

Summary Allocation Policy



Gardeen Housing Association Ltd
Building a Better Future



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

What does this booklet tell me?

This booklet contains a summary of Gardeen Housing Association's Allocation Policy and how it works. It tells you what size of property you are eligible for and how we work out what priority to give your application.

The law states we must provide this summary of our allocation policy. However, we can also give you a full copy of the policy. This provides more details about:

- Our legal responsibilities
- The principles of the policy
- Your rights as someone applying

Who can apply for housing?

Any person who is aged sixteen or over may apply to the housing register. This is not, however, an automatic right to receive offers of housing.

We will provide application forms at our offices and online. In line with our equality commitments, this form can be made available in different languages and in alternative formats. We may also offer interpreting services. On request, we can assist applicants to complete their application form.

How can I be sure that my application will be treated fairly, in line with the law and the rules of the allocation policy?

In order to make sure that the allocation policy is managed fairly, we have the following measures in place:

- Every application is checked by two staff members
- We make checks to ensure that what you say on your form is accurate
- Every offer of housing a landlord makes is checked by a second staff member
- Our computer system records how we make offers of housing
- We employ an external auditor to monitor our practices
- We have an Equality and Diversity Policy (available on request) that prevents discrimination
- All staff who process applications and offer properties are fully trained on all necessary policies and procedures
- There is a complaint procedure
- We are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator and complaints are managed in accordance with the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman Complaints Policy.

What size of property can I apply for?

Household Size	1 Apt	2 Apt	3 Apt	4 Apt	5 Apt
Single person	✓	✓	✓		
Couple	✓	✓	✓		
Parent(s) with 1 child			✓		
Parent(s) with 2 children under 14 years of same gender			✓		
Parents(s) with children of different genders both under 8 years			✓		
Parent(s) with 2 children of same gender where 1 is over 14 years				✓	
Parent(s) with children of different genders where oldest is over 8 years				✓	

Please note you will be placed on the waiting list for the size of property you require based on your household composition. However, you may be able to obtain a property of a different size. Please contact the office for more information.

Factors not taken into account for access to housing register

In accordance with legislation, certain factors must be ignored by landlords when assessing applicants access to the housing register. These factors are:

- Length of time applicants have lived in the area
- Housing debt not owed by applicants, for example, rent arrears owed by a partner
- Housing debt now repaid
- Any non-housing debt such as council tax
- Age of applicants unless under the age of 16
- Applicants income or property, including income or property owned by other household members
- Any rent arrears/tenancy related debt

Whilst these factors do not affect an applicant gaining access to the housing register, there are factors that can affect the status of an application. These include:

- Any rent arrears where the amount is more than one months rent and or where the applicant has not been maintaining an arrangement for paying the arrears for at least three months
- If you have acted anti-socially within the last three years
- If you own a property.

Is there any reason why you would suspend my application?

We can suspend applicants for unpaid rent or other money relating to current or previous tenancies. For instance:

- Unpaid rent and factoring charges
- Outstanding rechargeable repairs. For example, if a tenant has lost their keys and we have changed the locks
- The cost of cleaning a house if you leave furniture or rubbish behind when you move out
- Legal costs if we have taken an applicant to court.

If an applicant owes money for unpaid rent, however, we will only suspend if:

- More than one month's rent is owed and there is no mutually agreed arrangement to repay it; or
- The applicant owes more than a month's rent, a mutually agreed arrangement is in place to pay it, but has not been kept for three months.

We can also suspend applicants due to anti-social behaviour. For instance:

- The applicant has been given a final warning for anti-social behaviour in the last six months
- The applicant has been given a "Notice of Proceedings" for antisocial behaviour in the last six months
- The applicant or someone that lives with them has been given an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) or an interim ASBO (the ASBO must be removed by the Sheriff Court before we can end a suspension)
- The applicant has a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy because of anti-social behaviour
- The applicant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years
- The applicant has been violent or aggressive towards staff.

We can also suspend applications due to other types of breaches of their tenancy agreement. For instance:

- The applicant has been given a "Notice of Proceedings" for breaking the rules of the tenancy agreement in the last six months (for example, a failure to maintain a garden to an acceptable standard)
- The applicant has been evicted for a breach of a tenancy in the last three years.

When we suspend an application, we will write and explain why, how long the suspension is for and what needs to be done to remove the suspension. We will also write to the applicant when we have removed the suspension.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 enables some criminal convictions to become spent or ignored, after a 'rehabilitation period'. You may be entitled to withhold information about convictions that are 'spent' under the provisions of the act.

Admission to the housing register

In order to be admitted to the housing register, we ask applicants to complete an application form.

An application form can be obtained by contacting Gardeen Housing Association's office:

- In person
- By phone
- By post
- Via website

Our target for assessing completed application forms (this includes receiving relevant proofs) and informing the applicant of the outcome is 28 working days from receiving them. Applicants are sent written confirmation of their housing application details, including their award of points.

Information and processing applications

We process personal information provided on the application form in line with legal provisions. Accordingly, we only share information with other agencies if we have applicants consent, or if permitted by legislation. We may ask for references from any landlord or mortgage lender to confirm housing and tenancy details. We request applicants' consent to do this on the application form.

We check application details before making offers. This is necessary to ensure that information is accurately recorded so that offers are appropriate. For instance, we will request that applicants provide evidence to confirm details are as recorded on their application form such as proof of address for household members.

We may also carry out home visits to confirm application details. This 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.

If information held is inaccurate, the application details are amended accordingly. This might result in an offer not being made, or withdrawn.

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.

Applicants are responsible for advising us of any changes to their housing circumstances. They are advised of this requirement on the application form.



Verifying applicant's circumstances

Examples of the verification required include:

Circumstance	Proof Required
All applicants/ All household members	Proof of current address x2 Proof of current address x1
Residency/Asylum Status/Visa	Proof of residency – bank statement, driving licence, tenancy agreement, Home Office Letter
Homeless or threatened with homelessness	Assessment outcome letter from Glasgow City Council
Asked to leave current accommodation	Copy of valid Notice to Quit
In need of rehousing as health affected by current housing circumstances	Relevant medical documentation, full information from applicant
Access arrangements	Letter from child's other parent or lawyer
Household member temporarily living away from home eg; armed forces	Letter from this individual confirming they wish to be considered as part of the household
Experiencing harassment	Corroborating evidence eg police, social work etc
Pregnancy	MATB1 form or similar
Owner Occupiers	Proof of intent to sell property
Medical Support Needs	Relevant medical documentation from a health professional, full information from applicant

People from outwith the UK

People subject to immigration control must declare this on the application form. Eligibility for housing will require to be assessed in terms of Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 and asylum and immigration legislation. People 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.

If a landlord cannot establish the identity of an applicant (or a member of their household), the Home Office can be contacted. The Home Office will then have 48 hours to provide their own verification, otherwise the landlord is free to allocate, and without penalty should there be illegal immigration involved.

Offers

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

Reasonable offers are those that reflect an applicant's stated choice. For example, we will not offer applicants house types that they have expressly stated they will not consider.

Nonetheless, we provide advice and information on realistic preferences, as demand generally exceeds supply.

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, or joint applicant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour within the last three years
- An applicant, or joint applicant (or a person who is going to be residing in the house) is subject to an anti-social behaviour order
- An applicant, or joint applicant (or a person who is going to be residing in the house) has acted in an anti-social manner in relation to another person residing in, visiting or otherwise engaged in lawful activity in the locality of a house occupied by the prospective tenant or by a person who it is proposed will reside with the prospective tenant
- The applicant owns a property that is not currently meeting their needs and requires housing on a temporary basis to enable their needs to be met pending making alternative arrangements.

Overcrowding rules

Demand for larger houses often exceeds supply. On occasion, this makes it necessary to consider applicants for smaller houses than specified in the table on page 3. It may also be necessary to consider applicants for smaller properties due to the changes introduced in April 2012 under The Welfare Reform Act (“bedroom tax”).

We do not let houses to families if this would create statutory overcrowding, as this would constitute an offence.

Under-occupation

If required, we may also allow under-occupation of larger accommodation.

For example, this may be necessary if:

- An applicant can show a need for such accommodation due to medical needs

Internal applicants affected by under-occupation will be prioritised for offers of housing. This is to ensure, as set out within The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 as a reasonable preference group, that we make best use of stock.

Our groups and placing applications

We have established a total of 8 groups. These groups cover the main needs covered in housing law and good practice guidance. These groups are listed in order of priority.

Our groups are as follows:

- Group 1 Homeless
- Group 2 Urgent Needs
- Group 3 Overcrowded (or large families)
- Group 4 Medical Needs
- Group 5 Transfers/Under-occupation
- Group 6 General needs
- Group 7 Care & Support
- Group 8 Aspirational

Group 1, 3 and 5 have sub groups.

We place applications into a group using the following method. Applicants are placed in the highest priority group reflecting their housing need.



If an applicant has an urgent housing need, their application is placed in the urgent needs group (Group 2). This applies even if the applicant has other housing needs. This category will be reviewed every six months.

If an applicant is living in overcrowded conditions and not in Group 2, their application is placed in the overcrowded group (Group 3). In this group we have two separate sub-groups: overcrowding for waiting list applicants and transfer applicants.

If an applicant is not in Group 2 or 3 and is living in unsatisfactory housing, their application is placed in the medical needs group (Group 4).

If an applicant is one of our tenants, and not in any of the above groups, their application is placed in the transfer group (Group 5).

All other applicants are placed in the general needs group (Group 6), support group (Group 7) or aspirational group (Group 8).

For those placed in group 8 this is because people in this group have no housing ‘need’ element (in that their current home meets their housing needs), we do not award ‘housing points’ for aspirational applications. Instead, we add the person to the group, and when a suitable property becomes available for offer to someone from the aspirational housing group, it is offered to the person who has the longest length of tenancy and been on the list (for that property type) longest.

Order will be as follows:

1. Date submitted to list
2. Length of tenancy

Only tenants who have been living continuously within the same property for 5 years will be placed in the group.

An annual letting plan informed by housing need and demand will establish indicative percentage figures of anticipated lets from each group.

What points will I be awarded?

Housing Need	Points
Your home is being demolished or major repair work is being carried out.	250
You have suffered domestic abuse or harassment.	150
You are a young person who is currently or was recently looked after and accommodated by Glasgow City Council and are moving on to your own accommodation.	100
You are currently living in a care setting such as a long-term hospital or other institution and need to move to alternative accommodation.	100
You are overcrowded and your current home is smaller than you need (we give points for each room you are lacking, in line with our occupancy standard).	50
Your home is below the tolerable standard. The tolerable standard requires a home to be structurally stable and free of dampness. It must have natural and artificial lighting, thermal insulation, hot and cold water, toilet and bathing facilities, proper drainage, facilities for cooking, heating and safe electrics.	200
You have a need to move to accessible housing.	100 High 75 Medium 50 Low
You are a tenant and not using all your bedrooms (points for each bedroom in line with our occupancy standard). Owner occupier will not receive any under-occupation points.	250
You are in a private sector tenancy.	250
You are in a private sector property and you have been served notice to quit through the correct legal procedures or your home is being repossessed because you have not kept up your mortgage payments.	250
You are statutorily homeless and can provide a copy of your decision letter from the Local Authority.	75
You are living in accommodation linked to your job and your employment is due to an end within the next six months.	75
You are currently in the armed forces and you are due to leave within the next six months.	75
Statutory homeless and living in temporary accommodation.	75
You have no fixed address.	30
You are currently living with friends or relatives or you are a lodger and want your own accommodation.	20
Relationship Breakdown: Partners who now want to live separately.	20
You are sharing facilities with another household.	20 (points for single persons + couples) 30 (points for families)
Care and Support.	A 20 B 10
You have an exceptional form of housing need which is not mentioned in this policy.	300

Appeals

If an applicant is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way in which their application has been dealt with by the landlord, this will be managed in accordance with the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman Complaints Policy. A copy of this complaint policy is available on request and can be provided in alternative formats.

Useful Information

If you require homelessness advice and assistance, during office hours, then you should contact Health and Social Care Connect on **0141 287 0555**.

You can also request homelessness assistance on-line at Glasgow City Council Website:

www.glasgow.gov.uk.

If you require assistance after 4.45pm Monday to Thursday or 3.55pm on a Friday or weekends and public holidays, then please contact the Emergency Out of Hours Homelessness Service on **0800 838 502**.

You can also visit Glasgow City Council Homelessness Page:

www.yoursupportglasgow.org/glasgow-homepage/pages/housing-options-and-homelessness/homelessness-support-and-advice/.



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