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Milnbank
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



ALLOCATIONS POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Milnbank Housing Association (MHA) is a Community Controlled Housing Association in the East End of Glasgow. The Association is a non-profit making organisation, established in 1975 with the primary remit of improving the housing provision within its area of operation.

A key function of the Association is to allocate available housing within its stock in a manner that is fair and equitable and in line with good practice guidelines. To facilitate this MHA has implemented an Allocations Policy, which is needs based in order to reflect its statutory duty to identify and give reasonable preference to those categories of housing need specified in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. In terms of allocations, the principle aims of the Association are:

- To provide rented housing of the highest standard and to maintain affordable rent levels consistent with our tenants' ability to pay

2. LEGAL & REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

In terms of the Allocations Policy, there are a number of legal and regulatory requirements which the Association has incorporated and adheres to when allocating accommodation. These include:

- (a) **HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010** - To meet the requirements of this Act, MHA shall have clear rules governing admission to the housing list and the Association's priority for allocating available accommodation.
- (b) **CONTROL OF PAYMENTS BENEFITS FOR STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS POLICY** – In terms of the above Act, the Association may grant a tenancy to Employees, Committee Members, former Employees, former Committee Members and close relatives of the aforementioned. In the event of such a tenancy being granted, the decisions made with regard to this tenancy must comply with the guidelines laid down by The Scottish Housing Regular.
- (c) **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES** – The Association will abide by the Equality Act 2010.
MHA will not discriminate against any applicant who applies to be rehoused on the grounds of race, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy & maternity, gender reassignment or marital status.

To help fulfil its commitment to Equal Opportunity MHA collates and monitors data of the ethnic/racial origin, economic status and household details of all those who apply for housing. The Allocation Policy is provided, free of charge, to anyone who applies to be rehoused or who requests a copy. The Policy and application form is also available in Braille, large print, audiotape and a translation to other languages on request.

(d) OTHER LEGISLATION – In addition to the above, the Association also adheres to the following legislation:

- Race Relations (Amended) Act 2000
- Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981
- Sex Discrimination (Amended) Act 2003
- Data Protection Act 1998

3. THE BASIS OF SELECTION

All allocations are made in accordance with the Allocations Policy which is determined by the Association's Management Committee. The Association operates the following 3 lists which applicants can be considered for housing:

- 1) General Housing List (Open to all applicants who are not MHA tenants)
- 2) Transfer List (Open to existing MHA tenants)
- 3) Section 5 referrals (List of statutory homeless applicants)

All information provided by an applicant, or sought by the Association to assess the housing need, will be treated in the strictest of confidence. The information will only be disclosed to MHA staff in line with the Allocation Procedures.

There is continuous opportunity for applicants who consider themselves to be in housing need to apply for housing. Applicants must be 16 years old or over. Completed applications will be entered onto the appropriate list, e.g. 2, 3, 4, 5 apartment etc.

Removal from the Housing List - The Association will only remove an applicant from the housing list for the following reasons:

- 1) Applicant requests that their application be removed from the list
- 2) Death of an applicant
- 3) Applicant fails to respond to the annual review of the housing list

Suspension from the Housing List - Applicants may be suspended from the housing list for the following reasons:

- 1) Any applicant, spouse or co-habitee of an applicant who knowingly provides false or misleading information. If a tenancy has been granted the Association may start proceedings for recovery of possession.

- 2) If an applicant fails to provide the necessary information required to fully assess their application form (e.g. proof of address/identity, details of current Landlord). Applications will be re-instated onto the housing list once this information has been received and a full assessment has been carried out.
- 3) If an applicant has moved out of their current address or changed circumstances. Applications will be re-instated following assessment of a completed Change of Circumstances form.
- 4) Where 2 offers of accommodation have been refused by the applicant. Suspension will be for a 1 year period and the applicant should advise after this time if they wish their application to become live again.
- 5) Where an applicant or person accompanying the applicant, adopts threatening, violent or abusive behaviour to members of staff.
- 6) If an unsatisfactory tenancy reference is received where issues remain unresolved (e.g. rent arrears outstanding with no ongoing payments being made).

Homeless Referrals from Glasgow City Council (GCC) - The Association acknowledges its duty to comply with GCC when a referral request is made under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

A Protocol has been established with GCC and Registered Social Landlords and all referrals are considered within the framework of the Protocol.

Homeless applicants applying to MHA will be invited to make an application, and where necessary an interview with a Homeless Person Case Worker will be arranged.

One offer of accommodation will be made and if this offer is refused the Casework Team will assess whether or not MHA has any obligations to make a further offer.

4. THE ASSOCIATION'S HOUSING STOCK

The Association's stock is within its one area of operation. Regardless of the location, all available stock will be to the acceptable MHA standard. Area preference will only be considered where there is a specific reason (e.g. domestic violence). The range of housing stock is as follows:

- 1) Mainstream – The largest majority of MHA's stock is general mainstream flats, with a small supply of houses. This accommodation ranges in size from one bedroom to a small supply of 4 bedrooms. Vacant accommodation within this category is allocated from the main housing lists.

- 2) Sheltered Housing Accommodation - The Association manages a small stock of sheltered accommodation. Selection is normally restricted to applicants who are aged 60 years or over and who can demonstrate that they can live independently. Medical verification may be sought by the Association. Due to the specialised nature of this stock, a separate sheltered housing list will be maintained with applicants being assessed in terms of their need.
- 3) Wheelchair Housing - MHA has a few adapted properties. Selection will be restricted to applicants who can clearly demonstrate the need for such accommodation and must have medical verification.
- 4) Adapted Accommodation - The Association has a small provision of accommodation with specialised features (e.g. community alarm provision, medically adapted flats etc). This type of accommodation will be allocated to applicants in terms of their housing need.

The Association's housing stock may also, if required, be allocated for the following:

Decant Accommodation - On occasions it is necessary for the Association to use properties from the Housing Stock for decanting purposes (e.g. in an emergency like a fire, flood etc).

Mutual Exchange - Existing tenants of MHA may arrange mutual exchanges with tenants of any housing association or local authority. The in-coming tenant will be subject to the same scrutiny as other applicants, and must be of a suitable family size for the property. The incoming tenant must accept the condition of the flat as viewed. The Association may refuse a Mutual Exchange in situations where:

- There is an ongoing investigation or history of anti-social behaviour
- Receipt of an unsatisfactory tenancy reference

- The exchange will result in overcrowding, or under occupation, of the property

A register of Mutual Exchange applicants is held in the Association's Reception area.

Shared Ownership - The Association has a small stock of Shared Ownership properties whereby the occupant part owns a share and rents the remaining part from MHA. Details of this scheme are detailed on the website and office reception.

Nomination Arrangements - MHA may provide up to 100% nomination rights to GCC or GHA where a reprovisioning arrangement or agreement is in place.

Lease Agreements - The Association is committed to working with other agencies to support tenants who are allocated a tenancy with MHA. (E.g. Social Work Department)

Supported Accommodation - MHA owns and manages a small stock of specialised accommodation that offers support to vulnerable females. The allocation of this accommodation is via referrals from GCC Homeless Team and Social Work Services. (c)

Furnished Accommodation - The Association has a small provision of furnished accommodation that shall be allocated to suitable housing list applicant.

5. OFFERS OF ASSOCIATION ACCOMMODATION

All completed applications will be entered onto the respective housing list.

Offers of accommodation -All offers will be based on housing need and the availability of vacant stock.

MHA Existing Tenants - As the Association is committed to building and maintaining a balanced and stable community it seeks to avoid an excessive number of vulnerable households or a concentration of age range and/or lifestyles in one area. At the same time, consideration must also be given to potential problems caused by possible clash of lifestyles. As such, the Association is required to consider the needs of the existing tenants in an area as well as the needs of the local community before making a specific allocation to an applicant. MHA, therefore, must be able to exercise an element of flexibility and use of discretion when making individual allocations.

Where it is felt to be inappropriate, inadvisable or against the greater good of the immediate community or the applicant, the Association retains the right to bypass the applicant(s) at the top of the housing list for a particular property. The Housing Services Manager must approve the bypassing of any applicant on discretionary grounds, clearly providing a written audit of the reason(s). The applicant(s) bypassed will remain at the top of the housing list and will be considered for the next suitable accommodation that becomes available.

Assessing Housing Need - Where more than one applicant has the same points the length of time the applicant has been in known housing need and the suitability of the property in relation to the needs of the applicant (e.g. size, medical needs etc), will be taken into account. No account will be taken of the length of time an applicant has been on the housing list.

Rent Arrears -The existence of rent arrears will not debar an applicant from receiving an offer; however MHA reserves the right to establish what arrangements have been made between the applicant and current landlord and may take this into account in determining whether an offer of accommodation can be made, in accordance with the current housing regulations.

Providing Support - In applications where harassment, in any form, is evident or where an applicant has a disability or from an ethnic background, the Association will work in partnership with the relevant support/advisory body (e.g. Social Work Services, Medical Specialist, Voluntary or Statutory agencies).

Rejecting an Offer - Applicants will receive a maximum of two offers of accommodation. If both offers are rejected, the application form will be suspended from the housing list for a maximum period of 1 calendar year, unless applicants can clearly justify their reason(s) for rejecting the offer(s). The applicant will be able to re-apply at the expiry of the suspension period.

Accepting a MHA Tenancy - Where an offer of tenancy has been accepted, the applicant will be expected to occupy the property within two weeks of the date of entry or otherwise deemed by the Association.

In the case of a transfer, MHA existing tenants have two weeks from the date of entry to occupy the new property and return the keys for their existing property to the office. Should a tenant require longer than the two weeks additional rent will be charged at a daily rate until the date the keys are handed in.

6. APPEALS

The Association recognises that a situation may occur where an applicant is unhappy with a decision reached over their application, and in such an event may wish to appeal this decision. Where an applicant wishes to appeal, the following mechanism should be observed:

- 1) If a Housing Assistant or Officer does not adequately clarify the decision, you can discuss the situation with the Depute Housing Manager.
- 2) If you remain dissatisfied, applicants should submit their appeal in writing to the Housing Services Manager. Where this is not possible, an applicant can make contact at the Association's office whether in person or by telephone.
- 3) If the matter is not resolved by this stage, the Applicant may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the Management Committee within 14 days of the first appeal decision. At all stages, a written statement can be requested from the Association setting out the reasons for the decisions taken.
- 4) If you are not happy with the outcome from this meeting you will normally be able to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Any appeals received will be dealt with in accordance with the Associations Complaints Procedure Policy, a copy of which will be given free of charge on request.

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Housing Services Manager will manage the implementation of this policy ensuring that MHA internal procedures and The Scottish Housing Regulator Guidance is followed. The Allocations Policy is monitored on a monthly basis by

the Services Committee in order to assess whether the stated objectives are being achieved.

The Allocations Policy is reviewed biennially by the Services Committee unless there are significant changes to legislation or is otherwise deemed necessary.

8. THE POINTS SYSTEM

The assessment of housing need is on a points basis and will be based upon the following criteria:

	CATEGORY	POINTS AWARD
1.	<u>UNIMPROVED PROPERTIES</u>	
	Tenants of MHA currently residing in unimproved properties who require permanent rehousing prior to commencement of works to their existing accommodation. Tenants are given priority in accordance with development site start dates and where more than one family qualifies for the same property priority will be assessed on length of tenancy.	100 POINTS
1a.	This category may also apply where MHA has entered into an agreement with either the Local Authority or another Landlord to assist in the provision of accommodation where the applicant's accommodation is subject to demolition.	100 POINTS
2.	<u>MILNBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION TENANTS</u>	
2a.	<u>Transfers</u> Tenants of the Association requesting an internal transfer will be assessed in accordance with the points categories within the Allocations Policy. Transfer applicants will be visited at home by MHA staff to determine the housing need, check the circumstances detailed in the application form and identify any other tenancy issues.	
2b.	<u>Milnbank HA Tenant's - Relationship Breakdown</u> A MHA couple who can demonstrate that their relationship has broken down and can no longer reside together will be awarded points under this category. Any offer made under this category will normally be outwith their present area.	40 POINTS
3.	<u>HOMELESSNESS</u>	
	Where a referral is made by Glasgow City Council under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 they will be interviewed and added to the relevant Section 5 Referral List in date order of receipt of the referral.	
	Other applicants assessed as homeless will be awarded points as follows:	
	- Statutory Homeless, Roofless, No Fixed Abode or Homeless Unit.	70 POINTS
	- Victim of violence or abuse in present	70 POINTS

	Accommodation. - Victim of severe racial or other harassment in their present accommodation.	70 POINTS
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4.	<p><u>OVERCROWDING</u></p> <p>All applicants will receive points where overcrowding or underoccupation occurs. The criteria is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 bedroom for applicant and spouse, partner or co-habitee - 1 bedroom for each 2 children of the same gender under 16 years - 1 bedroom for each 2 children under 10 years - 1 bedroom for each other person <p>All applicants will be awarded 10 points for each extra or additional bedspace.</p> <p>*Where an addition to the family is expected, medical confirmation will be requested.</p>	10 POINTS
5.	<p><u>FIRST ACCOMMODATION</u></p> <p>In order to assist those applicants who are not overcrowded/under occupied and who are applying for their first property the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All applicants requiring 2 apartment applying for their first accommodation but do not qualify for overcrowding or under occupancy - All applicants require 3 apartment+ property and applying for first accommodation, but do not qualify for overcrowding or under occupancy 	10 POINTS 20 POINTS
6.	<p><u>LACK OF SECURITY/SHARING ACCOMMODATION</u></p> <p>Applicant living with friends or relatives, under the threat of eviction, residing in tied accommodation, obliged to sell but without enough financial resources to buy other suitable accommodation or tenant without a lease</p> <p>Tenants living in private rented accommodation who have difficulties in making rent payments due to excessive rent charges</p> <p>(NOTE: Applicants can only be considered for Homelessness <u>OR</u> lack of security).</p>	20 POINTS 20 POINTS
7.	<p><u>LACK OF AMENITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No bath or shower - No hot water - No cooking facilities - Where cooking facilities are located in the same room as the applicant sleeps 	25 POINTS 20 POINTS 20 POINTS 10 POINTS
8.	<p><u>SHARING AMENITIES</u></p> <p>Applicants who share amenities with those other than their</p>	

	<p>own household will be awarded points as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing a bathroom - Sharing a kitchen 	<p>10 POINTS 10 POINTS</p>
9.	<p><u>UNSATISFACTORY PROPERTY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If property suffers from long-standing disrepair, dampness or infestation and is unlikely to be resolved in a reasonable time. - Where disrepair, dampness or infestation, exists but is localised <p>Proof of disrepair will be required before points are awarded.</p>	<p>30 POINTS 20 POINTS</p>
10.	<p><u>MEDICAL CONDITIONS</u></p> <p>Medical points will only be awarded where it is demonstrated that the current accommodation is unsuitable and by moving to alternative accommodation the applicant, or anyone else in your household, will receive an immediate or long term health benefit.</p> <p>A medical self-assessment form should be completed and further information may be requested from your GP, Hospital Consultant or other medical practitioner.</p> <p>Unless otherwise confirmed by a medical professional, all medical applicants will only be considered for ground or first floor accommodation.</p> <p>If applicants require sole use of a bedroom due to medical condition verification from a GP or health professional will be required as confirmation of this.</p> <p>Award will be based upon the details of on the Medical Assessment Form to assess whether the need is high, moderate or low priority.</p>	
10a.	<p><u>High Priority</u></p> <p>Points will be awarded where it is demonstrated that the current accommodation is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - greatly exacerbating the medical condition or health problem - severely restricting the person's access to essential facilities within the property - rendering the person housebound - severely restricting the person's daily activities - the present accommodation is totally incompatible with the person's physical disabilities (e.g. an applicant, with a qualifying condition, living on 3rd floor accommodation requiring ground floor) 	60 POINTS
10b.	<p><u>Moderate Priority</u></p>	50 POINTS

<p>10c.</p>	<p>Points will be awarded where it is shown that the current accommodation is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aggravating the medical condition or health problem - restricting the applicant's mobility within the property - making it difficult for the sufferer to enter and leave the property independently (e.g. an applicant, with a qualifying condition, living on 2nd floor accommodation requiring ground floor accommodation) <p><u>Low Priority</u></p> <p>Points will be awarded to applicants that demonstrate that their current accommodation is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aggravating the medical condition or health problem - making it difficult for the sufferer to move freely about the house - causing the person mental and/or emotional problems (e.g. depression) to such a degree that continued and long term assistance is required from psychiatric services. Points will only be considered if accompanied by a Psychiatric report. (e.g. an applicant, with a qualifying condition, living on 2nd or 3rd floor accommodation requiring 1st floor accommodation or 1st floor requiring ground floor. Also applicants suffering from depression, with supporting letter from Psychiatrist) 	<p>40 POINTS</p>
<p>10d.</p>	<p><u>Additional Medical Points</u></p> <p>If more than one applicant in each household will benefit additional points per person will be awarded.</p> <p>Medical points will not be awarded for environmental factors (e.g. general neighbourhood problems, neighbour disputes)</p>	<p>10 POINTS</p>
<p>11</p>	<p><u>SOCIAL CONDITIONS</u></p>	
<p>11a.</p>	<p><u>Support</u></p> <p>Points will be awarded to those applicants who need support of, or who have to support, a relative living within MHA's area of activity</p>	<p>20 POINTS</p>
<p>11b.</p>	<p><u>Employment</u></p> <p>Points will be awarded to those applicants who wish to move to the area for employment reasons. In the case of joint applicants only one set of points will be awarded under this category for each application form. (Proof of employment will have to be provided before these points are awarded)</p>	<p>20 POINTS</p>
<p>11c.</p>	<p><u>Other Social Conditions</u></p> <p>The Association recognises that there are some other situations where there are special needs or exceptional social circumstances not adequately covered under other sections of this Policy</p>	<p>30 POINTS</p>

	<p>Points under this category may be awarded by the relevant housing staff. For audit purposes the Housing Services Manager will confirm these points. It may be necessary to request evidence to support this category e.g. Police, Social Work Services, Landlord etc.</p>	
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