



ALLOCATION POLICY

Yorkhill Housing Association can provide this document on request, in different languages and formats, including Braille and audio formats.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Yorkhill Housing Association Limited (the Association) was established in 1977. It is a charitable housing association, registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. The Association, a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), is situated in the west end of Glasgow. The Association's registered address is 1271 Argyle Street, Glasgow, G3 8TH.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to set out the statutory provisions governing:
- admission to the Association's housing lists
 - allocation of houses; and
 - tenancy changes.

2. Policy Background and legal context

- 2.1 The legislative and regulatory framework for the allocation of social rented sector homes has evolved over time, including through the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. These provisions, therefore, compliment the new Scottish Secure Tenancy and single regulatory framework (established by Part 2 and 3 of the 2001 Act) which will apply equally to local authorities and registered social landlords. This was further amended with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, which introduces the Scottish Housing Regulator who will oversee the Regulations of both Local Authorities and RSLs in Scotland and the 2014 Act which abolishes 'Right to Buy' and brings in new qualifications for Succession to tenancy.
- 2.2 The Allocation policy requires to comply with the homelessness rules set out in Part 11 of the 1987 Act (as amended by the 2001 Act and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003).
- 2.3 Yorkhill Housing Association considers all the legislation described above and also the Scottish Social Housing Charter for Social Landlords and Homelessness Functions published by the Scottish Government. The Charter Indicators 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 are indicated below.

Equality

- Outcome 1: "every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services".

Communication

- Outcome 2: "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".

Participation

- Outcome 3: “Social Landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with”.

Housing Options

- Outcome 7: “People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them”.
- Outcome 8: “Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options”.
- Outcome 9: “People at risk of losing their home get advice on preventing homelessness”.

Access to Social Housing

- Outcome 10: “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 allocated homes and their prospects of being rehoused”.

Tenancy Sustainment

- Outcome 11: “Social landlords ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their homes; and ensure support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.”

Homeless People

- Outcome 12: “Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.”
 - The provision of temporary or emergency accommodation in respect of homelessness is a local authority duty. The Association will work with Glasgow City Council to provide an agreed level of temporary lets to the council, and will assist the local authority in its requirements to rehouse homeless people through the Section 5 process.

2.4 The 2014 Act, which amended section 20 of the 1987 Act, sets out three categories of applicants, who should be given reasonable preference. These are:

- Homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness and who have unmet housing needs.

- People who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and who have unmet housing needs.
- Tenant of houses which are held by a social landlord which the social landlord selecting its tenants considered to be under-occupied.

3. Admission to the Housing List

- 3.1 Yorkhill Housing Association will operate an open waiting list to allow anyone over the age of 16 to apply to the Association for housing.
- 3.2 Only those aged 16 and over will be eligible to hold a tenancy with the Association.
- 3.3 The Association will take reasonable steps to ensure that information is widely available to the public. In order to achieve this, information on the Association and how to access the housing will be made available on the Association's web site.
- 3.4 Yorkhill Housing Association are part of Housing Options and as such persons wishing to apply for a house with the Association will be offered a face to face Housing Options interview, where their circumstances will be assessed, and information and advice given on the best housing options for that person.
- 3.5 If the person is unable to attend the office for a Housing Options interview, we will conduct the interview over the telephone or we may visit applicants at home, this includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled people as appropriate.
- 3.6 Housing Options ensures that although every applicant is entitled to be placed on the waiting list for housing according to the size of house required, they are fully advised of the realistic possibilities of housing with the Association and will be given the opportunity to decide if they wish to remain on the waiting list.
- 3.7 Applicants can also be considered for housing from Yorkhill Housing Association if a homeless referral (Section 5 referral) has been received from Glasgow City Council.

4. Waiting Lists

- 4.1 Applicants will be placed onto the waiting list that best reflects their housing needs, taking into consideration the house size required to accommodate the applicant's household. The Association will only offer the size of property required by the applicant's housing need – properties will not be let to applicants which would immediately lead to underoccupancy or overcrowding.

Applicants will be allocated to a waiting list group of either: -

- Waiting List (General Needs)
 - Transfer (Existing Tenant)
 - Retirement (Retirement Housing at the Overnewton Street complex)
 - Aspirational Moves
- 4.2 The size of the property required will reflect the household breakdown – one bedroom would suit each of the following:
- Applicant/applicant and partner
 - Any other couple
 - Single adult (aged 16 and over)
 - Any 2 children of the same sex under 16 years of age
 - Where there are 2 children of different sex they can share a bedroom until one of them reaches the age of 10.

5. Suspension of Applications

- 5.1 Yorkhill Housing Association will only suspend an application where it is reasonable to do so, having considered the individual circumstances of the case.
- 5.2 We may suspend applications if the applicant is responsible for an outstanding tenancy-related debt (e.g. rent or rechargeable repairs) where the debt is:
- Less than five years old
 - More than one month's rent, and the tenant has not maintained a repayment arrangement for at least 3 months.
- 5.3 We will inform applicants in writing if we suspend their application. We will provide reasons for the suspension, how long it will last for and/or what actions the applicant needs to take to end the suspension. Applicants will also receive details of how to appeal against our decision.
- 5.4 If a suspension is lifted because an applicant has maintained a payment arrangement for at least 3 months there is risk of a further suspension if the applicant does not continue to keep to the payment arrangement on an ongoing basis.
- 5.5 We may suspend applications if an applicant or a member of their household has behaved in an anti-social manner within the last three years, and is confirmed by an official source such as the Police or a present/previous landlord.

- 5.6 Examples of anti-social behaviour include the following. These examples are illustrative; they are not an exhaustive list:
- Serious anti-social behaviour within the last three years. This includes cases where the applicant was not the tenant but was named as the cause of the problem.
 - An Anti-Social Behaviour Order is in place (ASBO).
 - A current or previous landlord provides a tenancy reference stating that there have been complaints about anti-social behaviour by the applicant or their household.
 - The Police advise the Association that the applicant or a member of their household have been convicted of drug dealing from a tenancy or of crime which have affected others in their local area (example acts of violence, harassment or threats to neighbours).
 - The applicant has been violent towards a Yorkhill Housing Association tenant, resident or employee and this has resulted in Police involvement.
- 5.7 We will lift the suspension when a period of twelve months has elapsed without any incidents of unacceptable behaviour or ASBO has expired, or a Notice of Proceedings ceases to be in force or is withdrawn by the landlord.
- 5.8 If the suspension is lifted and a new incident of anti-social behaviour is confirmed then we may suspend an application for a further period.
- 5.9 We may consider commencing a tenancy under a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy as an alternative to a waiting list suspension. Advice on this will be taken from the Association's solicitors.
- 5.10 We reserve the right to suspend applicants who have not adhered to the condition of their present or previous tenancy. In particular, where they or members of their household have caused damage to their current or previous landlord's property or have not maintained it in a lettable condition. We will take special or extenuating circumstances into account if we are considering placing an application on hold for these reasons.
- 5.11 Where an applicant has abandoned a property or been evicted, we will normally suspend their application for a minimum period of 6 months, from the date of the abandonment or eviction, unless there are special or extenuating circumstances.
- 5.12 If an applicant has deliberately provided fraudulent or false information, we will suspend their application for a minimum period of 6 months. We will lift the suspension after this period and invite the applicant to submit a new application.
- 5.13 Where applicants have refused 2 reasonable offers of accommodation in the immediate 12-month period, we will suspend their application for a six month period.
- 5.14 On refusal of an offer applicants will be asked to review the areas of choice.

6. Waiting List Review

- 6.1 To help ensure that the information held is up-to-date and that each applicant still wishes to be considered for housing by the Association, the Housing List will be subject to review. There will be a constant review cycle in which all applicants will be required to confirm their wish to remain on the Housing List on an annual basis, within one month of the yearly anniversary of their last contact with the Association.
- 6.2 At the time of the review, the Association will ask applicants to confirm that all details held are still relevant, or if a change in circumstances has occurred that needs to be considered.
- 6.3 Applicants will be advised that failure to contact the Association in response to the review can lead to their application being cancelled from the Association's Housing List.
- 6.4 The Association will write to applicants. Applicants are given 14 working days to contact the Association. Applicants can respond by telephone, email, or visit the Association's office. Where there is no response within 14 working days, the applicant will be sent a second letter advising them that their application will be cancelled from the list if no contact is made within 14 working days of the date of the second letter.
- 6.5 If their circumstances have changed applicants may be asked to provide the information in writing. Applicants living at a different address will be asked to complete a new application form.
- 6.6 If there is no response to the second letter (within 14 working days), the applicant's name will be removed from the list.

7. Cancellation of Housing Application Forms

- 7.1 It will not be usual practice for the Association to remove applicants from the lists and, where this does occur, it will be confined to the following circumstances:
 - the applicant has been offered a tenancy by us or another RSL, this offer has been accepted, and the applicant has indicated their agreement to removal from the list;
 - the applicant has requested to be removed from the list;
 - the applicant has not responded to the review process;
 - the applicant has not responded to offers of housing; or
 - the applicant is deceased.

8. Offer Quota System

- 8.1 Allocations are made principally based on housing need; however, the Association will aim to make offers to Glasgow City Council Section 5 homeless lets in line with annually agreed targets. **Of the remaining lets** the following targets will be set:
- Waiting List: 45%
 - Transfer: 45%
 - Aspirational: 10%
- 8.2 We will not let our houses on a strict rotation basis. Instead, we will look at the potential each individual vacancy has to address our overall policy objectives.

9. Internal Transfers

- 9.1 Internal transfers occur where a current Yorkhill Housing Association tenant wishes to move to another one of the Association's properties. All current tenants have the right to apply and be admitted to the Internal Transfer List. However, given the low turnover of stock, it is not possible to guarantee that any offers will be made, and applicants will be made aware of this.

10. Mutual Exchanges

- 10.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 allows two (or more) social housing tenants to exchange their houses with each other, as long as the Association, and any other social landlord involved, give permission for this.
- 10.2 Mutual exchanges offer a further route to rehousing for tenants who may wish to move home, but may not have sufficient priority under their landlord's Allocations Policy. Yorkhill Housing Association will promote mutual exchanges to our tenants, as a further means of meeting their housing needs and aspirations.
- 10.3 All requests will be considered under the Mutual Exchange Policy.

11. Lets to Staff, Management Committee or Members of their Families

- 11.1 It is critically important that lets to Staff, Management Committee or members of their families are transparent and accountable at all times.
- 11.2 Where an allocation (or a let) is being made to a member of Staff, Management Committee or members of their families (also applies for former Staff and Management Committee Members) a written report from the Chief Executive will be presented to the Management Committee recommending the allocation and confirming it complies with the Association's Allocation Policy.
- 11.3 A tenancy agreement cannot be signed until Management Committee approval has been given.
- 11.4 Further guidance is available from the Association's Entitlement, Payments and Benefits Policy. This policy states the Association's approach to managing lets to 'connected people'.
- 11.5 Connected people are defined as:

Group 1 Members of an applicant's household	Group 2 People closely associated with an applicant	Group 3 Others an applicant needs to consider
Anyone who normally lives as part of a household, whether they are related to the applicant or not, including partners (and spouses) who work away from home; and children (regardless of their age) who are studying away from home.	Parents, parents in law and their partners. Sons, daughters, stepsons and stepdaughters. Brothers, sisters and their partners. A partner's parent, child or sibling. Grandparents, grandchildren and their partners. Someone who is dependent on an applicant, or whom the applicant is dependent upon. Close friends.	Other relatives (e.g. uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews & their partners). Other friends (e.g. someone who an applicant is acquainted with socially, neighbours, business contacts and associates).

- 11.6 The connected person cannot be present during the Management Committee discussion about the allocation and can only return to the meeting once the discussion has been finalised.
- 11.7 If an allocation to a connected person is approved the allocation must be entered into the Payments, Benefits & Entitlements Register.

12. Points System

Please note: applicants must provide sufficient evidence to substantiate their circumstances. The format of the evidence required may differ for the various categories noted below (for example, home visit to confirm living arrangement, letter from medical specialist, etc.).

Category	Points Category	Number of Points
Critical Need	Statutory Homeless An applicant has applied to their local authority and has been accepted as homeless.	30
	People in Imminent Danger Applicants at real risk of danger through racial abuse, domestic abuse, or experiencing distressing circumstances where they cannot be reasonably expected to live in their current accommodation.	30
	Below Tolerable Standard The applicants property is defined as 'below tolerable standard' in line with the Scottish Government's definition.	30
	Medical Need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a medical adaptation is required to an applicant's property but cannot be installed in the applicant's current home. Applicant is currently in hospital or care home and cannot return home due to an adaptation being required. 	30
Urgent Need	Overcrowding Where the applicant requires an additional bedroom for a member of their household. Cases of deliberate overcrowding will not be awarded points in this category. Appropriate checks may be made with landlords to establish these circumstances.	20 for first additional bedroom required 5 for each bedroom thereafter
	Under Occupancy Where the applicant has bedrooms which are not required for their household.	20 for first bedroom not required 5 for each bedroom thereafter
	Insecurity of Tenure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people leaving local authority care Applicants leaving long term medical care Personnel leaving HM Forces Homeless or threatened with homelessness (but not accepted with their LA) 	20

Category	Points Category	Number of Points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaving parental home for first time Leaving tied accommodation Living with friends and relatives 	10
Medical	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the applicant moving house is the only way they can experience normal living The applicant is house-bound The property is greatly exacerbating the applicant's medical condition Parts of the property are inaccessible due to the applicant's health 	25
	Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The property is aggravating the applicant's health condition The property is difficult to move around, or enter/exit due to the health condition 	15
	Low <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A move would benefit the applicant's health condition, however they are able to enter and leave the property safely, and move around within the home. The property is exacerbating a mental health condition. 	10
Condition of Property	Lack of Amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fixed bath or shower, no inside W.C., no hot water A means of cooking, but no means of washing dishes within a bed-sit or no alternative kitchen facilities 	15 2
	Sharing Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing kitchen facilities only or bathroom facilities only with one household Sharing both kitchen and bathroom facilities with one household Sharing kitchen facilities only or bathroom facilities only in houses for multiple occupation Sharing both kitchen and bathroom facilities in houses for multiple occupation 	6 8 9 12
	Poor Condition of Property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor Severe 	5 10
	Small Properties Where an applicant resides in a property which is a studio flat.	5

Category	Points Category	Number of Points
Social Factors	Support Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants who need the support of, or have to support, someone living in one of the Associations areas of activity on provision of confirmation supporting the facts from an appropriate person e.g. doctor, social worker etc. can be awarded a further 	5

Aspirational Moves

Tenants of the Association may apply to go on the transfer list, provided they have an element of housing need, as outlined in this allocation policy

However, existing tenants could be considered for re-housing within Yorkhill under the **Aspirational Moves category** as a means of enabling tenants who are otherwise housed appropriately of moving to another property of their preference. For every property allocated to an aspirational move the Association receives a void property in return, which can then be passed to another applicant on the waiting list.

Applicants can only be permitted access to the aspirational list if they have no other housing need, and as such all applicants will be awarded **0 points** and allocations will be primarily on a first-come-first-served basis, while taking into account appropriate matching processes.

Retirement Housing

The Association owns and operates a complex known as 'Overnewton Street Retirement Complex' which was historically operated as a sheltered housing. The complex is no longer classed as sheltered housing, however in order to maintain an appropriate mix of residents and to make best use of the available stock, allocations to this complex will be made in a sensitive manner.

Allocations will be made to applicants who are older (typically 60 years or more), and/or have medical conditions which require the adapted and supportive facilities within the building.

13. Exceptional Circumstances

In very exceptional or emergency circumstances, the Association reserves the right to bypass this policy in the allocation of an available property. This approach will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis, and will be initiated by a report from the Housing Officer to the Deputy Chief Executive. If approved by the Deputy Chief Executive a

subsequent written report will be made to the Management Committee for notification of the offer under the Exceptional Circumstances clause. An example of an exceptional/emergency circumstance would be the urgent requirement to rehouse an individual(s) under the witness protect legislation.

14. How we let our houses

14.1 Being on the housing list does not mean that we will always be able to make the applicant an offer.

- Receiving an offer depends on the applicants housing needs, who else is waiting to be re-housed at the same time as the applicant, and how many houses become available.
- The applicant will not move up the housing list just because of how long they have been waiting.

14.2 When a property becomes available, we will let it in line with this Policy. There are three main steps involved when we let a house.

Step 1: Which category of applicants will be offered the house?

14.3 We will decide which category of applicant the house will be offered to.

14.4 In making this decision, we will take account of our letting quota, and how to make the best use of our housing.

Step 2: Which applicant in the chosen category will be offered the house?

14.5 We will normally select the applicant with the highest priority, taking account of who is waiting for that size and type of house.

- If a house has been specially designed or adapted for a person with mobility problems, we will consider applicants with medical priority ahead of any other applicants.
- If a house is being let to a homeless person referred by Glasgow City Council, we will base our decision on the criteria specified in the referral.
- If a house is being let to the housing list or to an internal transfer applicant, we will offer the house to the applicant with the most points. If two or more people have the same number of points, we will offer the house to the applicant who has been on the list the longest.

Step 3: Making an offer of housing

- 14.6 Where appropriate we aim to have visited the applicants near the top of each list prior to making an offer. This should mean that we have up to date information, before we reach the stage of making a firm offer of a house.
- 14.7 The purpose of a home visit is to make sure that the applicants housing needs and living circumstances are still the same as when the application was received. The applicant can also tell us at the home visit whether there are any areas they do not want to be considered for, when we are making offers in the future.
- 14.8 The checks we carry out at home visit stage will depend on your circumstances, but we will always need to check information about:
- Proof of residency at the address you are applying from
 - The household composition and living circumstances of the people included in the housing application.
- 14.9 If relevant, we will also ask for a tenancy report from any previous landlords.
- 14.10 Points may be changed following a home visit, either upwards or downwards. This will be followed up by an amended points letter. If staff find that the applicant has given false information, staff will write to the applicant telling them that their application has been cancelled and that they will not be considered for an offer until the applicant's correct circumstances are known.
- 14.11 Once staff have made a decision about who to let a property to, they will:
- Arrange for the applicant to view the house
 - Give applicant a written offer of the house
 - Give applicant a maximum of two days to decide whether or not they wish to accept the offer.
- 14.12 To maximise the applicant's rights, our general policy is to provide a Scottish Secure Tenancy when an offer has been made. We may offer a different type of tenancy (a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy) in the circumstances set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. If we do this, we will explain fully the reasons for this, and what this means.

15. Information and Advice

- 15.1 Information on the Association's Allocation Policy and Procedures will be made available to applicants and as part of their housing options interview advice and assistance will be provided.
- 15.2 A copy of the complete policy is available on the web site and on request from the office and, where necessary, will be made available on tape or in braille or will be translated into other languages as required.

16. Consultation

- 16.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced that social landlords must consult with tenants, applicants and other stakeholders when carrying out a review of their Allocation Policy.
- 16.2 Yorkhill Housing Association will only carry out a consultation if there have been any significant changes to their allocation policy (i.e. changing point system) or any legislative changes.

17. Delegation of Responsibility

- 17.1 The practical implementation of the policy and the day to day operation of the allocations procedures will be undertaken by the Association's Housing Management Team. The Housing Management Team will provide housing options interviews, the assessment of applications and the allocation of void properties under the supervision of the Deputy Chief Executive.
- 17.2 To ensure accuracy and consistency all applications will be checked and countersigned by two members of staff.
- 17.3 Any special cases or need to deviate from the policy will be reported to the Management Committee after the decision by the Chief Executive.

18. Processing Information

- 18.1 Yorkhill Housing Association will process information and data contained within the housing applications in accordance with its Policies and Procedures relating to the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations.
- 18.2 All staff members will be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations and will be trained in the process that the Association has introduced to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

19. Monitoring of Applications and Allocations

- 19.1 In order to ensure that the aims and objectives stated in the Allocation Policy are being achieved data on the allocations process and outcomes will be collated and monitored annually. Reports on the information collated will be provided to the Services Sub-Committee (Housing Management).

Factors that will be monitored will include:

- Age Group
 - Equal Opportunities (protected characteristics)
 - Number of applications received, cancelled or suspended
 - Source of allocation (e.g. waiting list, internal transfer, referral)
- 19.2 The Association will regularly “benchmark” its performances against its peer groups. Yorkhill Housing Association will keep a record of all allocations made and such information will be made available to the Associations internal auditor and the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 19.3 It is important that Yorkhill Housing Association clearly record how particular allocation decisions are arrived at so that it can demonstrate objectivity fairness, openness and accountability in the operation of its policy.

20. Appeals and Complaints

- 20.1 An applicant for housing can appeal against:

- The points total they have been awarded.
- A decision to suspend their eligibility to receive offers of housing.
- Any other aspect of our assessment that the applicant believes is not in accordance with the Allocation Policy and has adversely affected their prospects of being re-housed.

Appeals should be made in writing. The Housing Officer will review appeals, with a final review being carried out by the Deputy Chief Executive if the customer remains dissatisfied.

- 20.2 If an applicant wishes to complain about how their application has been dealt with they are able to use Yorkhill Housing Association’s Complaints Handling Procedure.

Information about how to make a complaint is available from the Associations office or from our website. Stage 1 complaint will normally be reviewed by our Housing Management Team, while Stage 2 complaints about allocations matter will be dealt with by the Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Executive.

Our decision on a Stage 2 complaint represents the end of the Association’s internal complaints procedure. If an applicant remains dissatisfied, they can contact the Scottish Public Ombudsman if they wish to have their complaints considered by an

independent body. Details are available from our office or by contacting the Ombudsman direct at:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS, or Freepost SPSO

Telephone number 0131 225 5300, or Freephone 0800 377 7330

21. Equalities and Human Rights

- 21.1 We are committed to the principles of equality and diversity, including working towards a Management Committee and staff team that is representative of the communities it serves in respect of Protective Characteristics.

22. Freedom of Information (FOI)

- 22.1 The Association is subject to FOI and all enquiries with respect to Allocation Policy will be handled strictly in line with FOI and confidentiality policies.

23. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

- 23.1 The organisation will treat personal data in line with our obligations under the current GDPR regulations and our own policy.

24. Review of Policy

- 24.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years or in light of changes to legislation.