeal can be made if an applicant is unhappy with a decision we have made, for example:

- The group or priority awarded;
- A decision to suspend from receiving offers;
- A decision to cancel an application; or
- Any decision made which the applicant believes has not been dealt with in accordance with this Policy

An applicant should appeal in writing within 14 days of the decision to the Senior Management Team giving their reason for the appeal. The decision will then be reassessed by a member of the housing services team not involved with the original assessment. A written response will be provided within seven working days advising if there has been a change to the original decision.

# **Allocations policy**

## **10.2 Complaints**

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the level of service they have received e.g. published service standards not being met, a complaint should be made to the Co-operative who will respond in accordance with their complaints policy and procedures. Should an applicant remain dissatisfied having exhausted the organisation's internal complaints procedures the applicant can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

## **11. Equality and Diversity**

Our core values include providing a fair and equal service for all housing applicants and we will ensure that in applying this policy we will not discriminate against any individual, household or group on any of the grounds detailed in our Equality and Human Rights Policy.

The following are some examples of how we will achieve this:

- Publication of this choice based allocation policy in other formats and different languages, on request (with any reasonable costs borne by the Co-operative)
- Ensuring our allocation documentation is produced in plain language
- Promoting awareness of this choice based allocation policy to a diverse range of groups
- Providing interpreting services, on request
- Consulting with national bodies, as required, to promote good practice
- In line with our equality commitments, this form can be made available in different languages and in alternative formats.
- Support for applicants with learning difficulties (or other support needs) or who may need support to complete applications by adjusting the way that we communicate, including adapting written communications, making arrangements for meetings, sign-posting to support agencies / advocates, etc.

## **12. Training and Development**

Training is an important element in ensuring that the common allocation policy is implemented and monitored effectively. The training requirements of Management Board and staff will therefore be regularly assessed to ensure that they have the skills to effectively implement and monitor this policy.

## **Allocations policy**

This includes training on:

- Allocation law and practice
- Allocation policy and procedures
- Information technology systems
- Other relevant legislation such as equality law

We will monitor training through our training plans and annual staff appraisals and link to personal development needs.

### **13. Auditing and Monitoring Performance**

#### **13.1 Auditing Performance**

We will ensure that proper mechanisms are in place to allow individual allocations to be audited.

#### **13.2 Monitoring performance**

Monitoring the implementation of this policy is an important part of quality assurance and to measure if we are meeting our stated aims and objectives. It is also essential to ensure that allocation practices are subject to continuous improvement.

We will monitor performance in the following areas:

- The number of new applications received, including whether or not they are processed within targets
- The number of applications suspended and cancelled
- The number of applications reviewed and removed as part of the review process
- The numbers of applicants in each group
- Household type and equality information
- The number and percentage of lets against targets
- Numbers and reasons for refusal of offers
- Appeals and complaints information

Information on allocation trends is presented to the Management Board on a regular basis. As part of our Equality and Human Rights Policy we have an Equalities Action Plan where incidences are recorded and monitored by the Management Board.

## **Allocations policy**

### **14. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation or monitoring/reporting reveals that a change is required sooner. A policy review will involve consultation with our tenants, applicants and any other relevant stakeholders. Procedures and working methods may be altered more frequently where this is needed.

We will take account of any views, representations or tenant survey outcomes in revising our policy and service provision to assist in the development of effective service delivery. Including traditionally excluded groups and groups representing protected characteristics.

### **15. GDPR Privacy Statement**

The Co-operative will gather and use certain information about individuals in accordance with UK GDPR and DPA 2018. Staff members have a responsibility to ensure compliance with the terms of the privacy policy and to collect, handle and store personal information in accordance with relevant legislation. The Fair Processing Notice (FPN) details how personal data is held and processed.

# Allocations policy

## Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Name of the <b>policy / proposal</b> to be assessed	Choice based lettings	Is this a <b>new policy / proposal or a revision?</b>	Revision
Person(s) responsible for the assessment	Senior Housing Officer		
1. Briefly describe the <b>aims, objectives and purpose</b> of the policy / proposal	<p>This policy sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to apply for housing</li> <li>• How an application for housing will be assessed based on housing need</li> <li>• How homes are allocated to meet the needs of housing applicants</li> </ul>		
2. <b>Who is intended to benefit</b> from the policy / proposal? ( <i>e.g. applicants, tenants, staff, contractors</i> )	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that everyone who applies for housing is treated fairly, consistently and with respect.		
3. What <b>outcomes</b> are <b>wanted</b> from this policy / proposal? ( <i>e.g. the benefits to customers</i> )	<p>To ensure that the co-operative's processes and procedures for allocating its stock are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent and fair decisions are made</li> <li>• Delivery equality of opportunity for all applicants and ensure no applicants or groups, are treated more or less favourably, than anyone other applicants (unless it can be justified under the policy)</li> <li>• Ensure that all decisions are open, transparent and justifiable</li> </ul>		

# Allocations policy

4. Which **protected characteristics** could be **affected** by the proposal? (*tick all that apply*)

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Disability
- Gender Re-assignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

5. If the policy / proposal is not relevant to any of the **protected characteristics** listed in part 4, state why and end the process here.

	Positive impact(s)	Negative impact(s)
6. Describe the <b>likely positive or negative impact(s)</b> the policy / proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4	<p><b>Consultation event September 2018 with tenants, applications and service users</b></p> <p>Feedback - under occupation priority and aspirational lets for tenants only to be considered. These have been implemented from May 2019 when Housing Scotland Act 2014 came into force.</p>	<p><b>Minority Ethnic</b></p> <p>There may be negative impact on those for whom English is a second language who may find it more difficult to understand &amp; navigate the process and fulfil the requirements.</p> <p><b>Disability</b></p> <p>Applicants with additional support needs i.e. visual impairments / learning disabilities may find it difficult to complete applications on-line and / or provide supporting documentations.</p> <p><b>Age</b></p> <p>Social media may not be the method of choice for applicants of a certain age group i.e. older applicants.</p>

## Allocations policy

7. What **actions** are **required** to address the impacts arising from this assessment? (*This might include; collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts*).

### **Race**

Amend systems to ensure that prospective tenants are aware of the availability of information in a variety of formats (free of charge) on request.

*The Co-operative appoint the services of Happy to Translate and Global Languages to help those applicants navigate the process. We also have the option to change the language on our Website for user whose first language is not English.*

### **Disability**

Additional support to applicants with additional needs i.e. visual impairments through the provision of information in alternative formats. The provision of additional support to applicants with learning support to complete applications and / or submit supporting document (provided directly by co-operative staff or through support agencies)

*The Co-operative has SPEAK I.T on our website for users who may have difficulty reading. Explicitly written on our website within each section is the following statement: If tenants or applicants wish to view any of our documents in a braille or audio recording format then this can be arranged by calling the office on 0141 944 4902.*

*We signpost or refer tenants/applicants to supporting agencies i.e. Scottish Association for Mental Health.*

### **Age**

Different options for applicants who do not use social media i.e. older applicants.

*Applicants who do not use social media can be added to our list of applicants who receive information on properties for let via the mail or receive support with completion of their application in the office or during a home visit.*

Signed:



Job title: Senior Housing Officer