



KINGDOM
Housing Association

Allocations Policy

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HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Approved: May 2011
Amended: June 2014

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1. Statement of Intent

Kingdom is committed to the principles of good corporate governance and sustainability and will endeavour to develop fair and consistent policies, procedures and practices.

The purpose of this policy is to outline our aims and objectives and principles with regard to housing people who apply to us for a home directly or through the Fife Housing Register (FHR). Our Policy covers the process of applying for a house and the allocation of housing.

In line with Kingdom's commitment to equality and diversity, this Policy can be made available in a variety of formats, including large print, translated into another language or on audio tape. Reasonable adjustments will also be made to assist individuals who have a disability.

2. Introduction

Access to Housing

We allocate properties on the basis of housing and social need. The level of need is assessed by awarding points for different forms of housing need to each applicant. You are then placed in one of 5 groups depending on your main need (Please see section 6 of this policy for further explanation of the need groups).

We are members of the Fife Housing Register. The Register is a partnership made up of Fife Council and Housing Associations based in Fife, or who have stock in Fife, who have decided to pool their resources and have a common application form, a common assessment of need and a centralised team for the processing of housing applications and administration of housing lists. This team assesses applications for all partners.

For developments outside Fife, we still have our own housing list and application forms and assess these using the same common assessment of need as FHR.

Throughout this Policy, unless specifically stated otherwise "we" and "our" refers to Kingdom and our partners in the FHR and "you" refers to the applicant or tenant.

3. Admission to Our List and FHR

When processing an application there are a number of things in law which we cannot take into consideration. Anyone over the age of 16 is free to apply to us for housing. If you have restrictions placed upon you by immigration and asylum legislation, you can still apply to the FHR, however not all of the partners may be able to house you because of legal constraints. Applicants in these circumstances should contact individual partners for further clarification.

When assessing applications and allocating properties we will not take into account any of the following factors:

- The length of time you have resided in the area;
- Any outstanding liability such as rent arrears where you were not the tenant;
- Any rent or other tenancy related debt you accrued on a previous tenancy which are no longer outstanding;
- Any outstanding liability attributable to a previous or current tenancy which does not exceed 1/12th of the annual rent;
- If you or anyone who plans to live with you have any outstanding debts which do not relate to the tenancy of a property;



- Your age, provided you are 16 years of age or older. The exceptions to this will be specific lettings initiatives which are designated for grouped support, older people, young people or ethnic minorities;
- The value of any heritable or movable property you or any member of your household may own.

4. Access to Housing

Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity

We will embrace diversity, promote equal opportunities for all and eliminate unlawful discrimination in all areas of our work. We are committed to ensuring that people have fair and open access to our housing list and assessment processes. We will work with others to maximise and simplify access routes to housing.

Allocations of properties are made irrespective of the applicant's race, colour, religion, age, gender or sexual orientation. There may be exceptions in the case of any developments built specifically, for example, for BME groups, older/younger people or in partnership with Women's Aid, or similar organisations.

Monitoring

We will monitor the ethnic origins of the people we house.

Processing Applications

FHR application forms can be returned to us or any partner organisation. The form will be registered and any evidence to support your application will be gathered. An interview may be arranged to gather further information from you to prevent any delays later in the process.

Once this initial part of the process is complete, the form will be sent to the centralised FHR team for assessment. Fully completed applications will be assessed within 28 days. If you have any queries or changes in circumstances, it is your responsibility to keep the FHR partners updated.

5. Identifying People for Housing

When allocating new or existing properties we run housing lists from FHR for the need groups referred to earlier in this Policy. The lists arrange applicants in points order, with the highest points first, and allow staff to interview applicants and make appropriate offers of housing. If an applicant is interviewed by us for housing and is unhappy with the outcome, all queries should be raised with us in the first instance.

General Principles

We set out to achieve the following in this Policy:

- Promote social inclusion;
- Provide quality housing information and advice through this Policy and related services;
- Ensure that a proportion of our housing is allocated to applicants who need support or to those who provide support to others to help them live independently;
- Work with Local Authorities, where appropriate, in enabling them to meet their objectives and those of any lettings plans they may have in place;
- Work with voluntary organisations such as Women's Aid to help meet their client's needs and have appropriate Nomination Agreements with such organisations;
- Ensure we allocate properties in accordance with funding and planning agreements;
- Aim to allocate properties in such a way that you are able to live in your home with minimal disruption from others by aiming to create sustainable, diverse communities when we allocate properties;
- Give reasonable preference to those in housing need as defined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987;
- Make the best use of available stock;
- Give you reasonable choice.



6. Reasonable Preference to Those in Housing Need and Quotas

The FHR has identified the following need groups that we have to give reasonable preference to based on the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

We have set a quota for the number of applicants we aim to house from each of the need groups. This is reviewed annually to ensure we meet the aims and objectives of our Policy. Our aim is to give a number of people who have different needs an opportunity to be rehoused.

The Groups are as follows:

Urgent Housing Need

This category is for applicants who are statutory homeless and in priority need, those who are subjected to severe harassment, domestic abuse or racial harassment. It also covers those who are losing their current home due to a Closure Order/Closure for redevelopment. This meets the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 by giving “reasonable preference” to those who are homeless.

Poor Housing Circumstances

This category is for applicants who lack basic facilities in their current home, such as having an unsafe water supply, inadequate drainage, rising and penetrating dampness, lack of central heating, over crowding, under occupancy, sharing facilities, children’s social needs (recognises a need for a play space if under 16).

This group gives reasonable preference to those whose properties do not meet the tolerable standard, are overcrowded or have large families.

Lack of Security

This category is for people who are not Statutory Homeless and currently in priority need but do not have a secure tenancy of their own. This includes time limited tenancies, those with a Notice to Quit, tenants without a lease, owners in the process of repossession or being advised to sell, or non-householders (people living care of). This group gives reasonable preference to those who are threatened with homelessness.

Management Needs

These points are awarded by Managers for best use of stock and to meet the needs of applicants in acute need, when your housing problem is not covered by our Policy. Included within this category is a 5% quota of allocations to applicants who require support from our own Support and Care team and also any exceptional allocations not covered by the Allocations Policy

Social and Medical Needs

We recognise that some individuals, due to medical conditions and disabilities, need access to housing which has been designed or adapted in some way to meet their particular needs. They may also require support. Sometimes people do not have medical, mobility or support needs themselves but they may be supporting someone who does, therefore we have set up this group to meet the needs of applicants in these circumstances. If you have medical problems and restricted mobility you will be considered for ground floor and adapted housing. If you are supporting someone in this position, you will be considered for a general needs property but placed into this category because you are providing support.

We stated earlier in our Policy that we try to create sustainable and diverse communities. However we earmark the majority of adapted and ground floor properties for people with medical conditions which affect their mobility or for people, who due to age and other issues, need ground floor accessible accommodation.

Applicants eligible for the Social and Medical group include:

- Hospital patients who could, with appropriate housing, live independently;



- Young disabled people who wish to leave home to live independently;
- Families with disabled children who require particular facilities;
- Those who, because of an accident or long term illness, are unable to occupy their present home;
- Older People living in housing that no longer meets their physical or mobility needs.

In this group you are awarded points according to your current housing situation and how closely your accommodation meets your needs.

The Pointing Scheme in Detail

Category	Housing Need	Points
Urgent Housing Needs	Domestic Abuse	100
	Severe Harassment	100
	Closure Order/Closure for redevelopment	100
Statutory Homeless	Statutory Homeless	100
	Statutory Homeless Medical	100+
NB statutory homeless may be awarded between 20 and 40 medical points if they have a medical need however they cannot accrue points from other categories.		
Poor Housing Circumstances	Lacking Amenities	12
	Lacking Central Heating	5
	Unsafe Water Supply /Inadequate Drainage/Rising Damp	12
	Overcrowding	25 per room
	Severe Overcrowding	10
	Under-occupation	5
	Sharing Facilities	6
	Children's Social Needs	10/20
Lack of Security	Time Ltd Tenancy (no NTQ)	5
	Notice to Quit	75
	Tenants without a lease	25
	Own/occupier – Repossession	25
	<u>Non-householder</u>	25
	Not sharing bedroom	
	Sharing bedroom with a sibling	
	Sharing a bedroom with someone other than a sibling	
	No bedroom	25 extra
	No fixed abode	
Families with children overcrowded		
Management Needs	Management Needs General	120
	Management Needs Transfer	120
Social & Medical Needs	Illness and Disability	20/40/60
	Sheltered Housing	15/30/50
	Special Needs Accommodation	20/60
	Harassment	10/30
	Social/Personal Needs	5/10/25/40
	Independent Living	60
	Respite care	10
	Access to children	20
	Foster care	20
	Children's educational needs	5/20
No Immediate Need	Application with no immediate need	0



7. Housing with Support

We are committed to providing housing for those people who, due to disability, illness or homelessness, need specific types of housing or need housing in order for support to be provided.

We will liaise with the Social Work commissioning team to deal with any requests for supported accommodation, using the allocation of management points to fairly facilitate the allocation of housing.

If you are interested in receiving support from us, please contact your local Social Work Department for further information on accessing housing support or obtain information online using the FRF Fife Rights Forum Website (www.fiferights.org) which also has an online referral system.

8. Nominations

In Fife nominations no longer exist for landlords who have joined the FHR, as partners take applicants directly from a single housing list. Fife Council may still make Section 5 nominations, although the normal route for statutory homeless people to be rehoused will be through the FHR.

Falkirk and Perth & Kinross Councils

In the above areas we will offer Councils the opportunity to nominate applicants for 50% of all general housing vacancies. We will meet with the Councils once a year to review and assess the nomination process and agree any action points for the following year. All nominees other than Section 5s will be assessed under our Allocation Policy. Details of how the nomination process works in practice are set out in appendices 1 and 2 of this Policy.

9. Mobility Within Our Own Stock

There are three main ways in which a Kingdom tenant can move to an alternative property. These are through Transfer, Mutual Exchange and other mobility schemes which operate in the UK at the moment. Transfers will enable a tenant to move within our own stock, mutual exchange and mobility schemes may involve a move to the stock of another landlord. Details of current national mobility schemes can be obtained from any Fife Council local office. Transfers and Mutual Exchanges are covered by separate policies available from any of our offices.

10. Applications from Members of the Committee of Management, Staff Or their Relatives

Applications will be accepted from staff, committee members or close relatives/ family members of either. Applications will be assessed in line with this Allocation Policy and the FHR in relation to the common assessment of need. If an applicant in these circumstances is eligible to be rehoused, the Committee of Management must approve any allocation. Details of the allocation must be entered into our Benefits to Staff and Committee Member Register.

The definition of a close relative or family member is as follows:

He or she is the spouse or he/she cohabits with that person whether the same or different or he/she is that person's:

- Parent
- Grandparent
- Child
- Stepchild
- Grandchild
- Brother
- Sister



11. Changes of Circumstances

You are responsible for notifying any of the FHR partners promptly about any change of circumstances. Failure to do this might affect the level of points awarded and position on the housing list. When you submit a change of circumstances, you will normally receive a letter confirming any change in points. In some instances you will be asked to complete a new FHR form and a letter outlining any changes will be sent after this has been assessed.

12. Review of the Housing List

Housing applications are reviewed annually by the FHR Central Processing team on the anniversary of application. As we are members of the FHR, housing applications are reviewed by them on our behalf. Those who are Statutory Homeless will regularly be reviewed by the Homelessness team until they are rehoused. An application may be reviewed or withdrawn between times if you fail to contact any of the FHR partners in relation to firm offers of housing.

13. Suspension Exclusions and Withdrawals From the Housing List

The FHR manages suspensions on behalf of the partners and we have all signed up to a Suspensions Protocol. We do not exclude applicants from FHR or from our own housing list. Our ethos is to make the register and our own list open to as many people as possible. Although the Suspension Protocol is an FHR document, we will apply the same principles to applicants and residents in areas outwith Fife.

A suspension means you will not appear on any lists which are run for an empty property for a specified period of time. The partners may suspend an applicant for a number of reasons, these are covered fully in appendix 3 but we will summarise some of the main reasons below:

Applicants with Housing Related Debt

If you have a housing related debt (rent arrears, outstanding legal costs, rechargeable repairs) and this is more than 1/12th of the annual rent (approximately one month's rent) you may be suspended on FHR until such times as the debt is cleared, or you have made an agreement with the current or previous landlord to pay the debt and have paid that agreement regularly for three consecutive months.

Anti-Social and Criminal Behaviour

It is the policy of the FHR partners to take up tenancy reports on previous tenancies. If you have been involved in serious anti-social behaviour or criminal activity with previous tenancies, this may have a bearing on whether a tenancy will be granted and what type of tenancy is granted.

If you have lost a house during the previous three years for anti-social behaviour or an Anti Social Behaviour Order has been taken out against you or a member of your household, then in most instances you will be suspended on the FHR. This status will be reviewed annually. There is an obligation during suspension to ascertain whether you or a member of your household have taken steps to address the offending behaviour to ensure you are not by-passed for housing unnecessarily.

In cases where we believe there have been mitigating circumstances or you or a member of your household have taken steps to address the behaviour, we will normally offer a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) for a period of one year. During this period we will offer housing support to help prevent the new tenancy being put at risk.

In some cases of urgent and extreme housing need where we believe the need of the applicant outweighs the anti-social behaviour or debt, suspensions may be lifted or not applied and you may be considered for either an SSST or a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST).



Other Exceptions

The legal framework around homelessness legislation is different from other legislation surrounding housing allocations. This means, in cases where you are Statutory Homeless, in priority need and have been accepted as such by the Local Authority, it may not be appropriate to suspend you for debt and anti-social behaviour. The Local Authority's duty to permanently rehouse may overrule previous debt and behavioural issues.

We have an obligation to help the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duties in relation to homelessness and, for this reason; we will review homeless applications on a case by case basis. Where you have lost previous tenancies because you are vulnerable and have support needs, we will rehouse where there is debt or anti-social behaviour if support can be accessed and is accepted by you. However we are also committed to sustainability and have a duty of care to our tenants and other applicants. Where support is not available or a homeless applicant declines support then we may not be able to house them on that occasion.

Applicants Giving False Information

If we discover you have deliberately given false information to improve your chances of being housed, you will be given the opportunity to correct and submit revised information which accurately represents your circumstances. If you do not do this or the subsequent information is still false, then your application will be suspended in line with the current Suspensions Policy. If it is discovered after allocation that false and misleading information has been given, we reserve the right to take legal action to repossess the property.

Offers of Accommodation – Suspension

If you refuse two offers of accommodation for your chosen property types and areas, your application will normally be suspended in line with the current Suspension Protocol. You may change your areas at any time and will be encouraged to revise your choices to avoid being in the position of refusing a second offer and risking suspension.

14. Allocating Housing

This section of our Policy concentrates on how we intend to allocate houses rather than the assessment process. When a new scheme is expected or we are notified that a property will become empty, staff will run a housing list for one of the quota groups already discussed. A different quota will generally be run for each property to create a mixed community however most ground floor and adapted properties will go to people with medical needs and restricted mobility. Any offer of housing will initially be made by telephone and confirmed in writing.

Applicants with Equal Points

We will normally allocate properties to the applicant with the most points in that group. Where applicants have equal points, we will normally allocate to the person who has been on the housing list the longest length of time.

Wider Action Projects

We may from time to time become involved in projects which have social and economic objectives in addition to housing objectives, such as community regeneration. These projects will therefore need to be allocated in a different way to our mainstream projects which are let under this Policy. In such circumstances, if the initiative is not covered by the provisions of this Allocation Policy, we will submit a written report detailing the project and the assessment process to our Committee of Management for approval before any offers are made to applicants.

Lettings Plans

We reserve the right in certain circumstances to develop Lettings Plans which will specifically detail the household characteristics of those to be accommodated in certain developments (see Appendix 4).

We will use Lettings Plans as a tool to avoid social problems such as anti-social behaviour or to help address existing anti-social behaviour. There may also be instances where estate management problems may be addressed by altering the community profile.



Where feasible we will consult with Residents Groups and the Local Authority in the development of Lettings Plans. The responsibility of drafting Lettings Plans rests with our Housing Area Managers. Lettings Plans shall be subject to the approval of the Housing Manager and Director of Housing and Support Services and shall be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if circumstances change. If the Lettings Plan has been successful and the problem it was introduced to address has been resolved, the Lettings Plan will come to an end and any new allocations will be made under the Allocations Policy. In cases where issues are still ongoing the Lettings Plan will continue, subject to review, or it will be modified in order to address any issues more appropriately.

More Readily Available Properties

Some of our properties take longer to allocate than others due to their location and other environmental factors. On occasion there is little or no housing list for certain properties in certain areas. In order to reduce the rental loss on these properties we may adopt some of the following options:

- In exceptional circumstances allocate properties to applicants who have a low level of housing need or no housing need;
- Allow you to under-occupy the property;
- Offer you incentives if you are willing to accept a more readily available property;
- We may use marketing tools such as advertising and inclusion on our website in order to publicise these properties to as wide an audience as possible;
- We may set up pilot projects from time to time to deal with the challenges which arise as a result of these properties.

Occupancy Levels

The partners within the FHR have different occupancy standards when they are allocating housing. We all have a different stock profile and this influences what we are able to offer you:

- We will not knowingly overcrowd a property. We will normally expect to offer you a home with the correct number of bedrooms and bed spaces for all permanent members of the household.
- We expect anyone living together as a couple or partners to have their own double bedroom.
- Single adults may be offered a property with either a double bedroom or single bedroom.
- We expect everyone over the age of 16 to have their own bedroom unless they are sharing with a partner.

We aim to give each child in a household, regardless of gender, a room of their own as early as possible. Where children have to share they will be given a double bedroom; we do not expect them to share a single bedroom.

Where we cannot give each child his or her own bedroom we will do the following:

- Children of the same sex may share a double bedroom until the age of 13, then we regard the family as being overcrowded;
- Children of different sexes may share a double bedroom until the age of 9, then we regard the family as being overcrowded.

Amalgamated Households

In some cases families are amalgamated and children come from previous relationships or may be half brothers or sisters.

Half brothers and sisters are treated in the same way as full blood brothers and sisters; bedroom entitlement is determined on the number, age and sex of the children in the household.

Stepchildren living permanently in the household are not expected to share bedrooms regardless of age or sex.

We will make every effort to meet each applicant's requirements but there may be occasions where this is not possible due to the lack of suitably sized properties.



Access to Children

Households who have access to children for at least one night a week on a regular basis will normally be awarded an extra bedroom over and above the entitlement of the permanent number of the household regardless of the number, age and sex of the children they have access to.

15. Confidentiality – How We Handle Information

The confidentiality of information provided to us will be respected at all times. We will only use information and any supporting evidence provided, to process applications for housing and make allocations. Applicants' data is available to and held by the FHR and all its partners. We may pass information to other agencies or organisations as required to do so by law and to the Scottish Housing Regulator. Information will be processed and passed on in accordance with our registration with the Information Commissioner. We are registered under the Data Protection Act with the office of the Information Commissioner and we are the Data Controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act.

You have the right to access the information we hold on you. Anyone wishing to access this right should contact our office and ask for a Data Subject Access Form. Most information will be held centrally by the FHR team. In these instances Data Subject Access requests should be made to the Senior Service Co-ordinator, FHR Team, New City House, 1 Edgar Street, Dunfermline, Fife, KY12 7EP.

16. Enquiries into Application Details

We reserve the right to make any enquiries we consider necessary to validate the accuracy of the information you provide. The FHR also reserves the right to return any incomplete applications. In signing the application forms, you are giving us consent to make enquiries to correctly assess your application. In some circumstances we may need you to sign additional documents to allow the release of information from other agencies to support your application and ensure appropriate points are awarded.

Exceptional Circumstances

From time to time cases will arise which, because of their sensitivity or the particular nature of housing circumstances, your needs cannot be met by the mainstream Allocation Policy. In some instances we may need to free up high demand properties to ensure best use of stock. In cases such as these, management points may be used by the Area Manager to facilitate a move. All such cases will be recorded in a proforma (Appendix 5) to ensure transparency and accountability and will be reported to the Committee of Management.

17. Homelessness within Our Own Stock

From time to time existing tenants may find themselves either without accommodation or in a situation where it is difficult to continue to occupy their current accommodation.

In cases where tenants have had a fire or a flood or some other disaster which has meant they cannot occupy their home, we will do the following:

- We will liaise with you, and as far as possible, try to extend any help and practical assistance at the time of the crisis and in the aftermath. We do not have temporary accommodation of our own and this will generally mean that you may have to submit a homeless application in order to access appropriate temporary accommodation.
- Where you do not wish to do this and express a preference for us to deal with your situation, we will try where possible, using our own empty properties, bed and breakfasts, hotel accommodation and caravan parks, to arrange temporary accommodation which is appropriate to the circumstances.



- In general the expectation will be that you will return to your own home when the property had been returned to normal condition although, in some cases, it may not be possible or desirable and our Transfer Policy will be followed.

Homelessness or threat of homelessness due to relationship breakdown:

- In cases where relationships have broken down and no domestic abuse provision has been made to award points via the FHR, the occupant who wishes to leave the family home should submit a housing application based on this.

18. Appeals, Comments and Complaints

Appeals and complaints about the allocation process and the allocation of properties should be addressed in writing to the appropriate Area Manager. We are unlikely to be able to comment on the circumstances of other individuals, only your own application and the circumstance of allocations in general. If a complaint/appeal is not resolved at this stage, we have a Comments and Complaints Policy which should be used to take any concerns to the next stage. (Appendix 5) Complaints should be made to the Area Manager within 28 days of the problem arising.

19. Copies of this Policy

Copies of this Policy and any of the associated appendices are available at any of our offices on request and can be downloaded from our website at www.kingdomhousing.org.uk

20. Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be reviewed 5 years from the date of implementation or latest review, which will be the date the Policy, is approved by the Committee of Management, or earlier if deemed appropriate.

21. Anti Fraud, Bribery & Corruption

Kingdom is responsible for significant amounts of finance and other resources. There is a high overall value of organisational assets, there are large amounts of money received and paid out and there is a high volume of supporting contractual and financial transactions. Therefore there is always a risk that dishonest people will try to defraud Kingdom.

Kingdom has an Anti Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy and the requirements of the policy should be fully recognised when implementing this policy, Allocation and any related procedures.



KINGDOM HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

ALLOCATION POLICY

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the Plain English principles and has been reviewed by a Plain English Champion in the reviewing Department.

Policy drawn up with reference to:

Housing Scotland (2001) Act

Data Protection Act (1998)

Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended)

Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended)

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Reference made to the following sources and other guidance:

SFHA Raising Standards in Housing – Allocations (Revised)

Scottish Housing Regulator Self Assessment in Inspection Criteria

Scottish Executive Good Practice in Housing Management, Chapter Four – Housing Allocation

Cross Reference to Performance Standards for social landlords and homelessness functions AS 1.1 and 1.2 Lettings and Guiding Standards GS: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5

Prepared by: Alexander McLaren

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